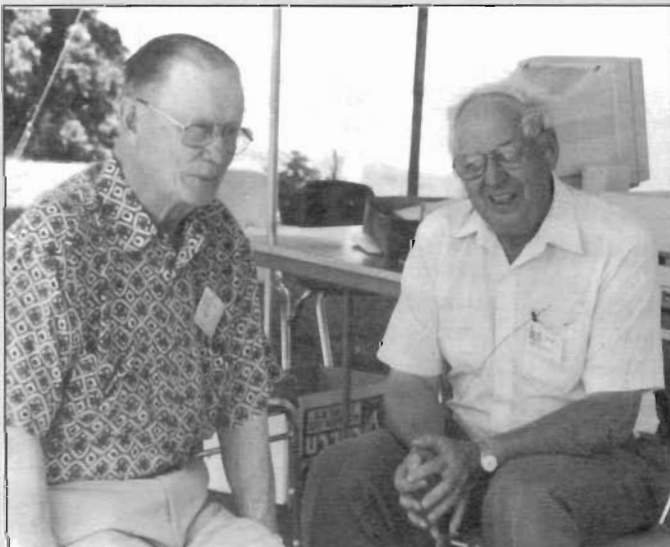
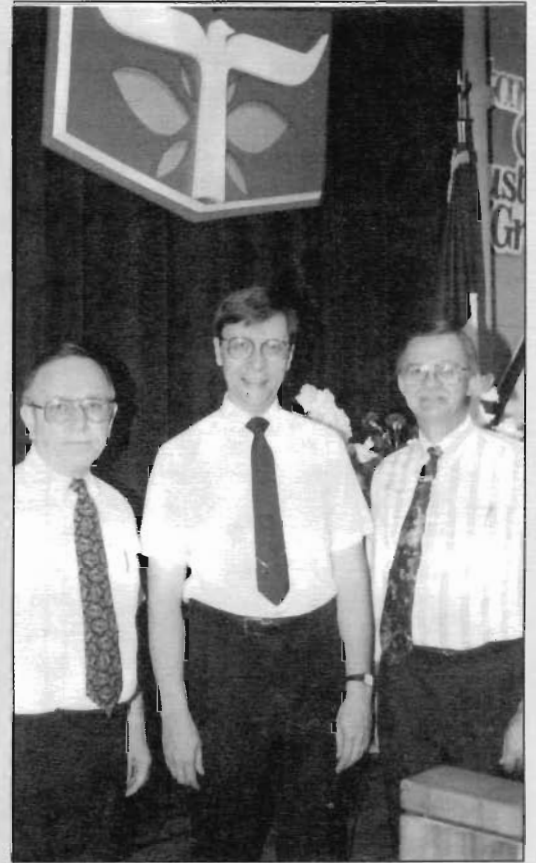


# The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

July 18, 1995



## The 33rd AFLC Annual Conference



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

July 18, 1995  
Volume 33, Number 9



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## AN ENCOURAGING WORD

### God's great gift

*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.* John 15:4-5

Aside from eternal life, God's greatest gift to Christians is prayer. In the next few issues of this magazine I want to encourage you to see prayer as a gift and privilege from God.

#### The source of prayer

Jesus Christ is the source of prayer. He tells us to "abide in Me," which means to rest and remain in Him and His Word. Then Christ adds His promise, "and I in you." When you feel anxious when you pray, check the source of your prayers. Are you depending upon your strength or upon Christ's promise?

#### Hindrance to prayer

The biggest hindrance to prayer is ourselves. Jesus reminds us, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me." Too often we depend upon ourselves when we need to turn to God.

#### The fruit of prayer

Jesus promises, "He who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit." Sometimes God lets us see results from our prayers. These results are not rewards for saying great prayers but blessings that God gives.

Notice how Jesus describes these results as fruit. You can't manufacture fruit. All you can do is pick it from the tree and enjoy it!

#### Lesson from my apple tree

This past January I was determined to do everything I could to make sure there would be much fruit on my golden delicious apple tree. I spent several hours pruning and shaping the tree. I purchased two types of chemicals and sprayed the tree for fungus and insects. Then I waited and watched anxiously. First the blossoms grew, and the bees pollinated them. Then I waited some more, and sure enough, tiny little apples began to grow. One day while I was inspecting the tree, it hit me: this tree is loaded with apples not because I worked so hard and worried so much. God made the apples grow, and if God wills, they will survive until this fall when I will harvest and enjoy them.

Isn't that what prayer is? We may fuss and fret and stew, but finally we acknowledge that God is the source of prayer, that He calls us to abide in Him and trust Him for the results, and according to God's will, we receive the fruit of our prayers to enjoy!

I encourage you to wait with me and see if God so chooses to give me a harvest of apples this fall. I'll let you know what happens!

— by Rev. Joel Lohafer  
Triumph Lutheran  
Ferndale, Washington

# Standing in the Gospel

Under the theme "Standing in the Gospel — Sustained by Grace" members of Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) met for the thirty-third annual conference of the AFLC at the Association Retreat Center (ARC), Osceola, Wisconsin June 14-18.

The 740 who registered at the conference set a new attendance record, breaking the previous mark of 673 set in 1987 in Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

One of the major orders of business at this year's conference was the election of executive officers. Rev. Robert Lee of Minneapolis, Minnesota was reelected to a second three-year term as president. Rev. Elden Nelson of Willmar, Minnesota was elected vice president and Rev. Bruce Dalager of Grand Forks, North Dakota was reelected secretary. Both the vice president and secretary were elected to one-year terms.

## Opening Services

After a day of committee meetings the conference began on



Rev. Tim and Rose Carlson  
Wheatland, Iowa

## Report of the 1995 AFLC Annual Conference



Wednesday evening, June 14 with a concert of prayer led by Rev. James L. Johnson of Fosston, Minnesota. Many took part in the time of singing, Scripture reading and prayer.

Following the concert of prayer was the opening service of the conference led by Rev. James Molstre of Zumbrota, Minnesota. Preaching on the conference text of I Corinthians 15:1-10 was Dr. Francis Monseth, Dean of the Free Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Dr. Monseth reminded those gathered that the letter to the Corinthians is a message to a divided congregation. It is a call to remember what had been taught at first and what really matters. It emphasizes the centrality of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Does this truth have first importance in our teachings, our congregations and our lives?" he asked.

A return to "apostolic simplici-



Dr. Francis Monseth

ty" was called for by Dr. Monseth as well as confidence in the power of the gospel to create faith. That soul-saving gospel needs to be received in faith and Christ personally accepted as Savior. A concern for the salvation of souls and dependence on the grace of God is vital.

## President's Report

In his report to the conference Rev. Lee spoke of the "fearful obstacles and fantastic opportunities" the AFLC faces. "Never has there been a greater need to be sustained by God's grace. Yet our assurance is that He is faithful, and our firm confidence is that our needs will never be greater than His supply!"

Rev. Lee expressed thankfulness for the encouraging progress that has been made through AFLC 2000 gifts towards eliminating debt in the various departments of the Association. In the area of finances, he reported on proposed changes in the budgeting process. The Budget Analysis Committee recommended tying future budgets to past income plus a realistic percentage of growth. These proposed budgets were later approved by the conference.

Also in the financial realm, conference delegates heard of work going on in the establishing of an AFLC Foundation. This would be a separate corporation made up of members of the various other corporations of the

→



Rev. Brian Davidson, Metz, Michigan (center) again served as head teller. Also pictured are Rev. Richard Larson, Abercrombie, North Dakota, and seminarian Marshall Nessa.



Rev. Robert Lee (center) and Chaplain Tim Skramstad, San Antonio, Texas.

## REPORT

AFLC. It would exist for the purpose of providing an entity to receive deferred gifts, stabilizing cash flow and assisting with special projects and needs.

Both in the report of Rev. Lee and the report of Rev. Terry Olson, chairman of the Coordinating Committee, mention was made of the fears of a few that "the AFLC is forsaking its evangelical and pietistic heritage." Much of it was said to stem from the release of a faculty member of the AFLC schools in 1994. Rev. Lee asserted that "The AFLC continues to stand on our guiding principles and evangelical Lutheran heritage ... AFLC schools together with the board of trustees stand firmly on these convictions, too. Struggles should always be expected, and they can serve to sharpen discernment and stimulate edifying discussion, as well as to remind us that our old enemy is eager to sow seeds of dissension during seasons of opportunity."

Rev. Olson, on behalf of the Coordinating Committee, said,

"Our founders were concerned with the salvation of souls and the growth in grace of the believers. There were differing concerns in their common emphasis. However, this was not divisive, but a help to achieve a biblical balance. ... We must respectfully hear and learn from each other so that we can have what we had in the past — a solid, biblical balance in our work together for the salvation of souls."

## The ARC

The conference hosts reported on their thankfulness for the way God has provided in the past year. A healthy increase in income was experienced with a jump in winter usage of the retreat center along with a full summer schedule. Thanks was expressed as well for the addition to the staff during the past year of Eric Westlake as full-time director. Appreciation was extended to the former directors,



Rev. Terry Olson, Dickinson, North Dakota, delivered the Coordinating Committee report.





Eric Westlake, ARC director grilled three cases of chicken for the Saturday evening meal.

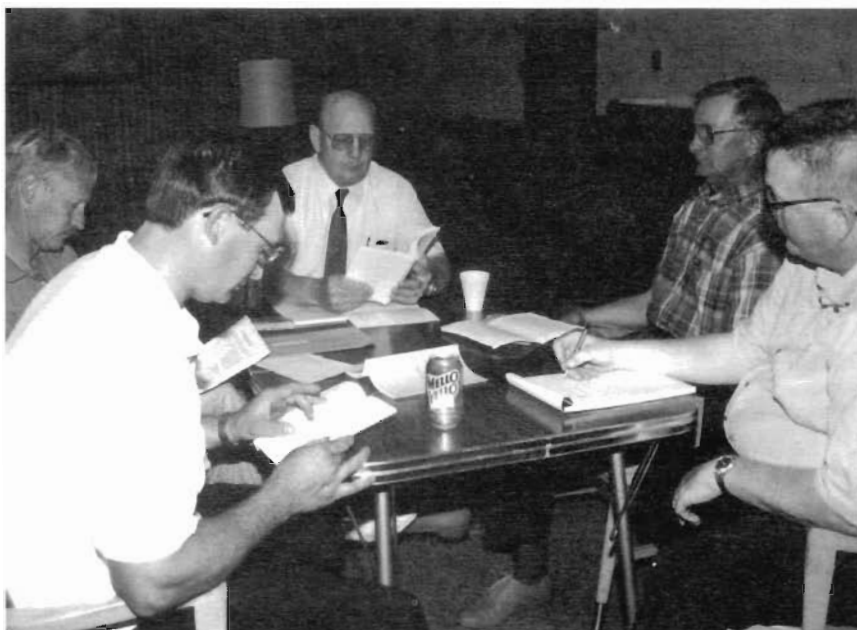
Bob and Carol Dietsche, who filled in once again during the interim when the ARC was without a director.

The ARC board and director reported on the completion of the director's home and the renovation plans of the Tadmor and Good News Lodge buildings. Plans are also in place to begin converting the Shunem building into motel-type rooms in the near future.

### AFLC Schools

The Chairman of the AFLC schools' board of trustees, Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, expressed gratitude to God for the faithful service of former faculty members Rev. Ralph Tjelta and Dr. Steven Lombardo. He was also thankful for God's provision of two new faculty members: Rev. Jerry Holmaas, teaching in the area of Old Testament, and Rev. Jerry Moan, New Testament instructor.

Rev. Korhonen stressed in his report that "It is of utmost concern to us that our Schools be a place where a personal relationship with Jesus is held up as the goal and norm of the Christian life. Whether that relationship



Committee No. 2 (Schools) L. to R. Arne Berge, Binford, North Dakota; John Presteng, Grafton, North Dakota; Rev. Roy Johnson, Ortonville, Minnesota; Harold Erickson, New York Mills, Minnesota; and Rev. Tim Hurley, Bruce, South Dakota.



In spite of efficient registration facilities, a long line gathered on Thursday. A record-breaking 740 delegates registered.

begins in baptism or conversion, it needs to be nurtured in the Word of God. Where there is a living relationship, it will express itself in a sorrow for sin and a love for the Lord and His Church. It has not been the board's desire or intent to change our schools' doctrinal position in any way."

Other news from the schools included mention of the graduation of two men from the seminary, Earl Korhonen and Randy Nelson. Renovation is going on in the dormitories at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School (AFLBS). The dean of AFLBS,

Rev. Don Greven, will be leaving in September for a year-long sabbatical with plans at the present time to include teaching and study at Lutheran Bible schools in Europe.

During the discussion of the schools the conference delegates were called to their knees in prayer for an extended period of time. This took place in the midst of consideration of a resolution that passed seeking for discussion to be done in "a Christ-like manner, seeking God's wisdom and guidance. May our passion be for spiritual life." →

Prayer happened each day of the conference at various times and most particularly during the prayer hours led by Rev. James Rasmussen. Prayer was also a special emphasis of the speaker at the pastors' banquet, Remco Brommet, Midwest executive director of Concerts of Prayer.

### Missions and Evangelism

The AFLC World Missions Director, Rev. Eugene Enderlein, expressed thanks in his report for the new missionaries and their families that have been sent out during the past year: Rev. David Nelson to Brazil, Rev. Todd Schierkolk to Mexico, Rev. Tim Hinrichs, on loan to the East European Missions Network, to the Czech Republic, and Rev. Richard Gunderson, on loan to the World Mission Prayer League, to Mexico.

Rev. Enderlein spoke of the continued implementation of the designated giving program for the support of missionaries. Rev. Jonathan Abel and his family, missionaries to Brazil, are in the United States on furlough at the present time. Full support will



Rev. James Rasmussen, Park River, North Dakota.



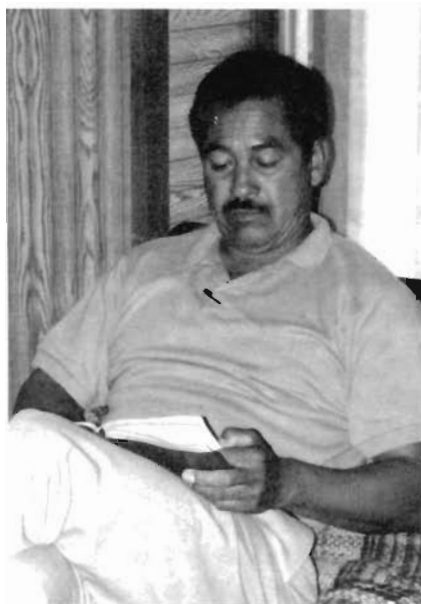
Missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel, April and Thomas.

need to be promised or pledged in order for them to return to the mission field.

The announcement was made that Rev. David Abel and his family will soon be moving from the Vitoria area of Brazil where they have been serving to the city of São Paulo. They will be involved in church planting in that city, the largest in Brazil and one of the most populated in the world.

Some of the major news in the

area of home missions occurred on Sunday morning with the installation of Rev. Paul Nash as the new director of that department. Rev. Elden Nelson had served in that position for 19 years. He was stepping down to pastor a congregation in Willmar, Minnesota. A reception to express gratitude for his years of service was held Thursday evening. Rev. Nelson and his wife were given a gift of a future trip to Israel.



Pastor Gabriel Mercado, Mexico, took advantage of the early morning hour for devotions.



Rev. Paul and Laurie Nash, the new AFLC Home Mission director, and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Nash, Abercrombie, North Dakota, and Mr. and Mrs. Bob Dietsche, Osceola, Wisconsin, parents of Laurie Nash.



Nearly 70 children participated in the VBS program led by the AFLBS Ambassador summer team.

During the time of discussion regarding evangelism a resolution was proposed and passed stating that "whereas the teaching and confession of the AFLC is clear in its declaration of the need for a living faith and a personal relationship with God by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ... be it resolved that the conference go on record as encouraging the ongoing practice of speaking to people with regards to their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ."

### Education and Youth

What has been done and what could be done, particularly in the development of The Ambassador Sunday School Series, was reported on by the board of Parish Education and the director, Katha Tjelta. A lack of the necessary funds has hindered the work from progressing as desired.

The Parish Education department announced the recent reprinting of Jacob Tanner's *The Senior Confirmation Book*. They

plan to reprint other books when funds are available.

The Christian Academic Education Board has been reorganized. A mission statement was recently developed. A twofold mission of the board is seen: 1. To provide discipling and educational resources to assist parents in their homes and schools of their choice and educators in public schools. 2. To assist congregations in establishing Christian/Lutheran day schools.

The AFLC Youth Board has also developed a new mission statement and philosophy of ministry. This effort has been spurred on by the process of calling a new full-time youth ministries director. The board desires prayer as they seek the person of God's choosing for that position.

The Associate Youth Ministries Director, Bob Halvorsen, resigned his position June 1. The Director of Youth Ministries, Rev. Dennis Gray, anticipates leaving his position in the near future as a full-time director is hired.

In his report Rev. Gray spoke of the increasing number of AFLC congregations which are hiring youth workers. His office will be

→



Members of the Home Missions Committee at the Sunday morning installation service were Robert Christian, Newark, Illinois; Rev. Alvin Grothe, Astoria, Oregon; and Rev. Paul Nash and Rev. Allen Monson, Lakeville, Minnesota.



Rev. Harvey Jackson, Ishpeming, Michigan, and Rev. John Allstaedt, Eben Junction, Michigan.

involved more and more in the training and assisting of these individuals.

Information was shared and enthusiasm was expressed by Rev. James L. Johnson, Free Lutheran Youth President, as he spoke of the upcoming Free Lutheran Youth National Convention in Estes Park, Colorado, July 17-22. Approximately 1000 people are expected to attend.

## Looking Ahead

A resolution was made and approved to establish a committee of reconciliation. It is to include AFLC executive officers, representatives from the Coordinating Committee, schools and school board and other interested parties to be appointed by the coordinating committee. They are to have a goal of finishing their work by October 31, 1995 with a service of reconciliation celebration to follow. According to one proponent of the resolution, the committee is to "do whatever it

### Committee of Reconciliation

The first meeting is scheduled for July 13, 1995, at Emmaus Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Minnesota.

The members are:

Mr. David Borg, Cokato, MN  
 Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, ND  
 Mr. Marc Denis, Plymouth, MN  
 Mr. Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, MN  
 Rev. Donald Greven, Plymouth, MN  
 Rev. Gary Jorgenson, Ottawa, IL  
 Rev. Paul Larson, Detroit Lakes, MN  
 Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, MN  
 Rev. Robert Lee, Plymouth, MN  
 Dr. Francis Monseth, Rogers, MN  
 Rev. Elden Nelson, Willmar, MN (chairman)  
 Rev. Terry Olson, Dickinson, ND  
 Mr. Ralph Peterson, Portland, ND  
 Rev. John Strand, Remer, MN  
 Rev. Ralph Tjelta, Blaine, MN  
 Rev. Einar Unseth, London, MN

# Election Results

**President** — Rev. Robert L. Lee, Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Vice president** — Rev. Elden Nelson, Willmar, Minnesota

**Secretary** — Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, North Dakota

## Nominating Committee for 1996 conference

**Eastern North Dakota** — Robert Knutson, McVie

**Western ND/Eastern Montana** — Gary Qualley, Brockton, MT

**South Dakota** — Junell Remme, Pipestone, Minnesota

**Lake Superior** — Tim Korhonen, Cloquet, Minnesota

**Northwestern Minnesota** — Rev. Raynard Huglen, Newfolden

**North Central Minnesota** — Rev. James L. Johnson, Fosston

**Southwest Central Minnesota** — James Rolf, Brandon

**Nebraska/Kansas/Colorado** — Rev. Scott Gray, Fairbury, NE

**Minneapolis** — Rev. Laurel Udden, New Hope, Minnesota

**Central Tri-State** — Rev. James Molstre, Zumbrota, Minnesota

**Northern Michigan** — David Blake, Ontonagon

**South Central** — Rev. Vince Will, Springfield, Missouri

**Southwest** — Dean Crouthers, Nogales, Arizona

**West Coast** — Rev. Earl Korhonen, Monroe, Washington

**Eastern** — Rev. John Dennis, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

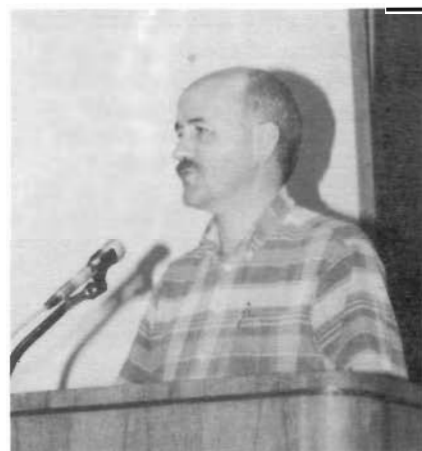
**Illinois** — Howard Johnson, Yorkville

takes" to reconcile parties in the AFLC that have been divided.

Rev. Gerald Peterson, pastor of the AFLC congregation in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma shared with the conference some of the ongoing needs and trauma his congregation and community have faced since the bombing of the federal building in that city this past spring. He expressed appreciation for the letters and phone calls and the knowledge they had that others in the AFLC were in prayer for them.

Future annual conferences of the AFLC will be taking place in 1996 at the Warm Beach Conference Center, Stanwood, Washington; in Thief River Falls, Minnesota in 1997; and in 1998 at St. Olaf's College in Northfield, Minnesota, hosted by Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Zumbrota, Minnesota.

In reflecting on the conference



Rev. Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City, OK

after its close, President Lee said, "From the first day I sensed a wonderful spirit. There was an openness to discuss differences. We heard encouraging reports of progress in every area of the work."



— Rev Craig Johnson  
 Editor



## Schools Corporation

David Borg, Cokato, MN  
Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, MN  
Rev. Kenneth Moland, Kirkland, WA  
Rev. Rodger Olson, Fergus Falls, MN  
Bob Bilden, Bagley, MN  
Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, MN  
Kenneth Rolf, McIntosh, MN  
Rev. Emerson Anderson, Cloquet, MN  
Rev. Dan Klug, East Grand Forks, MN  
Rev. Reuben Unseth, Radcliffe, IA  
James Peterson, Colfax, WI  
Norman Chase, Lake Itasca, MN  
1 year term — Rev. Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, MT

**Board of Trustees** — Rev. Gary Jorgenson,  
Ottawa, IL

## Missions Corporation

Ken Williams, Ishpeming, MI  
Rev. Ted Kennedy, Nogales, AZ  
Arley Hartsoch, Ray, ND  
Randy Sommer, Sparland, IL  
Rev. Steve Odegaard, Tioga, ND  
Dr. Peter Dyrud, Plymouth, MN  
Phil Grothe, Thief River Falls, MN  
Mrs. Vince (Eunice) Will, Springfield, MO  
Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, MN  
Rev. Harris Van Someren, Winger, MN  
2 year term — Rev. Ray Klug, Blackduck, MN

**World Missions Committee** — Randy Sommer,  
Sparland, IL

**Home Missions Committee** — Rev. Steven  
Mundfrom, Sebeka, MN and Halvor Knapp, Kandiyohi, MN (4 year term)

### World Missions Committee officers

Chairman — Ken Williams  
Vice chairman — Rev. Ted Kennedy  
Secretary — Randy Sommer

### Home Missions Committee officers

Chairman — Rev. Al Monson  
Vice chairman — Rev. John Skeie  
Secretary — Pastor Henry Mohagen

### Missions Corporation officers

Chairman — Rev. Al Monson  
Vice chairman — Ken Williams  
Secretary — Pastor Henry Mohagen  
Resident Agent — Arley Hartsoch  
Treasurer — Halvor Knapp

**ARC Board** — Rev. Todd Klemme, Wadena, MN

**Commission on Evangelism** — Rev. Steven  
Lombardo, Morris, IL

**Board of Publications and Parish Ed** — Rev.  
Phil Haugen, Culbertson, MT

**Christian Academic Education Board** —  
Rev. Larry Haagen, Buxton, ND; Mrs. Beverly  
Enderlein, Plymouth, MN; Mrs. Avis Dyrud, Moor-  
head, MN — 2 year term

**Youth Board** — Rev. James L. Johnson, Fos-  
ston, MN

**Stewardship Board** — Rev. Mark Antal,  
Leeds, ND

**Pension Board** — Rev. Rodney Johnson, Stan-  
ley, ND

**Budget Analysis Committee** — John  
Schlenk, Brooklyn Park, MN; Joel Quanbeck,  
Fargo, ND

## 1996 Conference Committees

### Committee #1

Albin Haugen, Fargo, ND  
Greg Seba, Camarillo, CA  
Bernie Anthonson, Oceanside, CA  
Arvid Schoeneberg, El Campo, TX  
Rev. Joel Lohafer, Ferndale, WA

### Committee #2

Rev. Michael Crowell, Lake Stevens, WA  
Ron Catlin, Oceanside, CA  
Ivar Berge, Fargo, ND  
Ken Thompson, Nogales, AZ  
Willie Braun, El Campo, TX

### Committee #3

Bud Haugen, Snohomish, WA  
Ken Graham, Camarillo, CA  
John Welch, Amery, WI  
Lynn Walty, Lake Stevens, WA  
Rev. Randy Nelson, El Campo, TX

### Committee #4

John Presteng, Grafton, ND  
Rev. Michael Peterson, Pleasanton, TX  
Kent Quanbeck, McVie, ND  
James McMillan, Oceanside, CA  
Rev. James Rasmussen, Park River, ND

### Committee #5

Ernest Schneider, Wichita Falls, TX  
Rev. Jerome Nikunen, Chillicothe, IL  
Todd Morey, Nogales, AZ  
Rev. Gary Skramstad, Osakis, MN  
Roland Meyer, Paxton, IL

### Colloquy Committee

Rev. Jon Benson, Ortle, SD  
Rev. Amos Dyrud, Minneapolis, MN  
Rev. Craig Wentzel, Hampden, ND  
Rev. Paul Larson, Detroit Lakes, MN  
Rev. Jon Wellumson, Williston, ND

### 1996 AFLC Annual Conference – June 19-23

Warm Beach Christian Camps and Conference  
Center, Stanwood, Washington.  
Hosted by the West Coast District.



**A tribute to  
Rev. Elden Nelson,  
who served as  
AFLC Home  
Missions  
Director for  
19 years and who  
is now serving  
Maranatha Free  
Lutheran, Will-  
mar, Minnesota, a  
home mission  
congregation.**

— by Rev. Alvin Grothe  
Astoria, Oregon  
Home Missions  
Committee member,  
1985-1995

This is no attempt to flatter, but rather to express appreciation and praise to God for the evidence of the Christ-life in a man of integrity.

You see I know this man quite well: three years in seminary together; one year in the West Coast District; and ten years working together in home missions. Elden Nelson and I have prayed together, cried together and laughed together.

Elden, I know you will not get "puffed up" if I publicly thank the Lord and you for your many years of faithful service as Home Mission Director. Thank you for being, by God's grace, an example to many of us as a man of integrity, commitment and sacrificial love of God and fellow men. You and your wife, Faith, have also shown us how to be "given to hospitality."

I am confident that God will use these God-given attributes as you take up your new ministry in the local parish. May God's grace and blessing be yours as you continue in the service of our King!

## A Farmer's Faith

If patience is a virtue...  
I know that that 'tis true  
Then farmers are more  
virtuous,  
During crisis — old or new.

This crisis that we face  
Has hit our county through  
and through.  
We've faced it in the past  
And now it strikes anew.

It's just that now it seems  
We've had more rain than ever.  
"Have you ever seen so much?"  
Old-timers answer, "Never!"

The roads are gone, the fields  
are wet,  
We know if more rain comes,  
That there's a possibility —  
We ain't seen nothing yet!

We pray for warmth,  
We hope for sun,  
Our goal is simply stated,  
"God help our work get done."

But we know this —  
That our work will never be in  
vain,  
For there's a God that we in  
faith  
Believe He feels our pain.

He sees our hurt,  
He knows our fears,  
We can go on  
'cause He is here!

So if there's sun — or yes —  
more rain!  
We'll not give up — He will  
sustain!  
Though flood may put us in a  
rut,  
He'll lift us up — no matter  
what!

— by Rev. Lynn Wilson  
Lake Region Parish  
Roslyn, South Dakota  
(from *The Neighbor*, Sioux Falls, SD)

## **I Enjoy Being a Woman**

We live in an age that glorifies youthfulness. Entertainment and advertisements are geared toward youth and beauty. Attractive clothing, beauty products, edifying opportunities and exercise may all be profitable, but when they cause us to dread old age we are denying the joy of Christian living. The truth is that aging begins from the moment we are born. Body cells die and new ones are formed every day of our lives. Aging is a natural process as the body groans and longs to shed the perishable and put on the imperishable (II Corinthians 5:1-4, I Corinthians 15:53-54).

### **I Enjoy Growing Older**

I was startled to read recently that I should be prepared by 30 for old age! It is the aim of this study to encourage you to prepare to grow older.

1. How can one move joyfully toward older years?

Proverbs 3:1-2

Proverbs 9:11

Proverbs 10:27; 19:23

Exodus 20:12

Ephesians 6:2-3

Psalms 91:14a, 16

2. What attitude does the Bible teach regarding the aged?

Proverbs 16:31; 20:29; 31:25

3. What should my attitude be toward a person older than myself?

Proverbs 23:22 and I Peter 5:5

### **I. Helpful attitudes**

4. Maturity is not necessarily related to age. What is a goal for every Christian?

Colossians 1:28

What will help you toward that goal? Proverbs 22:6

5. Abiding in Christ will help a person achieve maturity. John 15:4-5  
What does this mean?

How is this achieved? John 15:7a, II Peter 1:4, Psalm 130:5

What exhortation is found in Hebrews 5:11-6:1a?

6. Peace of heart and mind is another attitude that will help us enjoy growing older.  
How do we find this kind of peace? Isaiah 26:3; 32:17



An attitude of gratitude will greatly enrich our years and make us a pleasure to be with.

7. Contrast Colossians 3:16b and I Thessalonians 5:18 with the attitude shown in Romans 1:21 and Psalm 50:23.

8. Praise is an attitude to be exercised continually.  
Hebrews 13:15 and Psalm 71:8

Notice the attitude of praise in Psalm 71, the prayer of an older man. Use it for your next private devotional time.

9. Respecting my body and taking care of it is another attitude that will help me enjoy growing older. I Corinthians 6:20 and III John 2  
What does this mean to you?

## II. Special tasks

10. Anna was busy in her older years. What two things did she do that you also can do? Luke 2:36-38

Psalm 71:15,17,18 and 22 clarifies this.

11. One task for the older woman is to tell the next generation about the wonders of God. Joel 1:2-3  
How are you doing that now?

12. What three special tasks are older women given in Titus 2:3-5. Discuss some ways this can happen.

13. An older person is often tempted to "rest now, and let the younger ones take over." What can happen? Psalm 92:12-14



Separation from one's life partner and siblings and friends is likely as we grow older. Our response will depend upon our attitude toward God.

### **III. Abundant comfort**

14. The widow is faced with loneliness that is difficult to compare with any other. The Lord is an abundant Comforter. How is this expressed in Psalm 94:17-19?

15. What is the responsibility of the widow's children? Her church? I Timothy 5:3-8,16 and James 1:27

16. God has a special interest in the widow and her children. What promises do you see in Psalm 68:5, Proverbs 15:25, 23:10-11

17. Grandchildren are a unique comfort for the aged. What does the Bible say? Psalm 128:6; Proverbs 17:6; Ruth 4:14-15

The attitudes you are building today will determine if you enjoy old age or merely endure it. You are never too old to allow the Lord to begin His good work in you. Special tasks of old age will become natural to us if we begin to practice them now.

What kind of an older person do you want to be?

What are you doing to prepare for a good old age?

What could you do today to brighten old age for someone else?

*Next month: I Enjoy My Trials and Troubles*



# Graceful Growth

WMF convention report



National WMF officers (L. to R.) Cheryl Skordahl, secretary; Helen Knapp, 2nd vice president; Bonnie West, 1st vice president; and Karen Knudsvig, executive secretary. (Medical note on Mrs. Knudsvig: after collapsing on Thursday at conference, she was hospitalized and is now home with no after effects except a reduced schedule.)



Mrs. Lorene Winter and Thomas, son of missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel.

**G**od blessed mightily through the Word and song at the Thirty-third Annual Convention of the Women's Missionary Federation at the ARC on June 14 and 15.

## Challenging Messages

Our theme "Graceful Growth" was explored by our morning speaker, Mrs. Michael (Jeannie) Brandt, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Sharing from Titus 1:1 and 3-5, she spoke of the direct scriptural command that women are to help other women; at every age a person is an older woman to some and a younger woman to others. She encouraged the 244 registrants to model Christ's love, be approachable (not too busy), and be a friend to those younger. At the same time, it is important to take the initiative and request time from an older woman to visit informally and gain wisdom from her years of learning.

During the afternoon, Rev. Paul Nash, the new AFLC Home Mis-

sions Director, spoke from II Timothy 1. He stated that the United States is considered the most violent country in the western world and how urgent it is to treasure our children and grandchildren. As was true in Timothy's home, sensitive, godly women are the hearts of homes. If the Christian home fails, the church will cease to exist. Pastor Nash admonished, "Sisters, don't quit! Keep praying, sharing and loving."



Mrs. Jeannie Brandt

## News from the Mission field

Mrs. Jonathan (Tamba) Abel spoke following the Thursday morning breakfast, reading from I Peter 5:7.

Her husband's present assignment in Brazil is to oversee church construction and to help pastor a church in Vitoria. They also have started a little chapel which is growing. A children's club has begun with about 30 in attendance. Since a new government has come to power in Brazil, the program which helped support the homeless children's facilities has been suspended. This makes a financial burden for the missionaries and one of the homes may have to be closed.

When asked what is most needed in the boxes sent to Vitoria, Tamba answered: "Everything is appreciated. Most needed is medium and light weight clothing for all ages along with light weight quilts."

## Attention all WMF organizations

The 1996 WMF Bible Study, *Freedom's Holy Light*, by Mrs. Paul (Mary) Christianson, Fergus Falls, Minnesota will be published in book form! It will not be available in *The Lutheran Ambassador*. The cost will be \$3 including postage, when ordered as a group through the local WMF.

Publishing the study in booklet form means that the answer sheets and expanded study as well as the bibliography will be included. The size of the booklet will be 8 1/2 x 11 inches and it will have a good quality cover designed by Aaron Olson.

Orders for the 1996 study should be sent to the Executive

Secretary, Karen Knudsvig, RR2, Box 11, Buxton, ND 58218. These orders need to be in by September 15, 1995 and they must be pre-paid. The studies will be sent to the local WMF president by December 10, 1995. Do not include a list of names in your order, only the number of studies needed.



At the Thursday morning WMF breakfast.



Mrs. Linda Odegaard, Tioga, North Dakota, and Mrs. Ellen Monseth, Rogers, Minnesota.

Rev. Robert L. Lee, AFLC president, spoke at the Thursday evening Mission Festival, directing us to God's Word in Matthew 28:19-20 for our vision and goals. Greetings were given from Missionary Jonathan Abel, retired missionaries, Rev. George and Helen Knapp and Rev. and Mrs. James Winter, recent short-term missionaries to Brazil.

### Business meeting

During the business meeting, a budget of \$102,000 was approved. Mrs. Ted (Dee) Berkas, Wallace, South Dakota was reelected president. New officers elected were Mrs. Mark (Lori) Molstre, Tioga, North Dakota as second vice president and Mrs. Jon (Jeannette) Benson, Ortleigh, South Dakota as the new treasurer. Changes were proposed to the constitution which will be voted on at the 1996 convention. Additional information about these changes will be published in the next several months.

## Proposed changes in the WMF Constitution and Bylaws

The possibility of restructuring the WMF projects was discussed at the WMF Convention last month. The National WMF Board suggested that instead of ten pro-

jects, the WMF have four missions. The new mission categories would be:

1. Christian Education (formerly Cradle Roll, AFLC Schools, Mission Scholarship and Parish Education)

2. World Missions (formerly Junior Missions and National Workers)

3. Home Missions (formerly Home Missions and Church Extension — another description might be "Missions at Home")

4. General Fund (this remains as it is except that gradual increases were proposed to make it possible to make the position of Executive Secretary a full-time position in the future).

One project, AFLC Capital Investments, would be dropped. All other projects would be regrouped as indicated.

Changes in the WMF Constitu-

It was announced that the 1996 Bible Study entitled "Freedom's Holy Light" by Mrs. Paul (Mary) Christianson will be published in book form and not in *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

All offerings will be distributed to Home Missions (\$2,583.95); WMF General Fund (\$1,911.73) and World Missions (\$3,620.52).

A special thanks to the outgoing national officers, Mrs. Helen Knapp and Mrs. Jan Preitauer! To the ARC staff for the wonderful meals and hospitality, we say "thanks" along with all who participated in the program.

— by Mrs. David (Cheryl) Skordahl  
WMF National Secretary

## WMF CHANGES

tion and Bylaws that would be affected by this restructuring were discussed line by line and word by word. A motion was passed to bring the proposals to the 1996 WMF Convention. The changes will be voted upon at that time. Until acceptance by unanimous vote there will not be restructuring; projects will continue to be supported as they are now.

One of the main reasons for the proposed restructuring is to simplify. Restructuring would also emphasize the importance of personal involvement as well as financial contributions for local WMF members.

Christian Education and General Fund would be promoted three months each year; Home Missions for two months and World Missions for four months.

The project of Honorary Membership which now supports National Workers was discussed in detail because the use of pins would be affected by the restructuring.



Mrs. Dee Berkas.

turing. Members would still be honored by a local WMF when appropriate, but it was proposed that pins might also be purchased for personal use.

A copy of the proposed changes to the WMF Constitution and Bylaws may be obtained from Executive Secretary Karen Knudsvig or from the local WMF president. These proposals will be discussed throughout the year prior to the actual vote at the June 1996 WMF National Convention.

— by Mrs. Dee Berkas  
President National WMF

## AFLBS dorm renovation underway

The entire women's dorm at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School will be recarpeted, new lighting installed and new mattresses will be purchased. The resident head's apartment will be moved to the first floor, next to the main entrance where the dean's office formerly was located. This is the first major work done in the dorm rooms since the building was first used in 1968!

The change in the men's dorm will be construction of a new apartment for the resident head on the first floor, next to the main entrance. This will increase the capacity of the men's dorm by about eight beds. The dorm has been filled to capacity in recent years.

If you or your congregation feel led to contribute to this project, please designate your gift for "Dorm Remodeling" AFLBS, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441.

## Correction of AFLBS summer team pictures

On page 20, June 13, 1995 The Lutheran Ambassador, the photos of the AFLBS Ambassadors

and AFLBS Majesty teams were switched. Pictured below are the corrected picture and captions.



**AFLBS Ambassadors** (Back L. to R.) Jeremy Erickson, Badger, MN; Jason Sanford, Story City, IA (Front) Brenda Salvevold, Battle Lake, MN; Joanna Drybourgh, Fordville, ND and Rachel Fugleburg, Fargo, ND.



**AFLBS Majesty** (Back L. to R.) John Halverson, Strum, WI; Eric Rasmussen, Park River, ND (Front) Amy Jo Hill, Radcliffe, IA; Melissa Strand, Wahpeton ND and Emmy Schroeder, Valley City, ND.

One of the keys to the ministry that my predecessor Elden Nelson has had is that he has chosen the narrow road, he has not been afraid to stand on God's Word, he has been consistent in his Christian walk.

Another key is the prayer support he and his wife have received from their parents. Elden's father, who is now a widower, has been very committed to being in prayer for his son and his ministry. When you have prayer cover such as Elden has had, God is going to do great things. Elden's position has not been easy, but he has continued to look to Christ through it all.

I personally feel very inadequate for the job of home missions director, but by God's grace the home missions department of the AFLC will continue to go forward. I look for great things to happen in home missions. Doors are opening east to west, north to south.

Home missions starts in the home. Strong families and strong homes lead to strong congregations.

I claim the Bible verse, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20), for myself and my family as we step into this position. I

## Thoughts from the new Home Missions Director



— by Rev. Paul Nash

am grateful that the Lord is faithful.

We need prayer. On a personal level, please pray for protection for myself and my family. On a ministry level, home missions is making some hard decisions: where do we go from here? how can we best support our churches? where can we be best used? where do we plant new churches? We need wisdom from the Lord.

## New mission start in Wisconsin

A new AFLC congregation is coming to life in Superior, Wisconsin. Our Redeemer's Free Lutheran Church is the name chosen by the new group worshipping in the Challenge Center, 39 North 25th St. in Superior.

The congregation is being served by Rev. S. Jerome Elness, a former missionary in Taiwan and Hong Kong. He has also ministered in congregations in the United States.

Often there are Chinese students at the nearby universities and other local Chinese residents attending the worship services. For most Chinese from the People's Republic of China, it is their first Christian worship experience ever. One young Chinese lady who had just arrived from China, was recently asked if she



Pictured are some of the regular worshipers at Our Redeemer, Superior, Wisconsin.

had ever attended a Christian worship service. She replied, "No, this is my first time and I am anticipating it very much. I'm excited about this opportunity!"

She was pleased to receive a Chinese/English New Testament.

After the second time she attended she commented, "People who believe in Jesus are so loving and so kind to others. Why is

that? What is it that makes them do that?" What a wonderful opportunity to share the love of Christ (II Corinthians 5:14 and Matthew 25:40).

Your prayer support for the ministry and outreach of Our Redeemer's Free Lutheran Church in Superior is appreciated!

— by Rev. Jerome Elness  
Superior, Wisconsin

## More than paper

Dear editor,

Recently I had the fun of spending an hour with an eighth grade class where we discussed what made World War II and actions of war since then significant to them. They had seen most of the movies and TV specials on the 50th anniversary of World War II. They expressed real concern about the nations that had since come into existence and the meaning of these emerging entities for them (the class) today. Their thought was that the emerging people had all the democratic documents but somehow did not seem able to get the program off and running.

Some of the children present had military or civilian support parents and had served world wide. My hope is that these children are symbolic of the young

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

people coming down the road in our public life. They presented a very real question: The people have the documents; why are they having problems?

How would you answer them? Possibly in the words of Margaret Thatcher: "Democracy is not a piece of paper but it is a lived experience gained by mutual exchange of ideas and actions."

One student asked a question for which I had no good answer: "When did we begin saying that someone was African-American or German-American or Jewish-American — rather than being an American? (The student had lived in the United Kingdom and was always identified as being an American.) Is it more than a piece of paper?"

I returned home and dug out my U.S. passport and looked at it. I remembered the envy in the eyes of those who did not have one. More than paper? Yeah. It seemed to almost glow as I held it and remembered what it cost to have it.

Then I took out our Constitution. Our Judeo-Christian Scripture teaches that we are to render unto Caesar all that is his and to our God all that is His. In both we have been blessed with more than a piece of paper. We give those blessings meaning and worth by what we do with them.

I thank those students for making me study again that piece of paper called our Constitution. Do you have one to read and study?

— Francis E. Jeffery, CH,  
Lt Col, USAF, Ret.  
San Jose, California

## Old hoaxes never die

Dear editor,

An old hoax rears its ugly head once again. Rumors continue to spread that Proctor & Gamble is associated with the Church of Satan. A parishioner recently gave me a copied sheet with the following information:

The president of Proctor & Gamble appeared on the Phil Donahue show on March 1, 1995. He announced that, due to the openness of our society, he was coming out of the closet about his association with the Church of Satan ... Anyone interested in this topic should send \$3.00 to: Donahue Transcripts, Journal Graphics, 267 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10007 (typed exactly as it appears on the sheet with errors).

The Lutheran Ambassador exposed this and other hoaxes several years ago. Not knowing if this was more of the same or a new situation, I made several phone calls to verify the above information.

I talked to the Program Department at Phil Donahue (1-212-664-6513 — if you want to spend the money to verify what I discovered). I learned that the subject of March 1, 1995 was not Procter & Gamble and the Church of Satan, the Journal Graphics address is wrong and \$3.00 does not cover the cost of a transcript.

### Observations

Will Christians do anything to get people active in their churches? Spreading false information is justified in their minds because it gets people active and "doing something for Jesus." I am dismayed that Christians will spread untruth to keep their pews filled.

It is important to check it out. I spent an hour calling the local television station, checking for phone numbers and making calls to New York. But I did get the information needed to dispel the lie.

I learned from all those with

whom I talked that very few people verify these vicious rumors. Proctor & Gamble is not supporting the Church of Satan.

### Why do we continue to feed these rumors?

I believe most Americans dislike big corporations, yet corporations are greatly responsible for our comfortable lifestyles. White collar crime against corporations is many times greater than street crime — although I cannot find the actual statistics at this moment.

I believe that there is no conspiracy in which a dozen or so people are seeking to control the world. Yes, the devil does work in the world. He gives us greed. If there is any conspiracy at all, it is the conspiracy of greed. Merging of corporations and controlling of markets are the tools of greed. And the devil loves to stimulate greed in our own lives and hearts.

When Christians are duped into falling for such rumors, I am



# God's people and a bomb

Last April you likely watched in horror with the rest of the nation as an act of terrorism in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma killed 168 people in the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. In the midst of that tragedy I came to minister to the soldiers, civilians, and family members of the Army's Oklahoma Recruiting Battalion.

Our headquarters had a total of eight people killed including two soldiers, five civilian employees and a three-year-old daughter of a soldier who had just arrived that morning to begin working in Oklahoma. We had five others who were seriously injured and were hospitalized plus another thirteen who were treated and released.

concerned. Are we falling for the devil's plan? Last year the rumor was circulated again that the FCC is planning to remove religious programming from the airwaves. That rumor has been and continues to be disproved. Yet it lingers. Have we become so insecure that we are willing to jump on any cause that excites and titillates us?

In the Psalms we hear: "Children, come and listen to me. I will teach you to worship the LORD. You must do these things to enjoy life and have many happy days. You must not say evil things, and you must not tell lies. Stop doing evil and do good. Look for peace and work for it" (34:11-14, NCV).

When we tell lies about others to make ourselves strong, we are very, very weak. Problems abound in this world! Why do Christians spend so much time on problems that are based on rumors?

— Rev. Roger L. Tappert  
St. Mark's Lutheran  
Indianapolis, Indiana

The long trip from San Antonio to Oklahoma City was made even longer because of a storm system over Dallas. The Dallas airport was unusually quiet and the silence on the plane was broken only by the young lady who sat next to me and was expressing her fears to me about going as a reporter to cover the deaths of young children. She also had a young daughter.

When I finally arrived later that day at the recruiting station which was the new temporary headquarters, the enormity of the destruction was beginning to sink in. Later that night, I assisted in the first of seven death notifications. Two young boys would not see their mother again.

The entire city seemed under siege as police cars, National Guard vehicles, emergency equipment and barricades dominated the scene. When I made pastoral calls in the hospitals it was frequently under the escort of a security guard as certain unscrupulous individuals tried to invade the privacy of the patients for a news story.

It is not unusual to hear people visiting and even occasionally laughing in a hospital, but Oklahoma City hospitals were deathly quiet. People were clinging to each other and anxious for someone to pray. It seemed as though small children were in every hallway, but not to play or laugh. Their heads were covered with large white bandages and their faces expressed pain, fear and terror.

As the bodies were painstakingly recovered and identified, the funerals followed. It was not unusual to have over a hundred cars in a procession to the cemetery and all of the oncoming traffic stop, people cease from yard

work, a mailman stand at attention and individuals shedding tears for others whom they had never met.

It is never easy to be with families during a death. What do you say to five children who lost their mother over a senseless act? How can anyone help the oldest boy who had his twelfth birthday on that awful day?

Most of our people belonged to a local church and their pastors conducted the funerals. I assisted one pastor by conducting the graveside internment with military honors for one of our soldiers. In almost every service, the gospel was presented in a very clear manner.

After the last person was recovered and her funeral had been conducted, I officiated at a memorial service for all eight victims. We worked closely with Tinker Air Force Base and their chaplains graciously let us use their chapel. The memorial service had something beyond the beautiful flowers, tributes and playing of taps. We were thankful that many of our pastors, congregations, Bible school and seminary students were praying. The presence of God was in that chapel.

What does one say in the midst of evil which destroys not only buildings, but robs children and adults of life? I remembered what the late Corrie Ten Boom said when she was questioned about why all of the evil happened during the Holocaust. She said she did not understand, but she clung to the truth that "no pit is so deep, but God's love is deeper still."

I can not explain all of the reasons. I do not know why such twisted, perverted minds can justify such wanton destruction. But

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## Thanks and welcome

*The Lutheran Ambassador* would like to express a sincere thank you to Pastor Martin Christensen of Elbow, Saskatchewan for pointing us to Christ while serving as the writer for our "An Encouraging

Word" column during the first half of the year. With this issue we welcome Rev. Joel Lohafer of Ferndale, Washington who will share from God's Word in that same column during the second half of the year.

### In Memory

L. Marvin Quanbeck, 69, McVile, North Dakota passed away suddenly on May 2, 1995. Funeral services were held on May 5 at New Luther Valley Free Lutheran where he had been an active member all his life and had served as deacon, trustee and Sunday school teacher.

Mr. Quanbeck was born January 12, 1926 near McVile to parents, Ludvig and Emma Quanbeck. He graduated from Oak Grove Lutheran High School, Fargo, North Dakota, and attended the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He married Charlotte Miller in 1957 at Binford, North Dakota. They farmed near McVile until retiring in 1991.

He is survived by his wife; four sons, Joel, Fargo; Rev. Lloyd, Northome, MN; Mark, McVile; Rodney, Park River, ND; two daughters, Marian (Mrs. Kevin) Christopherson, New Hope, MN; and Beth (Mrs. Scot) Skogerboe, Richfield, MN; five grandchildren; two brothers, Kent and Lee, both of McVile, and one sister, Ardis (Mrs. Gordon) Twedt, McHenry, ND. He was preceded in death by his parents and infant triplet sisters.

All six children are graduates of AFLBS. Rev. Lloyd Quanbeck serves Hope and Bethesda Lutheran Churches at Northome and Mizpah, MN. Marian directs the AFLBS Choral Club.

### BOMB

I can tell hurting and broken people of a Savior who loves them and who has promised that He "will never leave them."

The past weeks have continued to be filled with counseling, encouragement and prayer. God's hand was evident in sending not just any team of psychologists, but several Air Force and Army doctors who told me of their own strong faith in Christ! AFLC Pastor Jerry Peterson of Oklahoma City and Pastor Bob Rieth of Media Fellowship International have both provided pastoral care for myself. Pastor Rieth provided a hospitality suite and a worship service for the media, but I felt that maybe the Lord sent him to minister to me. Two other chap-

lains and two chaplain assistants from our Recruiting Command also flew in for brief periods to give assistance.

The experts in post-traumatic stress disorder claim that the devastation from the bombing may continue for several years. Lives will never again be the same. Some may be so physically injured so as never to go back to their old jobs. Others have various emotional and psychological problems.

Please continue to pray that God's healing in body, mind and spirit would be taking place in Oklahoma City!



—by Chaplain Timothy K.  
Skramstad  
San Antonio, Texas

**Tucson, Arizona** — Living Faith Free Lutheran has enjoyed a special outreach ministry for more than ten years. Once a month members of the congregation conduct a worship service at the Tucson Gospel Rescue Mission. Living Faith members and friends also volunteer to help with mailings and donate food, clothes and furniture. They are the only Lutheran church participating in services at the mission.

**Mekinock, North Dakota** — Middle Grove Free Lutheran Church will celebrate its 110th anniversary on July 23, 1995. Rev. J. Christian Andrews, Larimore, North Dakota is the pastor.

**Rev. and Mrs. James Winter** have applied through the Canadian government for papers to return to the Brazil mission field. In the meantime they are living in McVile, North Dakota where Pastor Winter is the interim pastor of New Luther Valley and Bethany of nearby Binford, until September 1, 1995.

**Salmon Arm, British Columbia** — Emmanuel Free Lutheran has moved their worship services to a church building in Canoe and has been encouraged with increased attendance at the worship services. Rev. Kelley Henning serves the congregation.

**Frontier, Saskatchewan** — Bethel Lutheran began a new Junior youth group (grades 7-8). It becomes the congregation's third group along with the Trailblazers (grades 5-6) and Senior Youth (grade 9 and up). About 60 kids participate each Friday night. Pastor David Hesje serves the congregation.

**Vernon, British Columbia** — Living Word Lutheran poured the foundation for their new church building on May 8, 1995.

\* The above news from Canada was taken from *The Canadian Ambassador*, published quarterly by Pastor David Hesje, Frontier, Sask.

## PEOPLE AND PLACES



**Eben Junction, Michigan** — Pictured are nine of the 16 new members recently received at Calvary Free Lutheran. Pastor John Allstaedt is shown standing in the center, back row.



**McIntosh, Minnesota** — Pictured is Bob Hulst, president of Mt. Carmel Free Lutheran presenting a letter of commendation to Joshua Roed for 12 years of perfect attendance in Sunday School.

### Congratulations

Celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary on May 27, was **Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Markuson**, of Hauge Lutheran in Kenyon, Minnesota. They reside together at the Kenyon Sunset Home.

Celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on June 23, was **Rev. John and Mildred Strand** of Remer, Minnesota. Rev. Strand was the first president of the AFLC.

**Rev. Clyde Grier**, Milford, Illinois was placed on the regular Clergy Roster of the AFLC at the June Coordinating Committee meeting.

**Rev. David Hinrichs**, Everett, Washington has resigned as pastor of Calvary Lutheran, where he has served since 1991, in order to accept the call to serve Abiding Faith Lutheran in Ortonville, Minnesota. He expects to begin his new ministry in August.

**New addresses** — The Old Testament professor at the AFLC schools, **Rev. Jerry Holmaas**, is now living at 7809 Irving Ave. N, Brooklyn Park, MN 55444; (612) 585-9099. **Rev. Jerry Moan**, the New Testament teacher at the schools, is now living at 9201 Cain Road, Hamel, MN 55340; (612) 420-3396.

AFLTS graduate of 1995, **Rev. Randy Nelson**, was ordained on June 11 at Fox River Lutheran, Norway, Illinois, and is now living at 2802 Meadow Lane, El Campo, Texas, 77437; (409) 543-1843, home; 496-2536, office. The other May graduate from AFLTS was **Rev. Earl Korhonen**, who was ordained on June 11, in Cloquet, Minnesota. His temporary address is Monroe Free Lutheran, P.O. Box 68, Monroe, Washington, 98272.

**Rev. John Mundfrom**, Bismarck, North Dakota, has resigned as pastor of Calvary Lutheran in order to accept the call to serve the home mission congregation, Prince of Peace Lutheran in Beulah, North Dakota. He has served the Bismarck congregation since 1993 and later began serving the Beulah church part time. He begins his full-time ministry in Beulah in August.

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences — January 1 - May 31, 1995

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN MAY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	
General Fund . . . . .	\$268,591.00	\$19,247.64	\$91,682.87	34
Seminary . . . . .	163,200.00	7,716.73	51,936.27	32
Bible School . . . . .	244,800.00	11,750.04	65,179.51	27
Home Missions. . . . .	335,040.00	20,163.24	114,898.39	34
World Missions. . . . .	359,927.00	24,289.30	121,540.81	34
Capital Investment . . . . .	35,425.00	1,318.72	4,273.88	12
Parish Education . . . . .	67,868.00	5,123.29	23,030.29	34
Church Extension . . . . .	10,000.00	948.67	4,381.33	44
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,484,851.00</b>	<b>\$90,557.63</b>	<b>\$476,923.35</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>TOTALS 1994 . . . . .</b>	<b>1,422,890.00</b>	<b>94,764.44</b>	<b>433,188.78</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Goal 42%</b>				

## Church attendance remains stable but other faith measures decline

Christianity is a faith at risk, according to a new nationwide survey conducted by the Barna Research Group. Examining 13 measures used annually to evaluate the health and stability of evangelical Christianity in America, the organization reported that three measures experienced a decline from the previous year; nine were statistically unchanged; and just one measure improved.

The three measures which declined were Bible reading (which reached a new low in the nine years Barna has studied it), adult Sunday school attendance (also setting a record low), and identification as a Protestant.

The nine measures which have remained statistically unchanged in the past year were church attendance, church volunteerism, four measures of belief in Christian doctrines, the proportion of adults who are born again Christians, the proportion who are evangelical Christians, and the percentage who embrace a biblical definition of God.

The one measure which showed an increase was the number of adults involved in a small group which meets for Bible study, prayer or Christian fellowship, other than a Sunday school class or 12-step group. The upturn in small group involvement stemmed a two-year decline.

One new measure was added which produced an astounding result. More than two out of every five adults (42 percent) contended that when Jesus Christ was on earth He committed sins. Amazingly, more than one-quarter of all born again Christians (27 per-

cent) and church attenders (30 percent) agreed with this view.

### Among the survey's findings:

\* Four years ago, 53 percent of the people attending church services on a given weekend were not born again Christians. That proportion has dropped to 45 percent. This suggests that churches are being less effective in reaching people who don't share core Christian beliefs.

\* Baby Boomers are the generation most likely to hold "born again" beliefs. However, they are also increasingly inactive in their faith, demonstrating declining levels of church attendance, Sunday school participation and Bible reading.

\* When comparable measures are evaluated between 1991 and 1995, one measure has remained stable, but five have experienced decline and none have shown increased strength.

\* Although evangelicals get a lot of media attention, they represent only about six percent of the adult population. This is a 50 percent decrease in magnitude since 1992.

\* Church attendance, which crested at 49 percent per Sunday in 1991, has leveled off at 42 percent, the lowest level since Barna began tracking this in 1985.

\* Bible reading during the week is lowest among the Baby Bust generation. Currently under 30 years of age, only 21 percent of the Busters read the Bible during the week, just half the level of people 65 or older.

\* Only half of the people who attend a church service during the week also read the Bible during the week, other than while they are at church.

George Barna, president of the company which conducted the research, found the results sobering. "I believe we are at a critical crossroads for Christianity in America," he explained. "The survey revealed that millions of adults are frantically searching for something to believe in, for values to live by and for relationships that make life worthwhile. Although Christian churches in America spent more than \$40 billion on domestic ministry in 1994, not much new ground was gained. A mass movement cannot sustain its strength amidst public indifference to the goals, demands and products of that movement. The next several years may well determine the vitality of the Christian faith in this nation for the next several decades."

(The above story used by permission of the EP News Service)

### Word Power Sunday set for September 24

Aurora, IL — "Word Power" is this year's theme for Bible Translation Sunday, set for September 24, 1995. Lutheran Bible Translators invites all Lutherans to give God thanks for the ministry of Scripture translation with a special observance, or by incorporating this theme into regular services.

User-friendly materials for help in planning special Bible studies, worship services, and education programs for adults, youth and children will be available in August. Special Bible readings will be available. Materials are not dated so they may be used at another time, or ideas may be interspersed throughout the year.

## **I don't have time**

Dave Lee was only 39.

He was one of the most respected Christian workers in our community. He headed up the Campus Crusade for Christ staff at the University of Oregon. God had already touched many lives through him. The future looked even brighter.

The cancer that ended his life didn't seem to care about all that.

He was only 39.

I expect to have 50 more years of serving the Lord, but that isn't guaranteed. The time I have left may be short. I don't want to waste it.

I hope that the many, far too many, people in my community and throughout the world who are lost and apart from Christ will have plenty more days and more opportunities to come to Jesus. The reality is that an abundance of days for all of them is not guaranteed and is not likely. In the scope of all eternity, for me and for them our time on this earth is short.

"What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (James 4:14, NIV). "The time is short. ... this world in its present form is passing away" (I Corinthians 7:29,31, NIV).

The Bible makes clear that time is short and not to be wasted. "Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15,16, NIV).

I do not have time to waste on foolish arguments. Far too much time that could be spent by Christians reaching out to the lost is spent fighting about things

with no eternal consequences. I do not have time to argue with my fellow members of the family of God over little matters. I have big matters to take care of. There is truth to proclaim and souls to be saved.

I do not have time to attack fellow members of the body of Christ over every little error they commit. Certainly I need to take time to correct them when they are in serious and dangerous error. Sins need to be lovingly, patiently and gently pointed out. Sin needs to be attacked. Sinners, however, need to be forgiven and invited into the Kingdom.

I want to be so busy building people up in the Lord that I don't have time to tear them down. I want to be so busy attacking the evil one who is opposed to the Kingdom that I don't have time to attack those who are in the Kingdom. I want to be so busy worshipping and adoring Jesus that I don't have time to notice every little thing my brothers and sisters in the Lord do that I may disagree with and think is wrong.

My time may be short. Yours may be as well. The opportunities we have for proclaiming the good news, and the lost have for hearing it are quickly diminishing. Let us not waste the time pursuing things that have no value or trying to win battles that bring no real victory.

Let us be busy doing the work that matters. We have truth to declare and invitations to extend. The world needs to hear today of the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us be busy announcing far and wide that wonderful news.

## **How is it with you and the Lord?**

A speaker I heard recently reminded his listeners that "just because you stand in a garage, it doesn't make you a car." In a similar way, just because you go to church and other "Christian" kind of places and do "Christian" kind of things, it doesn't make you a Christian.

Sadly, many people in our world are assuming they are Christians because they are standing in the "right" places, making the "right" sounds and doing the "right" things. The problem is they are not really right with God. They are like Nicodemus in John 3. They have the appearance of spirituality, but they do not have the Spirit of God within. "Jesus declared, 'I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'" (John 3:3, NIV).

Because of the outward appearance of someone's life we can mistakenly develop a false contentment

about where they stand with God. It is a grave error to think that because a person goes to church, acts rather spiritual and leads a good moral life, we don't need to have a concern for the state of their soul. They are still sinners in need of a Savior.

We must not give others a false assurance that is based on what they have done instead of what God has done. Assurance comes when our faith is not in our works but in God's work of sending His Son to die for our sins and rise again from the dead.

What matters is not just a good outward appearance, but a right inner condition — a living, personal relationship with Jesus. It is nice if they do the right deeds, but it is much, much better if they are in a right relationship with God.

Dear reader, it is great if you are going to church and doing a lot of good works but what matters the most is: how is it with you and the Lord today?



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## BUILDING THE BASE

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### The Paraclete

Of the three persons of the triune God, the Holy Spirit is the one we comprehend least. We think we understand God the Father, because He is called "father" — a term that, correctly or incorrectly, has great meaning to us. The Son, we identify with Jesus. But the Holy Spirit? After all He is a "spirit," and we do not understand much about the spirit world because we cannot see or touch it.

Ironically, in spite of our intellectual inability to connect with the Holy Spirit, He is the person of the Godhead that relates most intimately with us. The Spirit of God works with us at the very core of our beings — in our spirits.

The Holy Spirit is not an "it," but a "He." He is not a mysterious impersonal force, a power or a will that emanates from God. He is God! Neither is He less God than the Father and the Son. He is equal with them and involved with them in all things. But we know less about Him because it is not His role to glorify Himself. Jesus says, "(The Spirit) 'will bring glory to me' and 'will testify about me.'" His goal and will is not to lead us to Himself, but to Jesus, our Redeemer.

To accomplish this purpose, the Spirit is involved in spiritual

open heart surgery. This surgery is of two types: resuscitation and reconstruction.

With the instrument of God's Word, the Spirit seeks to make the heart that is spiritually dead towards God, begin to pulse and flow with the love of God. He makes us, who are by nature enemies of God, to become God's children. By His effort, we who are bent and warped away from God spiritually are made to love and desire God. He resuscitates us, bringing us from spiritual death to eternal and abundant life through the new birth.

Once we are revived, He begins to reconstruct our sin-deformed hearts; remaking them in the Creator's design. The reconstruction is a continuous process; it lasts as long as we live in this world. Day by day, using the "Sword of the Spirit," He cuts away at the hard calluses and scars, making our hearts more and more pliable to God's will.

Unlike other surgeons, who stand outside us and reach into us to operate; the Holy Spirit does His work from the inside out. He comes inside us and lives there. From the Greek we get the name Paraclete, which signifies this closest of relationships which the Christian has with the Spirit.

This name means "the one who walks beside." Our various English versions translate this name as Comforter, Counselor, Advocate and Helper.

The Paraclete is that person of the Godhead who comes to live inside us forever. He is our constant companion. As such He is always there in all our needs and situations. He teaches and corrects us. He comforts and encourages us. He strengthens and empowers us to do what we could never do ourselves.

He gives each of us some ability we can use for God's glory and the good of others. And He organizes these spiritual gifts so that we each are dependent on the others, yet we each have something to contribute to the common good. The Church is the domain of the Spirit. He brings people into it through the new birth. He supernaturally empowers those who teach, preach, give, administer, comfort, etc. He calls full-time workers and He places them where He wants them to serve.

All spiritual life and all spiritual growth is the results of the Spirit's work. He brings us the Christ. He keeps us in Christ. And He walks with us all the way.

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