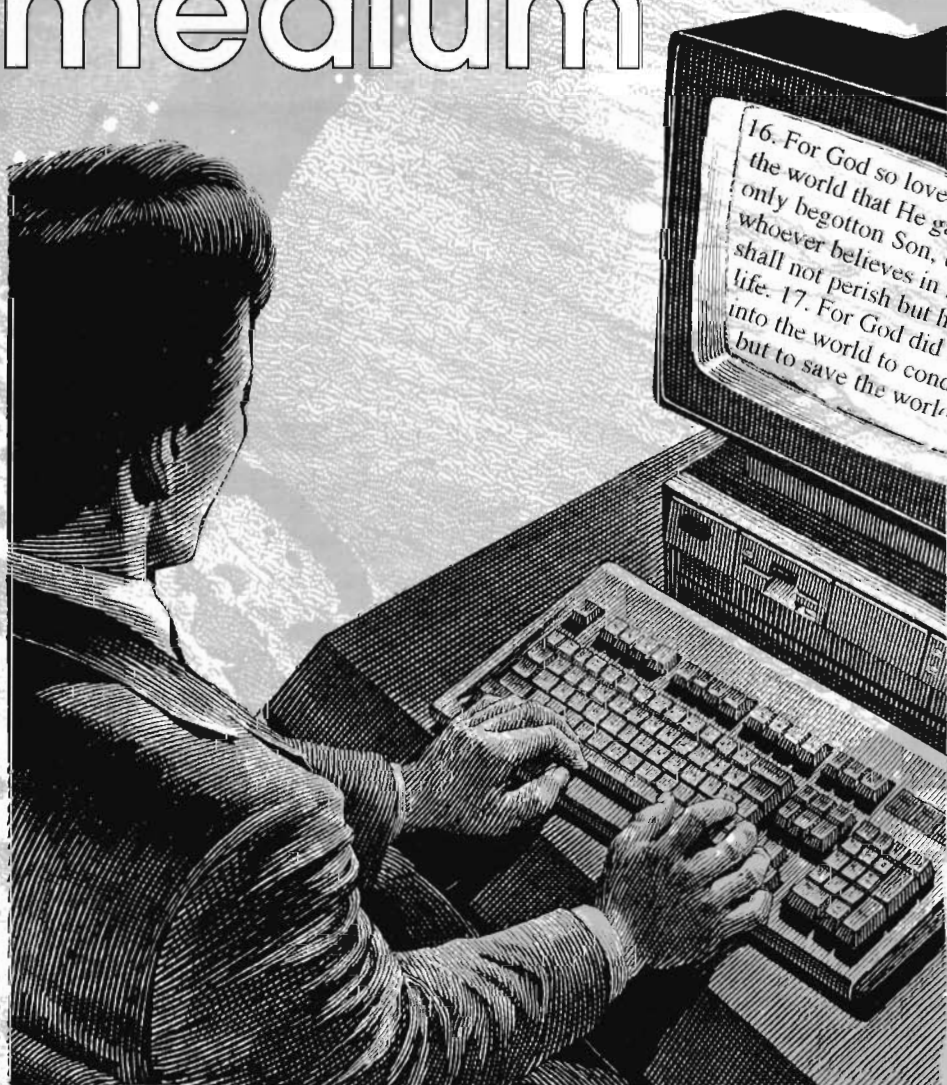


The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

July 2, 1996

Seize the medium



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Hope in a sea of despair

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. (Psalm 42:5)

Do you feel hopeful when you read, watch and hear the daily news? We live in a world filled with fear, despair, depression and hopelessness.

A short time ago some secular psychologists and psychiatrists concluded that the reason for the shocking increase of suicides among teenagers was hopelessness. They shared no remedy!

The absence of hope is despair. In despair, people feel no remedy exists. They see their life as beyond help and efforts to bring improvement as futile, vain and useless. The result is a downcast soul.

David was falling prey to this kind of attitude when he was pressed, tried and threatened from without and within. He asked his own soul, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" He must have felt tempted to despair of hope and help. Jeremiah and other prophets, the apostles and Jesus Himself must have all been tempted in a similar fashion considering what they each faced.

Friend, are you tempted to despair? To be cast down because circumstances seem hopeless, irreversible and without remedy? If we anchor our hope on the transitory things of this world, then we shall surely despair. But praise God, there is hope!

David did not end with a cast down, disquieted soul. He knew the source of true hope, a sure hope and he speaks to his

soul again with the good news, "hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."

Despair, despondency and hopelessness ought to be cast on the Lord and put under the blood of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ, along with all our other sins.

Hope is one of the three enduring graces. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity" (I Corinthians 13:13). Christian hope abides. It endures because it has solid ground. It is grounded in God's Word (Psalm 119:74,81; Romans 15:4), and in Christ (I Timothy 1:1).

We can, along with the hymn writer sing, "Our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness." Hope is our helmet of salvation (I Thessalonians 5:8), and "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Hebrews 6:18,19).

In all the trying circumstances of life, where is your hope anchored, friend? In things on earth that will pass away or in things eternal: in God, His Word and in Christ our Lord?

If you are lost and without hope in this world today, don't despair. Repent and turn to the loving, forgiving Savior, Jesus Christ. While there is still breath, there is hope for the penitent. He invites you to come. "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). In Christ we have a sure hope, a "living hope" (I Peter 1:3) because Jesus lives.



— Pastor Alvin Grothe
Asotria, Oregon

SOUND BITES

"Cyberspace belongs to God, and God's people need to be there. The church needs more Internet saints who purposefully and prayerfully use the new medium selflessly in service of the kingdom of God."



—Quentin Schultze

"Recent surveys indicate that some 38 million people around the world currently have access to the Internet. Experts say the numbers continue to jump exponentially every month."



"There's a lot of unrest in the mainline denominations. People are looking for alternatives. Evangelical churches need to use the Internet to introduce themselves to these people."

—Terry Mattingly

"There is the downside of the Internet. Let's start with cyber-zombies, the growing population of glazed-eyed addicts who prefer the flickering screen of virtual reality to actual reality, who can't get along with people in person but who thrive on Internet relationships."



"Colleges are reporting a swelling number of these furtive souls, some of them disastrously neglecting academic responsibilities and traditional social life in favor of the one dimensional on-screen life. In domestic settings, the Internet addict is a new class of matrimonial dropout."

—Daniel Greenberg

"I believe this revolution is as important as Gutenberg's invention of movable type, which led to mass printing and vernacular Bibles. If Christians do not seize the new technologies with salt and light, they will simply be turning the new media over to various principalities and powers."

—Quentin Schultze



"Speed the Need" notifies email subscribers of urgent prayer requests from the mission field. Wycliffe Bible Translators uses cyberspace to aid in Bible translation. Linguists in remote areas of the world can email translated texts to colleagues for checking and consultation."





Not long ago the only web I knew of was a spider web. I had heard of fishing nets, butterfly nets, and hair nets: but what is this Internet?

Spider webs and fishing nets are probably good mental pictures for us to use in describing the Internet and the World Wide Web. Roads allow us to travel anywhere across the country. They cover the land like a net or a web. Phone lines have allowed us to communicate across the street and around the world because of the phone network that is in place. The Internet is the newest web that is being used on a daily basis. Instead of allowing travel, or passing a voice message, it connects computers together and allows them to share information.

As a recent subscriber to the Internet I have been overwhelmed with the wealth of information that is available through this computer connection. My use started simple. I wanted the ability to send articles like this directly to *The Lutheran Ambassador* staff without them retyping it. But more was available: resources for any topic, educational software, college courses, question and answer forums, library card catalogs, encyclopedias, movies, out-of-print books, Christian apologetics, a national phone listing,

Computer technology —

In the beginning, God created man in His image and placed him in the garden of Eden to be steward over all. He could eat of all foods but was commanded to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). The serpent deceived Adam and Eve to disobey God with the promise that eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would be an enlightening thing to do; their eyes would be opened and they would be like God (Genesis 3:5). The temptation was the allurements to be like God; to have unlimited access to knowledge and power.

A story of human nature with a similar ending is found in Genesis 11, the story of the tower of Babel. The people apparently had a proud spirit that led them to build a city and a tower with its top in the heavens

(Genesis 11:4). The purpose was to make a name for themselves, and to prevent them from being scattered across the earth.

God observed them and noticed that they were a people with one language. Their plan, if completed, would lead to exceeding human power, focusing on man, man, man and de-emphasizing humility and obedience to God. This allurements to gain knowledge and power for human purposes is the sin of competition with God and is congruent with the story found in the initial deception of man in the garden.

The tower of Babel, a symbol of man's pride and achievement, was brought down by God, their languages of communication were confused and the people scattered across the earth (Genesis 11:7-9). Today,

newspapers, and much more. The information available has grown more than a hundred times this past year.

A relatively new group to the Internet is the churches. They have joined to make information available to their members and for the curious seekers. Some congregations have signed on individually and others as church bodies. Often they will have a welcoming page with a statement of their beliefs. They will list resources available through their schools or course listings that are being offered. Some church bodies have listed all of the churches in their denomination so that when someone moves they can find an existing church with the same affiliation.

There have been a number of requests for the AFLC to have a connection on the Internet. At this present time we are developing some of the initial pages for that connection. The first page includes a statement of faith for the AFLC and a button to go to information from each department. Parish Education will have a list of all resources available through that department. The Bible School will include their catalog of courses and possibly a listing of the books in the library. World Missions will include recent letters from the mis-

Entry level help for Christians on the World Wide Web

You may receive the Internet for Christians Newsletter via e-mail. This is distributed without charge and is published by Gospel Communications Network. This introduces the Internet user to vast Christian online resources. To receive, simply send the following message: SUBSCRIBE, your e-mail address, send to IFC-REQUEST@GOSPEL.COM.NET

sionaries. Home Missions will have a list of their congregations and specific needs that they face. Youth Ministries is publicizing up-coming events and a section for new ideas to try with your youth.

The simplest way to make this information available on the Internet is to purchase space on a local Internet provider. They have several computers on the Internet that store your information and give other computers access to it. The cost of renting this computer space in Minneapolis is about \$50 per month. **Our Internet address is <http://www.minn.net/aflc.org>.**

Much could be made available. It will take some time to implement all of it. However, as these areas are expanded this should be a great benefit for all of us.



—Pastor
Kevin Olson
AFLC Youth
Ministries Director

the new tower of Babel?

the computer may be considered a symbol of man's achievement that also has the potential for ungodly pride and power. The networking effect of the computer reverses the scattering of the peoples as one can reach out and touch someone on the other side of the world in a matter of seconds in an unifying language. The Internet provides unprecedented access to knowledge and services never before seen in the world. Has man finally managed to rebuild the tower of Babel?

The technology created by man is in itself not sinful. God uses technology to accomplish His purposes in spite of sinful man. He enabled Noah to use the technology of his day to make the ark. The Romans built roads that carried evangelists of the gospel. Gutenberg invented a printing press that accelerated the printing of the

written word of God. I believe though, that the heart attitude of the user and the use of technology can easily lead to the elevating and extolling of self. The throne of power is sought and submission to the will of almighty God is absent.

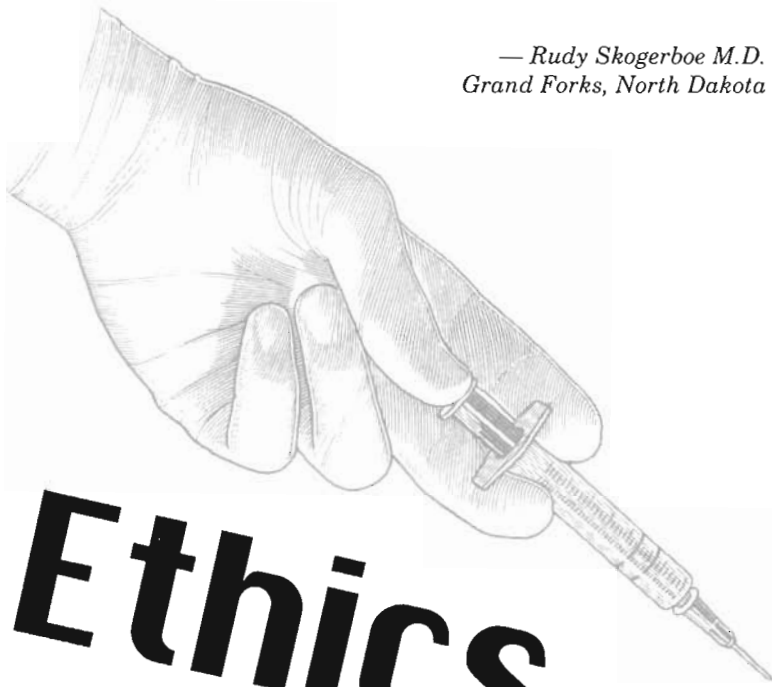
Christians and nonchristians alike separate themselves from God when a prideful dependence on technology exists. The predominance of technology in our society provides distractions that make it difficult at times to focus on God and our relationship with him. A great challenge for Christians is to follow the leading of God in resisting the use and power of technology for antichrist activities while at the same time using technology to glorify God and proclaim the good news that Jesus is Lord and sin is forgiven in Him.



—Terry Hunter
Lutheran Church
of Hope
Loveland, Colorado



— Rudy Skogerboe M.D.
Grand Forks, North Dakota



Ethics and technology in the field of medicine

For 2300 years the medical profession has followed the standards of Hippocrates, 377 B.C. A quote from him shows how close he was to the Christian view. "I swear ... that I will give what is for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious ... I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked. I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion. I will abstain from seduction of females ... I will not divulge a secret confidence that should not be spoken of abroad" (*Blakiston's New Gould Medical Dictionary*).

The Christian version of this ancient oath is too long to repeat in its entirety for this article, but I will use statements from the Christian Medical and Dental Society of the U.S. and Canada, a non-denominational evangelical organization. About fifty years ago this group started as a worldwide ministry to doctors. Their statement says: "We hold all life to be sacred as created in God's image. We know the example of Christ was not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give his life ... We are dedicated to the service of all persons regardless of their economic resources" (*Dr. Jay Hollman in New Issues in Medical Ethics*).

There is a great need in medicine for a Christian statement of medical ethics. This must at all times point to the Creator rather than a blind faith in science and technology. Some of our problems today, and aspects of the contemporary medical ethics issues discussed below, did not exist twenty years ago because technology has progressed so rapidly.

Christian ethics and reproductive biotechnology

Out of the body (in vitro) fertilization and cryopreservation of the human embryo is one example of technology that is very complicated. A secular humanist culture makes a scientific nightmare possible, writes Dr. Inid McIlhaney, Jr. Christians are warned to be alert.

Abortion

The Christian believes life begins at the early stage of fertilization (two to four cell). Therefore, termination of life at any

stage is wrong. Fetal tissue research wants top quality material and requires planned abortions. It also opens the door to the possibility of accepting commercial production of human life for body parts and research. In atheistic cultures the end justifies the means. The late-term abortion procedure shown so graphically on video was banned by Congress this spring, but later vetoed! Psalm 139:13 says, "For You have formed my inward parts; You have covered me in my mother's womb" (NKJV).

Doctor-assisted suicide

The doctor provides the means to the patient who commits suicide. Euthanasia is the termination of life by the doctor. Christians oppose this and understand that God is the giver of life as it says in Ecclesiastes 3:2, "There is a time to be born and a time to die." Pain relief is usually possible and it is very rare that pain cannot be controlled.

Life-support for the terminally ill

There are things anyone can do such as writing a living will that states your desire for or against artificial life support. Professional help is available for this. Most hospitals welcome the family to help in making the decision regarding life support. Medical ethics gets stretched to the limit in some patients with a persistent vegetative state (PVS). If due to stroke or head injury a wait of one month is desirable before declaring a PVS. There are great variations and clinical judgment is necessary and even then it is difficult. In our local hospital there is an ethics committee that is very good. The cost of futile care is astronomical and should be avoided if at all possible.

Transplant organs

Successful organ transplants are fairly common. However, the demand for organs far exceeds the supply from legitimate donors. In some parts of the world today big money is being used to obtain organs from unwilling donors. The Christian must condemn this nightmare. We are thankful for the greatness of political freedom and equality of rights in this country.

AIDS and homosexuality

While regarding homosexuality as wrong, the Christian must still love the sinner. No reliable scientific data exists to this day to substantiate the genetic cause of this behavior. A friend of mine who was dying of AIDS said to me he was not born a homosexual but he had made choices. He accepted the unconditional love and forgiveness that Christ is always willing to give, but he had to die of AIDS. Identical twins have approximately a 50% correlation with homosexuality. If it were genetic, there should be a much greater correlation. Leanne Payne, a research fellow at the Yale Divinity School states, "For pastors and counselors ... to accept and condone homosexuality rather than to heal it is to deliver the individual into the consuming power of his own sin and sickness."

As a result of scientific medical progress many new areas such as fetal surgery (repair of problems before birth), mind or mood altering drugs, genetic engineering and others exist. They pose ethical questions and challenges that must be biblically addressed. In all this it must be remembered that God is our Lord and He is to be honored and obeyed. He promised that if we obey Him, we will know His will.

Doctors are not given the power to impart immortality, but they can relieve suffering. They can also be a witness of the hope and the wonderful plans God has for His people.



The author began his medical internship in 1946. In 1965 he left his general practice in Karlstad, Minnesota, to return to medical school and study urology. From 1969 to his retirement in 1994, he was a urologist at the Grand Forks Clinic. He is an active member at Christ the King Lutheran in East Grand Forks, Minnesota. Recently he began serving as interim lay pastor at Calvary Lutheran in Bismarck, North Dakota.

*He has produced three trumpet albums and is the author of **Who Has Stolen My Church?** (now in its third printing), and a new book, **The Vanishing Physician**. To order your copy, write to: 2411 W. Fallcreek Ct., Grand Forks, ND 58201-5254*

"In all this it must be remembered that God is our Lord and He is to be honored and obeyed."



Computers

Computers are essential for work in our society and Christians should take advantage of this technology. Are teachers, pastors, scholars, and seminary students using the computer technology available to them today?

Those of us who graduated from school ten or more years ago react to this high-tech intruder in several ways. The first reaction is born out of a lack of knowledge and confidence — intimidation. We are afraid of “those things.”

People who react this way will say, “My typewriter has worked fine for years.” The best way to get over this intimidation factor is the “hands-on” approach. Local high schools and colleges offer classes for computer students with various skills. Take a leap into cyberspace, and drive down to your local computer store and explore the options available.

The second factor is embarrassment. In our confounded state we tend to stay away from this technology because of our lack of knowledge. “Pen and ink were good enough for Luther, and that’s good enough for me.” We must help people

realize that Martin Luther revolutionized the world with his pen and ink and the “movable type” of the Gutenberg Press. If Martin Luther lived today, would he use the technology at his disposal? Would he sit for months and years at his table writing his commentaries with massive Greek, Hebrew, and Latin manuscripts on his table, or would he use the best computer with an attached CD-ROM that provided those translations and more?

The third factor is our reluctance to change. Change is frightening and yet a willingness to do so at times can be crucial and highly beneficial.

And yes, the fourth and final reason we avoid computers is money. Computers are expensive. The cost of a computer system can engulf a family budget, and the financial expenditure can create a budget crisis and hours of heated debate in church council meetings.

It'll help your church

What can a Sunday school teacher, seminary student, and pastor accomplish with a computer? This article can only scratch the surface on what this medium can do. The common use is basic word processing (W.P.). A preloaded processing program (Microsoft Word, Word Perfect, or Claris Works) enables the pastor to write sermons, articles, and keep logs on correspondence, newsletters and press releases. Most word processors can be used to create certificates, brochures, tracts, business cards, mailing lists, and a host of other tasks an electric typewriter cannot do.

The second program that can be used by individuals in church service is a database. This program can be used for such things as developing a church member database, mailing lists and labels and zip code sorting.

The third program is the spread sheet. This is helpful to church secretaries, treasurers, and financial secretaries to monitor things such as budgets and statistics.

Some programs include scheduling fea-

So what's a parent to do?

There are so many ways for kids to gain access to sexually explicit material — e-mail, newsgroups. Kids can be part of an innocuous chat group, but a pedophile can join that group and begin recruiting a child. Don't allow privacy on the family computer. Put it in the family room or some other room where the child has accountability.

— Mark Hartwig

Software programs to help

Programs that block sexual images and other objectionable material involving violence, drug use, gambling, etc is available. For more information contact:

- SurfWatch Software, phone 415-948-9500
- Microsystems Software, 508-879-9000
- Solid Oak Software, 805-967-9853

help

tures. One such program for Windows 95 is Schedule +. It has all the features of a popular organizer program, such as Daytimer. It allows you to print out daily, weekly, and monthly calendars. You can carry your schedule with you or the larger versions may be saved in a binder.

The most innovative and exciting use involves Bible study software. A package costing about \$320 can provide a person using a Macintosh or Windows computer a wealth of resources that is available in seconds.

Two excellent programs available now are Logos Bible Study Software and Bible Works for Windows. I attend several classes at the Reformed Presbyterian Seminary in Pittsburgh and have access to Bible Works. This program is distributed by Hermeneutika (1-800-74BIBLE) and contains seven complete translations of the Bible. Also included are the Septuagint, two complete Hebrew texts of the New Testament, Hebrew parsing tools, and several complete Greek and Hebrew Lexicons. Bible Works has a powerful search feature, allowing you to do searches of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. The NIV fan might be disappointed that this current software does not include this translation, but it offers the Bible in French, German, Spanish, and Dutch. (Christian Book Distributors has this program for sale in their spring-summer catalog for \$319.95.)

There is other software available for Windows. Logos Bible Software (800-87LOGOS) is available on CD-ROM. Other Bible Study software for Windows includes HyperBible (800-428-4385), Bible Source (800-727-3480), and Quick Verse (800-223-6925).

Bible study programs available to the Macintosh user includes Zondervan's MacBible (800-727-3480) and its five versions of the Bible. It also has a Greek New Testament, a Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint, a Bible Atlas, and maps. Other programs include acCordance (306-576-3000), the OnLine Bible (800-243-7124), HyperBible (800-428-4385) starting at \$89,

Evangelism on the Internet

Jews for Jesus has designed a Web site that began in early 1995. Much of the material is directly geared to the unsaved and addresses common objections that Jewish people have to calling Jesus their Messiah. The site is accessed by 700 to 800 computers every week. In 1995, 463 people who had never been in touch with the organization asked to receive regular information. Of those, 29 were nonbelieving Jewish people and four were unsaved Gentiles. The rest were Christians, many of whom wanted information about how to witness to their Jewish friends.

"If on-line evangelism takes the same commercialized forms that it often did in broadcasting, it will reduce the effectiveness of all on-line ministries. Ministries of integrity need to band together to keep the emphasis on serving others and presenting the gospel selflessly, rather than on fund raising, commercials and entertainment."

—*Quentin Schultze*

and the Bible Source (Zondervan) costing less than \$150.

Whether you are student writing a research paper, a scholar writing a journal article, a pastor preparing a sermon, or an adult Sunday school teacher preparing a lesson, a computer and a good selection of software can provide you with research information that "angels have longed to see." You no longer need a table full of books, translations, concordances, commentaries, dictionaries, and lexicons to complete the lexical or grammatical study to which ancient scholars dedicated years of their lives to complete.

With an investment of \$2,000 - \$3,000, you can be fully equipped with a computer and its peripherals. When purchasing a computer, you should consider its compatibility with computers to which you might exchange files, and its current and future demands. A computer with either 8 meg or 16 meg ram and 1 gigabyte memory would be adequate for most personal and church needs.



— *Frank Mannion*
Ruthfred Lutheran
Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

Let freedom ring

— Melissa Maher and
Betty Lou Kost
Emmanuel Lutheran
Eagle Butte, South Dakota



Many in our generation here in America have taken liberty and freedom for granted and thus forgotten their true meaning. My grandparents on my father's side were Russian immigrants. They came to America like a can of cream with a cardboard tag around their neck with U.S.A. written on it. Though not able to speak English, they recognized the opportunities and privileges of this great nation and carved out a successful life for their families. My great-grandfather on my mother's side left a law practice in Missouri to move to South Dakota and minister the Word of God on horseback. These people understood and appreciated freedom!

Americans should understand freedom. We have lived for it and died for it. We are a nation of people who model freedom to a searching and doubting world.

The real democratic American idea is not that every person shall be on a level with every other, but that every one would have liberty, without hindrance, to be what God made him to be.

Political freedom goes hand in hand with religious freedom.

Wherever religion is free, men can no longer be kept in chains. Religious freedom means liberty for all and special favors to no one.

Real friendship cannot exist without freedom. Friendship loves a free air, and will not be fenced in a straight and narrow enclosure.

Mark Twain once said, "It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakable precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either!"

"God grants liberty only to

those who love it and are always ready to guard and defend it." Daniel Webster went on to say, "Let our object be our country, and, by the blessing of God, may that country itself become a vast and splendid monument, not of oppression and terror, but of wisdom, of peace, and of liberty, upon which the world may gaze with admiration forever!"

True freedom is only found through Jesus Christ. Without the love of Christ in our hearts, we are and will remain a prisoner of sin. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:32,36). Each of us must accept this gift or forever be a prisoner of wrong doing. Someone wisely put it this way:

*If there is righteousness in the heart,
there will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character,
there will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home,
there will be order in the nation,
If there is order in the nation,
there will be peace in the world.*



The AMBASSADORS: Amy Jo Hill, Scott Mundfrom, Rochelle Landblom, Ben Monseth and Elizabeth Welsch.

PEOPLE AND PLACES



The AFLBS Choir sang at the graduation service.

Association Free Lutheran Bible School

Fall Quarter begins on
September 8, 1996
Opening service is 4 p.m.
There is still time to apply.
Call 612-544-9501

Tarisa Cross, the dean of women at AFLBS the last two years, has resigned from her position and is attending a summer linguistics course at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. Tarisa's home congregation is Bethel Lutheran in Minot, North Dakota.

BARNABAS Summer Ministry Teams trained June 12-15 at the Bible School campus and began their tours on June 16. Two BARNABAS Teams, a northern and southern team, are traveling and working under the sponsorship of AFLC Home Missions. The Ambassador and Majesty teams are ministering under the sponsorship of AFLBS. Please keep these young people in your prayers as they travel and minister with concerts, and assist with camps and Vacation Bible Schools.



Brian Remme, Pipestone, Minnesota, gave the welcome on behalf of the senior class.

Director of Development announces retirement

Ernest Miedema, Minneapolis, Minnesota, announced his retirement as the AFLC's Director of Development effective January 1, 1997. He has worked in that position for approximately 17 years. Mr. Miedema was a businessman in Valley City, North Dakota, before moving to Minneapolis.

Pastor Ralph Tjelta, Blaine, Minnesota, has accepted the call to serve Hope Lutheran in Wyoming, Minnesota. Pastor Tjelta had been serving as the interim pastor at Morgan Avenue Lutheran in Minneapolis.



Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, Board of Trustees chairman, presented Sheila Knudsvig, Buxton, North Dakota, her diploma at the AFLC Schools' graduation ceremony on May 18, 1996.

Ministry opportunity available

David Hover, Shakopee, Minnesota, has resigned as the superintendent of maintenance and grounds at the AFLC headquarters and campus in Plymouth. For more information or an application, call Pastor Lyndon Korhonen at 612-286-2861, or write to him at Box 219, Cokato, MN 55321.

Rollag, Minnesota — Home Missions Director Paul Nash and administrative assistant, Larry Walker traveled to Grong Lutheran on May 19. Pastor Nash spoke at the morning service and following a Norwegian smorgasbord, a meeting was held to discuss strategies for ministry and growth.

Pastor Roy Johnson, Ortonville, Minnesota, has resigned as pastor of Elim Lutheran in nearby Clinton, where he has served the last three years, in order to accept the call from Christ Lutheran in Wichita Falls, Texas. The Johnsons have lived in Ortonville since 1988, when they began serving Abiding Faith Lutheran in Ortonville. They plan to move by September 1, 1996.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Aguascalientes, Mexico — Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk are in their first summer of ministry in Mexico. They ask for specific prayer for their daughter Rachel that she might adjust to their new life. They are seeking open doors in Palomi and have begun a new work in Jerez, Zacatecas. They praise God for Ricardo and Adrianna who just graduated from the WMPL Bible School/Seminary in Mazatlan. Ricardo will begin pastoral internship with Missionary Dan Giles this summer. Pray that Ricardo will be able to get a job with the orchestra in Aguascalientes.

Celaya, Mexico — Gethsemane Lutheran Church crossed a milestone in its history on April 18, 1996, when papers were signed for the new church property. Pastor Milton Flores and the officers of the central Mexico congregation gathered on the property and sang a hymn and prayed for the future of Gethsemane Lutheran.

In 1979, God gave the vision to Pastor Samuel Flores to start a new congregation in Celaya. No one thought this day would be so far in the future. Four times of crisis in the Mexican monetary system during these years decreased the value of money by 50% each time. But God's timing is perfect. Mexican laws on church properties are now different.

The goal is to have the new sanctuary by the year 2000, after which classrooms, a kitchen and other facilities will be added. The true foundation is already laid: Jesus Christ who will continue the good work in us on to completion. Construction costs are high. Approximately \$60,000 is needed for minimum building expenses. If your congregation can help with funds or by supplying items that could be moved to Mexico, it would be appreciated. All funds should be sent through the AFLC

Be a missionary in Aguascalientes during August 1-16.

Experience the mission field and you'll never be the same.

Call Partners in Mission Outreach, Al Brazier at (218) 782-2456.

World Missions Office, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441.

Curitiba, Brazil — Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson are well into their year of interim ministry at the ARCA and area congregations during the furlough year of Pastor Paul and Becky Abel and family. Pastor Clovis and Tania (formerly from Vitoria) are now serving the Vila Camargo church. Pastor Clovis is working hard ministering in his new place of service. Pray for them while they are living with their four children in the church fellowship room until a parsonage can be built.

Sonja Dahl, has accepted the

call from the AFLC World Missions Committee to serve in Brazil. Sonja has chosen Isaiah 6:8 as her mission verse: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I, Send me!'"

The Missions Committee is praying that Sonja will be on the field by early this fall. In the interim, they encourage congregations and organizations to give Sonja the opportunity to share her call and vision. She is now living on the AFLBS campus while she awaits the arrival of her Brazilian missionary visa and the balance of her support. The committee seeks to have in hand or promised funds to cover salary, benefits, transportation costs and field outfitting costs totaling 40 annual support units of \$600 each before she leaves for the field. Prayerfully ask God how He would have you help meet this need and support Sonja with your fervent prayers.

Pastor John Skeie, New Hope, Minnesota, has accepted the call to serve Morgan Avenue Lutheran in Minneapolis. He began his new ministry on June 3, 1996.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences — January 1 - May 31, 1996

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN MAY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$241,472.00	\$17,134.31	\$85,195.32	35
Seminary	122,626.00	7,814.00	32,018.88	26
Bible School	184,696.00	15,503.92	49,133.41	27
Home Missions	253,270.00	17,134.03	80,075.95	32
World Missions	341,257.00	28,293.53	162,156.23	48
Capital Investment	24,639.00	805.61	5,751.29	23
Parish Education	49,289.00	2,225.58	19,242.25	39
Church Extension	15,018.00	755	4,567.71	30
TOTALS	\$1,232,267.00	\$89,666.68	\$438,141.04	36
TOTALS 1995	1,484,851.00	90,557.63	476,923.35	32
Goal 42%				

In Memoriam (April-May, 1996)

Name	Given by	Department
Alice Johnson	Friends & Family	Miriam Infant Home
Norman Ihland	Kenneth/Mary Nash	Home Missions
Mrs. Archie Isackson		
Edwin Hoge		
Orlando Hermo		
Alva Peterson		
Eleanor Lee		General Fund
W.C. Julson	Hazel Holland	AFLBS
Grayce Holland		
Esther Scholhohm	Mitchell/Marilee Johnson	AFLTS
Inga Langaas	Clarence/Edna Quanbeck	Parish Education Book Fund
	Orlin Quanbeck	Home Missions
	Pastor Raynard Huglen	Book Fund/Home Missions
	Langaas family	Home Missions
	Gerald/Karen Swanson	
Selma Johnson		
Elvine Ekander		
Bernetta Skare Museus		
Edwin Peterson		
Ted Morken	Gordon/Thedine Gunderson	AFLBS
	Gerry/Karen Knudsvig	
	Hilman Knudsvig	
	Ny Stavanger Ladies Aid	
David Snipstead	Arden/Marge Jacobson	Home Missions
	Friends	World Missions
	Vernon/Dorothy Russum	AFLBS
	Raynard Huglen	World Missions
	Arnold/Lydia McCarlson	World Missions
	Mrs. Valborg Hedman	AFLBS
	Gordon/Doris Newell	AFLTS
	Kenneth/Joanne Torkelson	AFLBS
	Debra S. Quanbeck	AFLBS
	Triumph Lutheran, Ferndale	World/Home Missions
	Darrel/Bette Ford	World Missions
	Dale/Darlene Quanbeck	AFLBS
	Calvary Lutheran, Wallace	World Missions
	Eldon/Elizabeth Hermunsle	World Missions
	Knudsvig families	AFLBS
	Paul/Susan Kyllö	World Missions
	Aini Myking	AFLTS
	Campus family	General Fund
	Vernon/Dorothy Russum	
	Pastor Gerald/Margaret Mundfrom	
	Pastor Elden/Faith Nelson	
	Pastor Amos/Ovidie Dyrud	
	Marlene Unverzagt	AFLBS
	Annie Holen	
	Adeline Skramstad	
	Pastor Wayne/Solveig Hjermstad	
	Mildred Bjornson	
	Pastor Christian/Charlotte Oswood	
	Pastor James/Anna Asp	
	Vernon/Elizabeth Nelson	
	Martin/Pearl Bjornson	
	Dennis/Sharon Holmquist	
	Thomas/Gwenda Skiff	
	Pastor Vincent/Eunice Will	
	Loiell/MaryLynn Dyrud	
	Pastor Laurel/Joan Udden	
	Marjorie Wayne	AFLBS/AFLTS
	Pastor Tim/Evonne Skramstad	AFLTS
	Pastor John/Mildred Strand	
	Karsten/Bernell Baalson	
	Pastor Paul/Laurie Nash	World Missions
	Pastor Raynard Huglen	
	Dorothy A. Olson	Missionary S. Dahl
	Howard/Dorothy Christian	Home Missions
	Valborg Huglen	
	Pastor Vincent/Eunice Will	AFLBS
Edith Will and		
Gertrude Hult		
David Haagenon	Boyd/Elna Haagenon family	AFLBS
	Maxine Yri	
	Sidney/Lilly Bingaman	
	Alice Blegen	
	Gerry/Karen Knudsvig	
Marvin Quanbeck	Rodney Quanbeck	AFLBS
Emory Christianson	Margot Christianson	ARCA Missions
Alva Peterson	Dagne Faust	Home Missions

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Mato Grosso, Brazil – Missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel and family have moved to this neighboring state, just west of the state of Parana, and have begun a new ministry. A Bible study group is meeting already. Pastor John Abel is in Brazil conducting evangelistic tent meetings and will be holding services in their new community this summer. April, the young daughter of Jonathan and Tamba, had fallen shortly after their return to Brazil last spring and was in a body cast for two months. They thank God for His protection and healing.

India workers in the BFLC, are now 30 in number. Currently ten of them are supported on a regular monthly basis by congregations or individuals. There is still a need for people or organizations to provide the \$30/month support for the others. Please contact the World Missions office if you would like to participate in this program of sponsorship.

Pastor Scott Gray, Fairbury, Nebraska, has resigned as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church effective the end of June. His future plans are not finalized.

Thanks

Thank you to Pastor Les Johnson of Minnewauken, North Dakota, for pointing us to Jesus, the Great I Am, while serving as the writer of An Encouraging Word column for the first half of this year. We look forward to Pastor Alvin Grothe of Astoria, Oregon, sharing God's Word in that column for the second half of the year.

The editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, Pastor Craig Johnson, may be contacted by email at a new address: cjohnson@efn.org.

Legacies
Alvin Gulbranson
Pearl Aanstad

NEWS OF INTEREST

Crystal, MN — Financial contributions which were made to a church by a couple who later filed for bankruptcy belong to the church and may not be recovered by creditors, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit ruled May 6.

The ruling came in a case involving Bruce and Nancy Young, who regularly engaged in the Christian practice of tithing — giving one-tenth of their income to the church — throughout their business careers. In 1990 a recession combined with health problems to hurt their electrical contracting business, and despite using many personal assets to pay business creditors, they were forced to declare personal bankruptcy because of their business debts.

The trustee for the creditors attempted to recover money the Youngs had donated to Crystal Evangelical Free Church in the year before their bankruptcy, arguing that the gifts constituted a "fraudulent transfer" under bankruptcy law. A lower court agreed, ruling that the Youngs had not received "anything of value in

exchange for the donation."

The circuit court disagreed. In a 2-1 ruling, a panel of the court held that seizing tithes given to the church violated the religious freedom of both the Youngs and the church. "Recovery of the contributions substantially burdens the debtor's free exercise of their religion, and is not in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest and therefore violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act," the court said.

The Rev. Stephen Goold, pastor of Crystal Evangelical Free Church, emphasized that the battle was over principle, not money. In fact, the church spent in excess of \$250,000 to defend its right to keep the \$13,450 contributed by the Youngs.

The church received donations and letters of encouragement from every state in the nation, as well as support from the Alliance Defense Fund. Those efforts helped generate about \$175,000, leaving the church to absorb about \$75,000 of legal expenses on its own. "Standing for spiritual principle is sometimes very costly," Goold noted.

Charlottesville, VA — A hard-core criminal led to Christ while in jail has returned to his Muslim-populated homeland and planted a church.

According to Bob Emery, director of ministries in ex-Soviet lands for Christian Aid, a Muslim from the Caucasus region was convicted under the communist system and sent to a prison in Komi, Russia, where all hard-core prisoners were sent. He was in his 28th year of a 30-year sentence when he was visited by a Voice of Hope missionary. Gregor (not his real name) accepted the Lord and devoted the last two years of his sentence to intensive

study of the Bible. By the time he was released, God had transformed him into a missionary.

Just before his release, he received a letter from his father. "Come as soon as you can," his father wrote. "I have weapons and we will fight our enemies." At that time, peoples in the Caucasus region were fighting for independence.

The transformed prisoner wrote home, "Dad, I will come, but the only weapon I have is the Sword of the Spirit, and this weapon will bring peace not only to my homeland, but also to the hearts of my people."

Upon hearing that, his Muslim

Wheaton, IL — Dr. Art Gay will step down as president of World Relief on July 19 to return to work in parish ministry. Gay led World Relief for five years, during which it began relief and development work in the former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and Myanmar. "My wife Joann and I have always felt we were on loan to World Relief from the local parish to serve in a larger parish for a time," said Gay, who is a minister in the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference.

Akron, OH — The First Congregational Church in Akron, Ohio, has reached the limits of its hospitality. The congregation voted 124-100 to ask a man who lives in a tent on the church lawn to move. Jim Dunn, 53, believes that God has commanded him to live on the lawn, and he has done so with his nine-year-old collie since April of 1995. Dunn has no job and doesn't shower. He sleeps in a filthy sleeping bag, but rejected a newer one given to him because he believes it is not God's will for him to have it. He refuses to go to a shelter two blocks away. Though many church members initially welcomed Dunn, the recent arrival of rats made them reconsider the arrangement.

father rejected him, as most Muslims do when a family member leaves Islam. But Gregor returned to his homeland anyway and began to tell of his newfound Savior. He took the gospel into streets and parks. While foreign missionaries were not allowed in because of the civil strife, God raised up a church through the ex-convict. According to Christian Aid, about 100 believers now gather to worship the Lord Jesus Christ in that place.

(The above stories used with the permission of the EP News Service.)

Using the gifts, worshipping the Giver

Some things are not good or evil in themselves. What makes the difference is the way they are used. Ink and paper has been used to spread lies and false teaching, slander and hatred. It has also been used to proclaim the Word of God. Ink and paper can be a powerful tool for good when used properly.

It seems we are daily hearing about the development of a new tool. Things such as VCRs, microwaves, compact discs and computers were cutting edge only a few years ago. Now they are commonplace in many of our homes. We are surrounded by many new and, until recently, unheard of devices; things that can have a positive impact on our lives and our service of the Lord when they are viewed and used properly as tools.

It is appropriate for us to inspect what God has permitted man to develop in this era of advanced technology and search for ways it can further the spread of the gospel and the work of the Lord. We are told that "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (I Peter 4:10, NIV). Of course computer skills are not specifically listed in the Bible as a spiritual gift, but the listings are not to be looked at as all-inclusive. "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us" (Romans 12:6, NIV). We have a creative God who is able to bestow gifts on His Church that bear little resemblance to the gifts received decades ago.

While we use the tools our gracious God grants us, it is important to see them for what they are — merely tools.

They are not to be worshipped or trusted in. They are not to be looked to as some kind of savior or permitted to dominate our lives like some kind of god.

The Psalmist prayed, "You are my King and my God, ... I do not trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but you give us victory over our enemies, ... In God we make our boast all day long" (44:4, 6-8, NIV).

The right audio and video equipment does not guarantee true success. The computer does not bring us victory. Our boasting is not to be of the latest gad-

get man has developed. We trust in and boast of the greatness of our God.

In his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, Fyodor Dostoevsky imagines a scene where the Church tells Christ He is no longer necessary, it can function fine without Him. Tragically in our day, while that message may not be conveyed with words, we come close to doing so with our actions.

We have seminars that tell how to plant a church. Video series that instruct how to grow one. Computer software that tells how to counsel. Mailing lists so that we can get our message out into the community. Colorful signs to let people know where we are. Audio and visual equipment to lead us in worship. With all of that we get tempted to think, who needs God?

Technology can be a useful tool but nothing more. It cannot ever begin to replace God.

It can do some incredible things, but it is God alone who can save a soul and impact a life for all eternity. We put our hope and our trust and our confidence in the Creator and not in any part of the creation.

We "use the things of the world" but we do not become "engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away" (I Corinthians 7:31, NIV). Technology provides us with many things that we can easily become "engrossed in." It can dominate our time and attention as we use it. It can have an inappropriate impact on our view of the future as we wonder and worry about what may come.

God is on the throne. Man cannot develop technology that will change that fact. We need not fret excessively about what man may come up with. We trust in our loving Lord who always has been and always will be in control.

We use tools, but we worship God. He is not a tool that we manipulate but the Lord to whom we submit. With thanksgiving we use the gifts God has provided, but we put our trust not in the gifts but in the Giver. Our hope is not in what technology can do, but in what God has done. In a fast-changing world we rest secure in God whose love for us and power to take care of us never changes.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Periodicals

Association Retreat Center Family Camp

Osceola, Wisconsin
July 28-August 3, 1996
715-294-2877

Evening speaker — Dr. Francis Monseth
Bible teacher — Pastor Robert Lee
Youth teacher — Pastor Steve Snipstead

We consider The ARC our family that we have chosen. Each year as we leave camp, we look forward to coming back the next year. The friends are priceless, the fellowship great and the management outstanding. This week is a big part of our kids' lives and we plan to keep coming back until the Lord comes again.

— Erling and Nancy Langness
Jared, Jordan, Jerney, Jonathan
Hope Lutheran
Ishpeming, MI

I like it that when you get old enough you can stay with all your friends and the teen Bible study was really cool last year!

— Sara Nash, 13
Solid Rock Lutheran
Brooklyn Park, MN

When the kids were younger, it was great to bring the whole family and not have to worry about them because there were always things for them to do like VBS. It is great to be able to get away from the phone and day to day responsibilities and to be able to catch up with old friends. I always look forward to singing with the camp choir. The whole package with a godly emphasis is great.

— Ginny Knapp
Maranatha Lutheran
Willmar, MN

As you may imagine, summer is our favorite time of the year. We are busy hosting many groups from churches and schools. The diversity is exciting. However, there is one week each summer at The ARC that is special: Family Camp. It feels like the family has come home for a week.

Recently, we talked to some Family Camp alumni and asked why they keep coming back. Join us this summer and find out for yourself. Come home to The ARC!

We keep coming back because it's a tradition. We never even think about not coming to Family Camp. For us, it's a perfect vacation. There's spiritual uplifting, physical relaxation and a chance to meet up with old and new friends. We never have to worry about where the kids are or what they're doing. A big plus for us as a large family is that it is so affordable. I can't think of any place where you can get so much for the price.

— Denis and Susan Parsley
Christ the King Lutheran
Pipestone, MN