

The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

July 6, 1999

Facing the future



**with
faith,
not fear.**

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Editor: Rev. Craig Johnson
Assistant to the Editor: Solveig Hjermstad
Editorial Board: Rev. John Mundfrom, Oryen Benrud, Rev. Jerry Moan.

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For editorial inquiries and information:
The Lutheran Ambassador, Box 446,
Bruce, SD 57220-0446; 605-627-5188;
fax 605-627-9254;
e-mail craigj@teleport.com
wshjerm@brookings.net

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

A place of refuge

"Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34).

How many times in the past twenty-four hours have you said, "I am worried?" I'm sure you haven't been counting, but we are all prone to

worry, some more than others. Sometimes we dress up our worries with terms like "anxious" or "concern." They might sound better to us, but nevertheless they still represent the worry of our mind and heart. Jesus says, "be not anxious" or "do not worry."

It would perhaps be easier for some to stop breathing than it would be to stop worrying. The beginning of the year 2000 and the possible computer problems, which is called Y2K, has caused considerable thought, discussion and for some, much worry. The whole matter makes me feel like a little mouse in the middle of a busy city intersection during rush-hour traffic. I am so small and insignificant to the problem which those in the know are frantically trying to resolve before January 1, 2000. But no matter how little I know or how unable I am to do much about the problem it affects me today. If you can't do anything else you tend to do what comes natural and easy - worry. What about all of the things in my life that Y2K could disrupt in just another six months? My finances, communications systems, utilities, auto, insurance and health records, fire and police protection are just a few areas of technology that could crash. Shouldn't I be worried?

Some are advocating that we make common sense preparations, and I certainly agree with that. A part of that common sense preparation is to listen to what our Lord is saying to us in His Word. The first word of the above quoted verse is

"therefore." It points us back to the preceding verses, and therein is a wonderful promise from Jesus. He assures us that we are of much more importance to Him than the birds of the air for whom He has cared over the centuries and still cares for today. Food, drink and clothing speak of his care for us, and they are promised to us for this day. In verse thirty-three is the admonition to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." As we do and when tomorrow turns to today, His promise of care and provision will still be true. "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

How can it be? It is so because God is still in control. He will not lose control on January 1, 2000. His power will not fail. His communication with us will not be cut off. His resources will not be depleted or destroyed. His protection will not end. His love will not flicker and fade. He is God and the promises He gave through His Son will stand.

Have you ever taken shelter behind a rock wall when the wind and rain were so strong you couldn't have possibly stood against them? That wall provided protection and security, and you were safe. Worry? Jesus said "don't." May we like King David pray thus to our God: "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For Thou hast been a refuge for me. A tower of strength against the enemy. Let me dwell in Thy tent forever; let me take refuge in the shelter of Thy wings" (Psalm 61:2-4).

— by **Pastor Eldon K. Nelson**
Maranatha Free Lutheran
Willmar, Minnesota

sound bites

Men and women of vision and dreams have no trouble praying because they have something to pray about. ...

1 Men and women of vision and dreams have no trouble believing God for big things because they know that God can do the impossible. Men and women of vision and dreams have no trouble with drifting and laziness because they know where they're going and they're turned on for Jesus.

— Dale Galloway

When a dream fails, we can take it as a sign

4 we're worthless or we can take ourselves to God, saying, "Here I am, ready for Your next open door in my life."

— Bill Peel

6

The poor man is not he who is without a cent, but he who is without a dream.

— Harry Kemp

2

God gives us always strength enough, and sense enough, for everything He wants us to do.

— John Ruskin

What we really need to have is the Guide himself. Maps, road signs, a few useful phrases are good things, but infinitely better is someone who has been there before and knows the way.

— Elisabeth Elliot

Life is meant to bring a succession of discoveries of our need of Christ, and with every discovery the way is open for a new

inflow of the supply.

— Miles Stanford

5



"I thought of ... Jesus coming again, and how few people seriously think about it enough to prepare for that certainty."

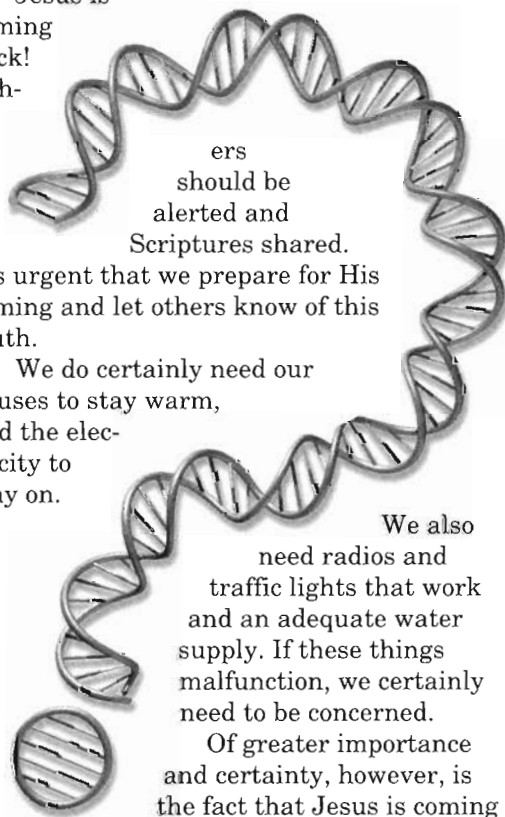
Y2K or J2C?

— **Lester Hinderaker**
Salem Lutheran
Radcliffe, Iowa

R Recently I attended a meeting in our community, called by concerned citizens, about the coming of the end of 1999. It is believed that at that time many of our computers will quit working and cause many problems to occur. There is much talk and speculation about when these problems will begin, or if it will really happen, and how bad it will be. At the meeting they discussed purchasing standby generators, and secondary heating systems, along with ways to save water and food.

I don't know how much of this to believe or prepare for, because of the uncertainty of it all. One thought came to me as I listened. I thought of the many verses in the Bible that deal with Jesus coming again, and how few people seriously think about it enough to prepare for that certainty. True, we don't know exactly when that day will be, but we do know absolutely that it will happen!

Jesus is
coming
back!
Oth-



It's urgent that we prepare for His coming and let others know of this truth.

We do certainly need our houses to stay warm, and the electricity to stay on.

We also need radios and traffic lights that work and an adequate water supply. If these things malfunction, we certainly need to be concerned.

Of greater importance and certainty, however, is the fact that Jesus is coming again and many are not ready for His coming. Instead of preparing to meet Jesus, the world is thinking about temporal things. In Revelation 22:7 we read what heaven will be like and then Jesus says, "Behold, I come quickly! Blessed is he that

keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Three times in the word "quickly" is used. It's urgent.

In First and Second Thessalonians, it gives certain facts. One is that our Lord will most surely return. Second, the dead in Christ shall be resurrected. Third, is that the living believers will meet the Lord in the air (I Thessalonians 4:16,17). We are admonished to comfort one another with these words.

We who are His are not worried because our future is secure. He has promised to prepare a place for us, that where He is, we may be also (John 14:3). Until then we are told to abide in Him, and have confidence in Him, and not be ashamed of Him at His coming. We are told to hold fast our profession and exhort one another as we see the Day approaching. How important it is to have fellowship, and to study God's Word, and hang unto His promises every day.

There is a warning in II Thessalonians 1:8 for those that don't know God. God will take vengeance on them in flaming fire. God forbid that any of our loved ones will be included in that group. It is our responsibility to make these truths known while we are still in the day of grace.

Matthew 24 tells of some of the signs of His coming. When we see these things happening we know it is near; even at the door. We don't know the exact time, but we're admonished to "watch" and to "be ready" because He will come when we least expect it. When we get busy with other things, then we forget and are not expecting Him. Let's take special effort to not be so busy so as to forget His warnings.

I am so glad today for His promises, and for fellowship with other Christians. We need strength each day as well as His guidance and keeping, as we strive to walk with Him, and defend ourselves from the forces of the world. Along with the warnings about Y2K, we need to be concerned about J2C — Jesus' Second Coming.

God forbid that people will go lost because of my failure to warn them. Let's make sure we don't listen to false teachers, or deceivers! Mark 3:15 says, "Take heed lest any man deceive you." May it be said of us what it says in Luke 21:36: "Watch therefore, and pray always, that we may be counted worthy to escape distress, and to stand before the Son of God."



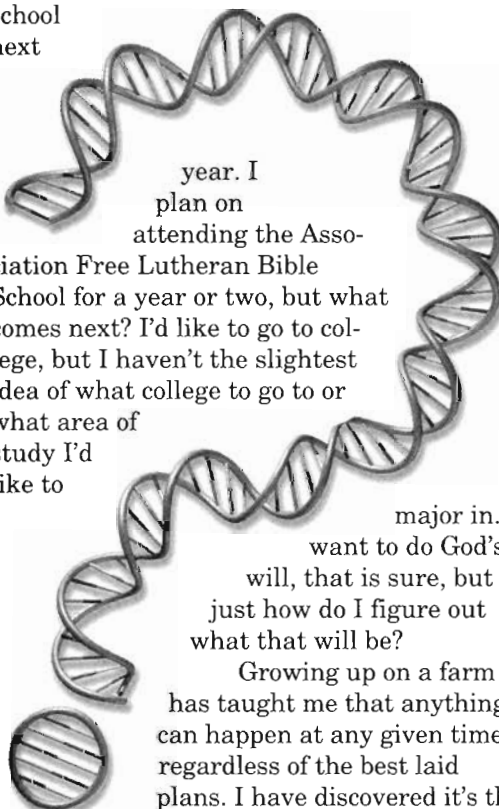
A Christian teen looks ahead

— Betsy Parsley
Christ the King Lutheran
Pipestone, Minnesota

Fear seems to be a common feeling among young people today, and with good reason. There are dozens of things within our society for teens to be afraid of: everything from rejection by one's peers, to family break-ups and ultimately to world chaos.

As a Christian teenager, I have a tremendous advantage over the secular teen because I can take all my struggles and worries to Jesus. People watch more of what I do than what I say, so how I handle my fears carries a lot of weight.

I frequently wonder and worry about what is going to happen when I graduate from high school next



year. I plan on attending the Association Free Lutheran Bible School for a year or two, but what comes next? I'd like to go to college, but I haven't the slightest idea of what college to go to or what area of study I'd like to

major in. I want to do God's will, that is sure, but just how do I figure out what that will be?

Growing up on a farm has taught me that anything can happen at any given time regardless of the best laid plans. I have discovered it's the same way in my Christian life.

God will direct me and set me in a place where He can best use me, if I let Him; even though it might be on short notice. Matthew 6:34 advises us not to worry about the future, for it will worry about itself. A favorite verse of mine is Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.'" I just need to follow God one step at a time, and not be concerned with knowing everything about my future **right now!**

Another area where I experience some apprehension is regarding the "End Times,"

which I have always thought of as being something like the horrifying concentration camps during World War II described in Corrie ten Boom's book, "The Hiding Place." Will Christ's Second Coming be before the prophesied antichrist, famines, and plagues, etc., or will it be after? Christians of other centuries suffered during times of disaster and holocaust, so it's possible they will this time, as well.

Our Sunday school class recently completed a year-long study on the somewhat mysterious book of Revelation. Though many of our questions were honestly left not clearly answered, one encouraging thought permeated our study. It is summed up in Deuteronomy 31:8, "The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Psalm 46:1,2a says, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear."

Cancer, strokes, and numerous other diseases, all of which seem more common all the time, can also be a source of inner turmoil. I think of my grandpa, who died after a long battle with cancer, and now my grandma, whose life is slowly disappearing because of repeated strokes. It makes me wonder when another person close to me will become sick, or even if I will, and what we'll have to suffer through. Physical distress is likely to touch my life some day, followed by the emotional pain as well. Though I may not understand the reasons for these troubles, I know the Bible says, "These (trials) have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Christ Jesus is revealed" (I Peter 1:7).

Luke 12:25,26 speaks to me. "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?" What good is it, then, to dwell on and be anxious about the future and the things that may or may not happen? How wonderful it is to give my cares to the Lord because I Peter 5:7 promises that He cares for me.

The Bible is accurate and true. I have no doubt that God is in control. He is all-wise and all-powerful. He wants the best for me. All I need to do is to trust and depend on His strength daily to handle every formidable fear I might encounter.





The following incident was told by Emma Coleman in about 1947 to Roscoe E. Dean. Emma and her husband Eugene still lived at that time on their homestead farm in Jerauld County, South Dakota. The Colemans arrived in Dakota Territory shortly after their marriage in New York in 1885, when the virgin prairie offered little protection from raging blizzards. Taken from "The Wessington Springs True Dakotan," January 12, 1988. (Used by permission.)

The Colemans farmed a few acres and each fall carefully stored seed for the coming season. One of their most treasured possessions was the ears of seed corn Eugene selected and stored in the attic.

Fortunately Eugene was home January 12, 1888 when the blizzard struck. (He was a part-time mail carrier.) His livestock was in and they thought they had adequate fuel. But as the blizzard became more severe, fuel consisting of wood, twisted hay and cow chips in the

little frame house went up in smoke. The house was getting cold and the storm became more intense. Eugene pushed the front door open enough to pull the wooden steps in from the front of the house. He broke them up and burned them. Next they broke up the furniture and burned broken pieces. The blizzard still raged as the children hovered around the stove as the fire turned to embers.

Eugene then said, "We have nothing left to burn except the seed corn, Mom. Leg me up (to the attic) and I will get it." The seed corn lasted about an hour, but the blizzard continued and it was getting bitter cold.

At that point Emma said, "Eugene, I think we better pray." They got down on their knees and prayed, and in Emma's words, "The blizzard stopped!"

"I don't know why we didn't think of praying sooner," Emma said with a twinkle in her eye, "we could have saved the seed corn."

**"When nothing whereon to lean remains,
When strongholds crumble to dust:
When nothing is sure but that God still reigns,
That is just the time to trust."**

— *First Lutheran
Newsletter*
April 1999
Oklahoma City,
Oklahoma

It makes no difference

— *by Harold M. Severson
Mankato, Minnesota*

It makes no difference if you're lame or blind
If you have a heart that's kind.

It makes no difference if you're black or white
If your heart and soul reflect God's light.

It makes no difference if you're rich or poor
If you have a mind and soul that's pure.

It makes no difference if you're short or tall
If you stand up for him who gives us all.

It makes no difference if you run or walk
If you go through life, and with him you talk.

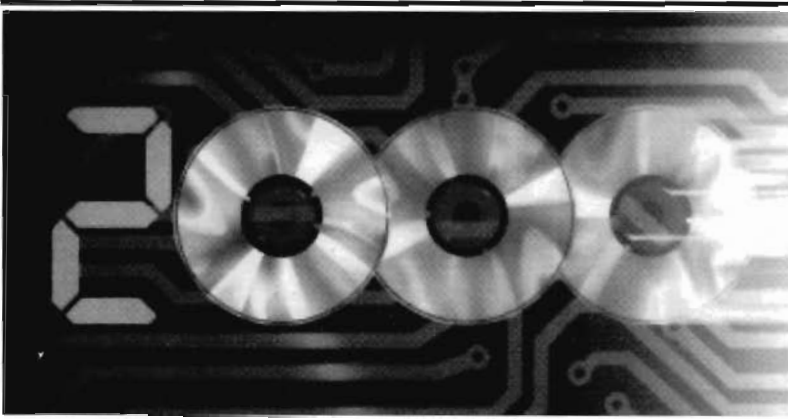
It makes no difference if you live here or there
If at your journey's end, eternity you share.

It makes no difference if you're awake or asleep
If you pray to God your soul to keep.

It makes no difference if you're weak or strong
If you travel through life and take God along.

It makes no difference if you're young or old
If with those in need you share your gold.

It makes no difference if you live or die
If in life and in death your God is nigh.



and then what?

Entrusted and empowered

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations has been entrusted with a vision that is over one hundred years old. It was conceived in a rich heritage of revival, born in the pain of church conflict, and baptized in the fire of a new spiritual awakening. The vision is to build free and living Lutheran congregations.

— **Pastor Robert L. Lee**
*President of the
Association of
Free Lutheran
Congregations*

The freedom that our forefathers sought was inseparable from life in the Spirit. The primary goal was always to see souls set free through personal life in Jesus Christ. Recognizing that the local congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth, these pioneers also saw the importance of incorporating the new believer into a living fellowship where their new life would be nurtured through Word and Sacrament.

Convinced that the New Testament pattern for the church does not dictate any governmental structure with authority over the local congregation, the founders of the Free Lutheran movement in America sought to create a church body with as little struggle for freedom and life. It was this vision, almost smothered by the cobwebs from at least a generation of neglect, that was renewed and refreshed when the AFLC was organized in 1962.

A clear vision is empowering to a spiritual movement, and the AFLC must continue to measure all of our endeavors in light of it. It was encouraging to me recently when a visiting pastor and elder mentioned that all of our directors and deans, in one way or another, stated to them that the purpose of their department was to serve. History testifies how easily this can be distorted into the opposite emphasis, that congregations exist to serve the national church body. We should thank the Lord that a servant spirit lives in our midst, yet still remain vigilant to the danger of losing it.

A vision for freedom and life should be at the heart of every AFLC congregation. A mere “political” freedom may degenerate into lawlessness, as Paul warns in his letter to the Galatians: “For you were called to freedom, brothers; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (5:13). Home and world missions, the Bible school and seminary, parish education, youth ministries, evangelism, women’s missionary federation, Free Lutheran Youth, the ARC and other Bible camps ... each of our common endeavors and auxiliaries is called to do its part that the vision might be a living reality throughout the AFLC family of churches in America and around the world.

The challenges to this vision are a reality, too. I have sometimes stated (with a smile, of course) that a “synod spirit” almost seems to be ours by nature — the old nature, not the new one — and an association like the AFLC can soon slip back into conducting its affairs the old way, without even realizing it at first. The marks of a vital spiritual movement will be lost unless the Spirit of God is in control. When the flesh rules, the results are mayhem or more human machinery.

The generation that was entrusted with the vision is passing away. Few of the founding fathers and mothers of the AFLC are still with us, and a new generation will carry on the work that they began. Thousands of new friends have found a home within our fellowship during the past thirty-plus years, sharing the same concern for building free and living congregations founded on the inerrant Word of God.

The vision entrusted still lives and empowers the life of the AFLC. May we prayerfully and faithfully entrust it to those who follow.

AFLC departments share their

The Bible School

If the Lord doesn't return for a few more years, and I have the privilege of overseeing the work of the Bible school a little longer, here is what I would like to see at AFLBS on the other side of 2000 A.D.:

A faithful, joyful crowd of students who know for certain that they are saved.

A faculty of 10 who love the Bible, use it, and believe it's 100% accurate.

Dorms bustling at 10:02 p.m. with students cramming into rooms for devotions.

Twenty students a year committed to life-time service in missions.

Twelve students a year doing youth work internships in rural congregations.

The dean of students telling me in September, "The dorms are crowded again."

Seven students on first-floor housing who are between the ages of 65 and 80.

Three choirs touring 45 churches every April.

The dean of students telling me, "Students say we need more prayer time."

An Hispanic AFLC home missions church using four of our students each summer.

Three student urban missions teams who teach Sunday afternoon classes for children.

The silent campus chapel at 6:55 a.m., scattered with students reading the Word.

The overwhelming majority of our classes still "just" expository Bible classes!

Forty students a year learning to preach the Word with conviction.

Twenty students a year testifying, "I believe God is calling me to go to seminary."

Only those graduates actually going into the ministry whom God is truly calling.

The dean of students telling me, "Our Hmong students led another friend to Christ."

One hundred students a year who meet one-to-one with an older disciple.

One hundred students a year who meet one-to-one with a new believer.

A fire for evangelism!

The dean of students telling me, "Student prayer meetings are running overtime again."

— **Pastor James L. Johnson**
AFLBS Dean

Evangelism

We believe that Christians today need to stop, be still, look at their lives and see what unbelievers see. Psalm 46:10a says, "Be still (cease striving) and know that I am God."

We need to become more involved in our neighbors' lives. We need to be concerned about their souls. It seems that most believers are as focused on themselves as on the lost. God has called believers to be different; to be lovers of the lost.

The goal for 2000 and beyond in AFLC evangelism is to remind each congregation that there is a great field of harvest rotting on the stalk; that every saved person in an AFLC congregation is called to go out so others will see Jesus living in them.

We need lay people to stop living as "undercover Christians." The commission on



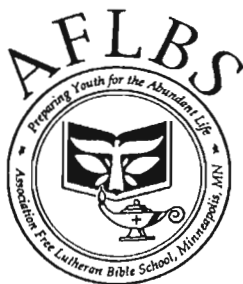
Parish Education

At the turn of a new century, there is extensive talk of change. In times of change and uncertainty, it is comforting to reflect on what does not ever change: the nature, character, and work of God. God is unchanging even throughout the centuries. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God in His mercy still offers to sinners the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

As AFLC Parish Education looks ahead to the next century, our purpose does not change. Our desire is to continue to "hold fast the faithful word" (Titus 1:9) by encouraging the regular ministry of teaching the

Free Lutheran Seminary

As the student body grows, the seminary faculty and staff realizes our own need for growth, spiritually most of all, but also professionally. The challenge to grow in our depth of understanding of God's precious, inerrant Word as well as in personal application to one's own life, is ever before our dedicated staff. We are thankful for the vision of the board of trustees of the seminary regarding faculty-staff needs and look



vision for the next century

evangelism is going to do everything it can to call everyone to the need to be "salt and light" in this dark world.

Second Chronicles 7:14 rings clearly: "If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." That's a call for God's people today. The focus throughout Scripture is on the whole body of Christ doing the work of directing men and women, boys and girls to Jesus.

May each believer allow Christ to be Lord and live a holy life, so that others will see that Christ is the One who makes life worth living.

— **Pastor James Rasmussen**
Director of Evangelism

Word of God in the local congregation. There through the means of grace, the Holy Spirit will continue to call sinners to repentance and to strengthen believers in their faith. Our role in contributing to this ministry is to provide quality, Lutheran educational and devotional resources. As we progressively work towards completing the revision of Ambassador Sunday school curriculum, providing new Bible study materials for youth and adults, as well as publishing other books such as the new AFLC Heritage Series, we want to utilize to the best of our ability the tools that are available to us including technology developments and human resources. We trust that God will provide all that is necessary for His work to go forward as long as He tarries.

— **Marian J. Christopherson**
Parish Education Director

with them to the Lord in great expectation of His abundant supply.

With the beginning of the construction of the first of four seminary apartment buildings on our campus, we see God preparing the way also for more economical and convenient living conditions for our students and their families, now and in the future. A greatly-enlarged library in the new student center to be built on the campus will also enhance the program of the seminary.

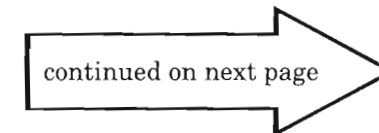
Youth Ministries

How can we offer vision to our youth who are bombarded with problems? There are daily reports of school shootings, teen pregnancy, suicides, drunk driving accidents, and drug abuse. Their lives might be titled, "Facing the Future with Fear!" Is there any hope for this future youth culture?

Yes, there is, but there is only one, and that one is JESUS! As we begin this new millennium, the hope found in Jesus will shine out brighter than ever against the black backdrop of our society. The hope found in Jesus will cause some youth to live sold-out lives for Christ regardless of the cost. The hope found in the Lord will call others to go on international mission trips where people have not heard of that hope. The hope found in Jesus will give some youth the reason they need to choose life over death. There are many reasons to face the future with fear, but Jesus offers us the hope we need to boldly face the future with vision.

The future in AFLC Youth Ministries will continue to have district rallies, youth worker retreats, summer camps, national youth conventions, and international mission teams. However, the youth office will be entering this new millennium by sending out a traveling training team. This team of three youth workers will be spending a week at 20 to 30 churches this coming year to help them revitalize their youth groups. This new millennium will also include the Leadership Training Conference 2000, which will be held at the ARC and titled "Evidence from the Heart." It will be a conference specifically designed for evangelism and discipleship training.

Get ready for a new generation that is coming at you facing the future with vision.



— **Pastor Kevin Olson**
*AFLC Youth Ministries
Director*

As the seminary considers potential growth and development in the coming century, the vital need is to remain true to the original calling — to equip men of God through the Word to be faithful to Him as undershepherds of Christ, feeding "the flock" with the living and abiding Word of God and "doing the work of an evangelist" unto the salvation of the lost and dying. Continue to pray with us toward that end.

— **Dr. Francis Monseth,**
Dean of the Seminary

A view of world missions in the new century



I look out the window of Connely Dyrud's house upon a varied view in the middle of the state of Parana, in southern Brazil. In one direction the beautiful, slightly rolling grain fields are reminiscent of scenes I have seen in the Dakotas or western Minnesota. In the foreground the backyard is filled with various fruit trees: peaches, mango, tangerine and orange. Immediately outside the window and against the skyline of the growing city of Campo Mourao stands a huge avocado tree. During the past few minutes two cantaloupe-size avocados have crashed to the ground sending shock waves through the tile floor under my feet. What a scene to watch the Dyrud's 90- pound Doggie Aleimao (German Dog) "Duchess" charge upon the grounded avocado and tear into and consume its ripened flesh.

It's all before me: the city filled with people ... the grain fields in the distance ... and the ripened fruit shaking the ground. The words of Jesus flow through my mind: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest" (Matthew 9: 37,38). Then Revelation 3:8 appears: "Behold I have put before you an open door which no one can shut."

For God's people, this is a day of challenge and excitement. We sit on the eve of the beginning of a new millennium. Will we

charge ahead and through the open doors that God has set before us?

Having visited all of our AFLC mission fields within the past year, I am convinced that we indeed stand before a door of gospel opportunity unlike any time in our past. Let us confidently forge ahead with the will of God. Let us and our AFLC make our goal God's own goal. His goal is that all people should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4); not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (II Peter 3:9).

How can this be? Oh, that we would see our congregations in Brazil, Canada, India, Mexico, Portugal and the United States become reproducing congregations, giving birth to daughter congregations around the world. This is impossible unless we are consumed with a God-given zeal for missions — meaning every Christian a missionary, and every non-Christian a mission field.

Nearly two millennia have passed since the death and resurrection of Jesus, and still two-thirds of the world's population have not acknowledged Him. May we commit ourselves to be about the evangelization of the world in whatever time remains! The task is urgent. Let us rise up and obey Him with joy and hope!

— **Pastor Eugene Enderlein**
World Missions Director



Missions within our borders

As we approach the new century, we find ourselves looking back and forward. We look back at the cross and the promise that our crucified and risen Lord is King of kings and Lord of lords. Jude 24-25 promises victory for the future. He keeps us from stumbling. He gives the believer the ability to stand in the presence of His glory, blameless and with great joy. AFLC Home Missions' goal is that the glory, the majesty, and the dominion and authority will go to Jesus Christ, both now and forever, in everything we do.

Our vision for the days ahead is that through new congregations, we would see Christians abiding in the love and redemp-

tion of Jesus. One of our board members expressed his vision for an AFLC congregation in every county in the United States so that we would spread out as a light to an unbelieving nation. Some call us a post-Christian nation and others call us the greatest mission field in the world.

An important part of our vision for the new century is to reach the many ethnic groups that now reside in the United States. Hispanic ministries need to be started along our borders and in our cities. Huge Middle Eastern and Asian populations live near us and they need to be reached for Christ.

Travel and communications technologies provide new tools for carrying out the Great Commission. Pray for us as we seek the Lord. Share with us your vision, your gifts and talents so that we can join together in seeing the world prepare for the Return of our Lord.

— **Pastor Paul M. Nash**
Home Missions Director

Missionary Sonja Dahl, has moved to Winona, Minnesota, where she was accepted at the Winona State University's registered nurse program. She traveled to Brazil this summer for a short-term medical team trip to the interior of the country and to her previous residence in Campo Mourão before beginning two years of studies at Winona.

Story City, Iowa — The Hauge Innermission Society is sponsoring their 9th annual Summer Crusade at the Story City High School July 18-24, 1999. Pastor Mike Brandt of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, will be the speaker for the seven-night crusade. For more information call Lester Hinderaker at (515) 733-5058.

Pastor Wayne Hanson has begun his interim ministry at Calvary Free Lutheran in Gilbert, Ari-

zona. His new address is 16715 E. El Lago Blvd. #312, Fountain Hills, Arizona 85268; phone: (480) 836-1021.

Pastor Brian Davidson, Weslaco, Texas, concluded his year as interim pastor at Faith Lutheran Church and is working for several weeks at the AFLC headquarters doing database report writing. He expects to fly to Naknek, Alaska, on July 12 to begin a two-month stay with Pastor Tom Olson at the Lutheran Mission Societies' KAKN radio station and mission congregations. He will help set up the new computers to more automate the station. The Christian station is the most powerful of only two operating in the region and many fishermen rely on KAKN for their weather and fishing reports. His address until September 14, will be P.O. Box 450, Naknek, AK 99633.

Pastor John and Ruby Abel, Hitterdal, Minnesota, retired missionaries to Brazil, visited several of their children in Brazil and many of the AFLC Brazilian congregations during four months of traveling earlier this year. Pastor Abel has enjoyed a tent evangelism ministry in recent years while visiting Brazil. Evangelistic services are conducted under a tent, which is taken from place to place and serves as a portable chapel and meeting area.

After attending the annual conference of the AFLC-Brazil and assisting in Bible camps, the Abels began their tent evangelism in March in a new housing area in the city of Curitiba with Pastor Clovis Xavier. Bible school students from Campo Mourão joined them to help with a house-to-house survey, and to sing and share their testimonies at the nightly services. Students again assisted in tent meetings with Pastor Jose in the city of Londrina. Questions on the survey asking, "Would you like a visit from the pastor?" and "Would you like to have a Bible study in your home?" received numerous positive responses.

After a family reunion in Curitiba at the home of Missionary Paul and Becky Abel during Easter week, Pastor John and Ruby traveled with their tent 1,000 miles to Vitoria and the two congregations in that region. The churches there are served by Pastor Wagner and lay pastor Hilario.

The Abels wrote of their experiences, "We can only praise our Savior as we look back on our four months in Brazil. Fifty-one people were prayed with for salvation and there were cards on 54 families who were interested in a visit from the local pastor. 'It is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our sight' (Psalm 118:23). God honors His Word and has promised that it shall not return to Him void (Isaiah 55:11). It was not always easy, as we covered about 9,000 miles by road and put in some long hours. Your prayers kept us going and we ask you to continue to hold us up before His throne of grace."

Finnish spiritual classic now available in English *The Doctrine of Faith Unto Salvation*

By Fredrik Gabriel Hedberg
(1811-1893)

Erick E. Erickson, translator
Finnish Evangelical Lutheran
Mission, Inc., 1998

A Guide for Growing in Grace

Peter closed his second letter with the challenge to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This devotional commentary on the first chapter of Ephesians will help you to do so. Arranged for daily reading, the chapters overflow with food for the growing Christian, pointing us away from our own righteous rags to the righteousness of our all-sufficient Savior.

The Doctrine of Faith unto Salvation was written by a 19th century Finnish Lutheran pastor during one of the seasons of spiritual awakening that have blessed that northern European nation. Reacting to a legalistic pietism that pointed seeking souls to their feelings for assurance of salvation, the message of this new evangelical revival was "Look to Jesus!" "The works-right-

eous are certainly zealous concerning the works of the Law," Hedberg wrote, "but they do not direct souls to believe in Christ who has fulfilled the Law perfectly" (p.116).

Filled with quotes from Luther's works, the author makes it crystal clear that he is not concocting any novel teaching, but rather recovering the Reformation emphasis on free grace that is so easily forgotten. There are also references to controversies among Finnish revival leaders that may confuse the reader, but they do not distract from the central theme.

The translator and other supporters of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission have done our generation a great service by publishing the first English edition of this spiritual classic. It promises to be a source of blessing, not only to those who share the same ethnic heritage, but to all who seek to grow in grace.

— by Pastor Robert Lee

Available from AFLC Parish Education (612) 545-5631



Pastor Mike Zehnder, Parker, Colorado, the newest member of the AFLC, enjoyed the groundbreaking ceremony on May 22, at the AFLC Schools' campus for the first unit of seminary student housing. Construction is underway with completion expected for the beginning of the fall semester at FLS. Applications for the two-bedroom (\$450 monthly) and three-bedroom (\$500 monthly) units are being accepted. Unmarried seminarians many apply after July 1. Seminary enrollment in the fall is expected to increase. According to Dr. Francis Monseth, Free Lutheran Seminary Dean, there is a possibility of 10 new men joining the student body this September.

Concert, groundbreaking and graduation draws a large crowd to the campus



Standing on the site of the soon-to-be-built seminary housing unit are: Mary Pollestad, Gloria Lee and Cindy Schlenk, Vision 2004 secretary.



Emily Baker, Bloomington, Minnesota, is a 1999 AFLBS graduate.



Pastor Jerry Moan gave the commencement address.



Traci Munson, Fertile, Minnesota, found time to finish packing before her graduation ceremony from AFLBS on Saturday afternoon, May 22.



The Seminary Chorus at the Spring Concert on May 21, at the schools' chapel.



After the graduation service it was time for that last special picture with friends or simply a quiet moment before the reception.



The AFLC Schools' faculty at the graduation service.



FLS graduate, Craig Benson, received his diploma from Dr. Francis Monseth. Waiting to congratulate him are Pastor Robert Lee and David Borg.



Ingrid Giles, Aguascalientes, Mexico, received her diploma from AFLBS Dean James L. Johnson.



A standing-room-only crowd filled the schools' chapel for the graduation services on May 22. Fifty-seven students received their diplomas from the Bible school, the largest graduating class ever. The previous high was 55 graduates in 1977. According to Dean James L. Johnson, 55 students are expected to return for their senior year next fall. Applications continue to come in for first-year students at the AFLBS office at 3120 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441. Phone (612) 544-9501.

Colorado congregation joins the AFLC

Living Water Christian Church, a Bible-based Lutheran community of grace, was accepted on the AFLC congregational roster by recent coordinating committee action. The congregation began their public worship services in April 1998 in Parker, a southeastern Denver suburb. Fifteen families and their pastor, Mike Zehnder had a "burden to let God birth a new congregation in Parker, where there was no conservative Lutheran church. Today we have an average attendance of 130." The congregation, currently meeting in a school, is negotiating on 28.5 acres of property overlooking the suburb in the fastest growing county in the United States. The community is 10 minutes from Denver's rapidly expanding "tech center."

Pastor Zehnder, now on the AFLC's Fellowship Clergy Roster, was a fifth generation pastor in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The Concordia Seminary graduate was a church musician and director of Christian education for 16 years before beginning his pastoral ministry seven years ago.

— Planned Giving —

You can invest in the ministries of the AFLC through planned giving — wills, charitable remainder trusts, etc. Call Mark Johnson at 1-800-950-2109



Pastor Laurel and Joan Udden, New Hope, Minnesota, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 18, 1999. Pastor Udden was the pastor of Medicine Lake Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Minnesota before his retirement and previously had served many years as the Director of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement.

Cokato, Minnesota — Good Shepherd Free Lutheran Church, located just 45 minutes west of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area, is accepting applications for a Director of Youth and Family Ministries. This full-time position includes developing further the existing youth program and establishing a college/young adult's ministry, assist in coordination of other educational programs of the church, and other areas of ministry involvement. Further details available upon request, call Pastor Lyndon Korhonen at (320) 286-5420.

Pastor Scott Jans, Fairbank, Iowa, was placed on the AFLC Clergy Roster at a recent coordinating committee meeting. Pastor Jans serves Lord of the Harvest Lutheran Church in Fairbank.

Marilyn Hurley, 70, Puyallup, Washington, passed away on May 23, 1999. She was a long-time church pianist and a former missionary to Mexico. She is survived by three sons, one of whom is Pastor Timothy Hurley of Good Shepherd Lutheran in Ponca City, Oklahoma.

Lynda Dornquast, 90, Mountain Home, Arkansas, passed away on April 22, 1999. She is survived by her two children. She lived with her son, Pastor Norman Dornquast, and his sister, Olive, at the Faith Lutheran parsonage in Weslaco, Texas, from 1975 until his retirement in 1998. They moved to Mountain Home, Arkansas where Pastor Dornquast serves an unaffiliated congregation, Henderson Community Church in nearby Henderson, Missouri.

AFLC memorial gifts received in May 1999

(Department given to, in memory of ...)

World Missions

Pastor Ernest Langness
DeLoyd Rudningen
Ruth Jacobson
Florence Dickson

Home Missions

Mrs. George Bahr
Mildred Aarhus
Clayton Lee

General Fund

Pastor Ernest Langness

AFLTS

Joe Milton
Pastor Ernest Langness

AFLBS

Bennie Falk
Anker Harbo
Arlene Goolsby
Richard Hawes
Pastor Ernest Langness
Burton Boyum
Gusta Mae Bahr
Mabel Peterson

Vision 2004

Joe Milton, Sr.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (5 months) — January 1 — May 31, 1999

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN MAY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$234,385.00	\$22,144.27	99,836.59	43
Seminary	110,296.00	7,955.73	50,080.64	45
Bible School	147,674.00	11,382.33	74,833.28	51
Home Missions.	238,152.00	17,730.16	90,856.91	38
World Missions.	190,909.00	10,211.39	56,138.74	29
Capital Investment	14,065.00	390.05	2,246.40	16
Parish Education	56,854.00	4,302.99	29,329.38	52
Church Extension	21,051.00	736.50	8,793.74	42
TOTALS	\$1,013,386.00	74,853.42	412,115.68	41
TOTALS 1997	1,278,758.00	95,144.04	480,407.99	38

Goal 42%

The Evangelism Department received \$3,235.32 in May.

Do you know where you are going?

At times, I have been driving along and the passenger with me has asked, "Do you know where you are going?" I often don't appreciate that question, because it demonstrates my cover has been blown. I don't want to admit I'm lost. I want people to believe I have it all under control.

Often the passenger isn't fooled. They detect what is happening. I'm going fast, but to where I do not know.

Then they ask the question that is maybe even more painful to consider than the first one: "Why don't you stop and ask directions?"

Being on the road without an idea as to where you are going can be frustrating. Being on the road of life without a clue as to where you are headed can be fatal. And yet, as we are on the verge of a new century and a new millennium, many are rapidly entering into it with no sense of purpose or direction.

People are trying to discover the reason for their existence. In a recent national survey the question was put to people: If you could ask God one question, what would it be? A third of the people polled said they would ask why they were put on earth. It was by far the most common response.

The Lord wants us to ask Him why we are here. He has an answer. He told the prophet Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5, NIV).

God does not put anyone on earth simply to take up space. He does not want any of us to wander aimlessly through life. Each of us has a reason for being. Richard Bach said, "Here is the test to find whether your mission on earth is finished: If you're alive, it isn't."

Many have no idea what their mission and purpose in life is, because they are either like me when I'm driving, not too interested in asking for directions, or going to the wrong place to ask. We do not find where we are to go by looking for which path is easiest and has the least challenges. The road that leads to the greatest riches is very likely not the one where our purpose will be found.

We find our reason for being by looking to God in prayer, spending time in His Word and asking for His help in applying it to our lives, and seeking

counsel from others who know the Lord. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV). He wants to reveal those plans to us. He has a place for us to go and He wants us to know it.

In Acts 6 we see the early Church realizing each person has a specific calling from God. Some are to give attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Others are to wait on tables. Other reasons for being exist as well. You have a specific and unique purpose, a gift from God. May He give you vision to see that purpose.

Congregations also often go through life with no idea where they are headed. They do not know their purpose. They just exist.

Howard Hendricks, a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, after a short time of serving on the board of a Christian organization, asked at a meeting why the group existed. The chairman had a little difficulty coming up with an answer, so he asked the person who had been with the group the longest to respond. He couldn't, and neither could anyone else in the group. Then Hendricks asked to make a motion. He moved that the organization fold. The majority wasn't in favor of that! They had been around for many years! They had to keep going! Hendricks promptly resigned from the board. He had no time to waste being

part of a group that did not know why it existed or where it was going.

Sometimes within congregations groups exist, simply because they always have. They maybe started with a clear purpose, but it has been lost. That can be the case with whole congregations. The purpose becomes nothing more than keeping the programs going and the building open.

God created His Church for a much greater purpose than that. We are to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19), to storm the gates of hell itself and impact the world (Matthew 16:18).

May each of our individual congregations find its special and significant purpose within the overall purpose of bringing glory to God and proclaiming the good news of Jesus. May we know where we are going, and trust in Christ to help us get there.

— **Pastor Craig Johnson**

"Being on the road of life without a clue as to where you are headed can be fatal."

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Periodicals

ARC PAGE



Pictured is the All-Boards meeting last fall in Tadmor, the ARC's most popular meeting room. Originally it was the Officers' Club on the radar installation. This is just one of the many renovations completed, making the facility a versatile and increasingly popular retreat center.

Y2K. Just months ago only a few people knew what that word represented. Now everyone's talking about it. What will happen on January 1, 2000? Certainly there is potential for disaster, but do we know what will happen on any given day? There are so many questions, choices and opportunities that we face daily.

The psalmist has some Y2K and everyday counsel to give. "Show me your way, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long" (Psalm 25:4-5).

Each of us needs to learn His truth, His paths, His ways. We need to spend time in His Word, in

prayer, in being quiet before Him and in the fellowship of other believers. Our hope is in Him all day long! That's the basic, nitty-gritty way to prepare for the Year 2000 and each day given to us by God.

That's also what we're all about here at the Association Retreat Center! Twenty years ago the AFLC took possession of these 80 acres with that purpose in mind — to provide a place to come away from the busyness of life to learn the ways of the Lord and leave refreshed and emboldened by the hope that is in Christ. We've changed the looks on these 80 acres. The next century will bring more improvements to our facilities as the Lord tarries, but our purpose remains the same.

Come to Family Camp

August 1-7, 1999

Does this date sound familiar to you? It should because it's Family Camp at the ARC and we're expecting you! We've got great speakers lined up: Pastors James L. Johnson, Jerry Moan, and James Rasmussen along with Cary Dietsche as worship leader. Our gospel team assisting us throughout the week are the Ambassadors.

As always there will be family activities, canoeing, snoozing, eating and that wonderful fellowship with other believers. This little bit of heaven-on-earth begins Sunday afternoon with registration at 3 p.m. Don't eat on your way here because we're cookin'. The week will fly (because you'll have so much fun) and it will soon be Saturday morning and time to get everyone's address before the trip home following the final service after breakfast.

Contact the ARC for more information, pricing or to receive a brochure. Rooms are going fast but we'll always find a place for you. The ARC is the best place to bring your family for vacation!

Phone: 1-800-294-2877

Fax: 1-715-294-2398

E-mail: thearc@cornernet.com

Mail: The ARC

2372 30th Ave.

Osceola, WI 54020