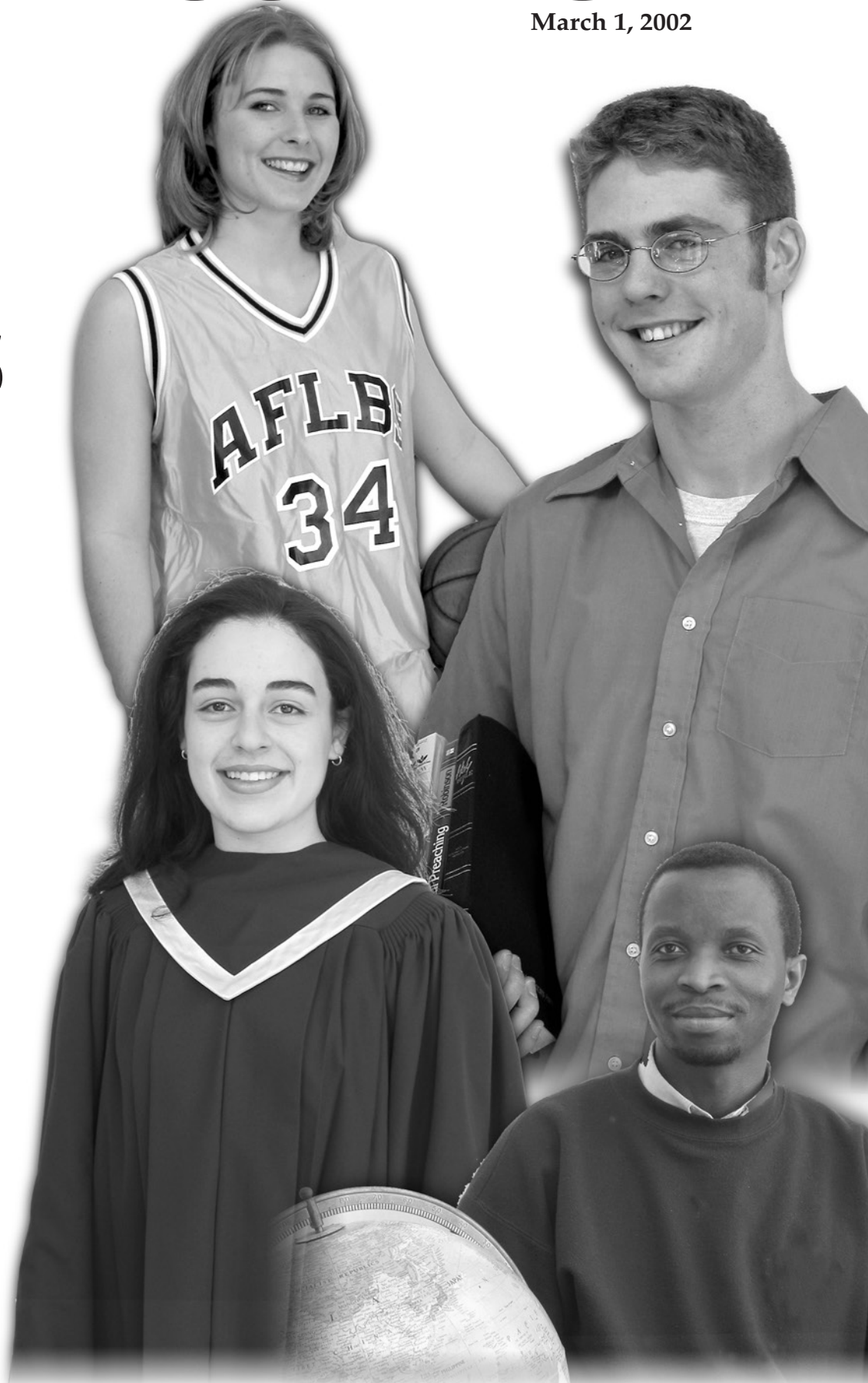


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 1, 2002

Students of God's Word

Find out how
AFLBS and
FLS are
changing lives



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 1, 2002
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Editor: Rev. Craig Johnson

Assistant to the Editor: Ruth Gunderson

Editorial Board: Rev. John Mundfrom, Oryen Benrud, Rev. Jerry Moan, Rev. James L. Johnson.

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For editorial inquiries and information:

The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441; 763-545-5631; fax 763-545-0079; e-mail craigj@teleport.com
ruthg@aflc.org

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Coming to our senses

Did you know that the epithelial lining of the mucosa is highly specialized, being composed of pseudo-stratified, ciliated, columnar epithelium in which the goblet cells are richly interspersed?

I've had a lot of fun with that sentence over the years. My aunt, a nurse, taught it to me when I was a child. What does it mean? I don't have a clue. But a rhinoplastologist would tell you it has something to do with the nose and your sense of smell.

One of the most powerful of all our senses is that of smell. Can you recall the moist scent of wet mittens, or the smell of a library full of books? How about the adorable aroma of a baby's head or the flowering tang of a mint leaf? I jump at the chance to sniff a handful of fresh black dirt or to catch a whiff of freshly cut alfalfa. Odors have the ability to trigger so many different memories and feelings.

A little over a year ago in early January 2001, I was standing in the lobby at the front desk of the Marriott Hotel in Denver, Colo. I remember distinctly the essence of sweet cherry in the air as I spoke with Robert and Caleb behind the counter. Vulkan, a bellhop from Turkey, was carrying luggage in and out of the sliding glass doors about 30 feet behind me. Each time the door opened, a disgusting stench of smoke would enter the building. James, the other bellhop, was taking a cigarette break. The odor definitely spoiled the experience. But suddenly things changed. Laura, from Argentina, who also worked at the Marriott, wandered over to join in the conversation. Drifting with her was a very pleasing redolence that quickly overwhelmed the rankness coming from outside. Her perfume was the fragrance of life that

eclipsed the smell of death.

II Corinthians 2:14-16a says, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life." What do you smell like?

In the Old Testament, sacrifices of animals were offered to God for the sins of the people, and "the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma ..." (Genesis 8:21a). In the New Testament, Jesus became that sacrifice when He "gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering to God" (Ephesians 5:2). Likewise, in Romans 12:1, we are called upon to "offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God."

Again I ask you, "What do you smell like?" Do you smell like James, a reeking odor that keeps others from breathing well — a disposition that chokes out the presence of Christ? Or do you smell like Laura, the fragrance of life, who carries with her a bouquet of friendliness? Someone who brightens a room with the sweet smell of their personality is so appealing. May our personal spiritual perfume be a pleasing aroma to God and to all those around us.



— Paul Kneeland
Youth Pastor
Faith & Stillwater
Free Lutheran
Kalispell, Mont.

SOUND BITES

I do not think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday.

— *Abraham Lincoln*

We are always either drawing nearer to God or falling away. There is no holding pattern.

— *Jim Cymbala*

Some people say that I am passionate because of my Latin heritage. Actually, I am passionate because God's Word makes me so, and because man's condition demands it.

— *Alex Montoya*

I must ask again and again for the faith to believe that God delights in me and desires to relate to me. For that reason as much as any, I study the Bible; not merely to master a work of great literature or to learn theology, but to let soak into my soul the inescapable message of God's love and personal concern.

— *Philip Yancy*

Togetherness in Christ encourages movement toward Christ.

— *Larry Crabb*

LOOKIN



Anders Macy (center), Beltrami, Minn., attended AFLBS from 1979-1981. Also pictured are Pam (Kinneberg) Jacobson and Joyce (Strand) Folson.

The saying goes, “Hindsight is 20/20.” Twenty years seems like a long time, unless, like me, you are 41 and looking back to the best two years of your Christian life. I am writing about the two years (1979-1981) I spent at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School in Minneapolis, Minn. Imagining what these past 22 years would have been like as a Christian and church member had I not chosen to attend Bible school and study God’s Word for two years seems almost scary.

One of the first memories I have of Bible school is being asked in class why I chose to attend AFLBS. I remember distinctly answering, “So I can learn to rightly handle the Word of God.” Becoming a Christian only a year and one-half earlier, and with virtually no Christian background, I truly wanted to live for Jesus. I figured the best way to accomplish my goal was to attend a Bible school and learn what the Bible taught about walking with my Savior. Through some great guidance by Ken Sortedahl, director of Peniel Christian School in

Spring Valley, Wis., I chose AFLBS.

Since graduating from Bible school, I have attended several congregations within the AFLC. While participating in those congregations, I have been able to bring a confidence in biblical matters that would have been difficult without the background Bible school gave me. Regarding doctrinal matters, as various ideas and concerns have presented themselves in congregational situations, I have been able to use sound Bible study principles to find the truth to some incredibly complex issues. Practical scriptural applications of God’s Word to life’s various problems have been much simpler because of the techniques I learned while studying at AFLBS. These applications have translated to church life while teaching Sunday school, counseling at Bible camp, visiting in homes and preaching from pulpits. All Christians stumble, and all of us fall into diverse temptations. However, with an in-depth biblical understanding, dealing with temptation is possible and restoring a hurting brother is a privilege because of the understanding that comes from the Word of God.

GOING BACK AFLBS

Graduate reflects on post-Bible school life

Over the past years, God has given me a number of opportunities to assist area pastors by filling their pulpits when they are not available. Preparing for a sermon can be an scary experience. Yet, because of the resources that I gained at Bible school, these tasks have been within my grasp, even on a last-minute basis. Granted, any thorough, doctrinally correct and practical Bible study or sermon takes time for even the most adept theologian. As a graduate of AFLBS, I have resources available to complete the tasks, glorify God, encourage the saints and further the kingdom of God.

Perhaps, above all the benefits Bible school training has given me, I cherish most the time I was able to devote to just studying God's Word. Through my years of college, working and family life, I have not had the time to pursue an in-depth, extended study of the Scriptures. There have been times of preparation for a sermon or Bible study that have compared to Bible school, but these times are short-lived. I gained a spiritual depth at Bible school by being able to focus on the Scriptures for an extended period of time. God's Word was ingrained into my thinking, which has allowed the Holy Spirit to use the Word to transform my heart and mind, thus influencing those around me.

An area of biblical study that has always fascinated me is the comparison of the human body to the Christian church. Each member of the human body is dependent on the other parts for survival, and each part is interdependent on the next to ensure a healthy body. When one part hurts or does not work properly, the whole body

suffers. As believers, and members of one another, having a proper understanding of God's Word is fundamental to a healthy Christian church. Notice I didn't say, "a healthy Free Lutheran Church." A proper understanding of the Bible will reach beyond the domain of any particular church body. A proper understanding of the Scriptures will influence people throughout the world. A proper understanding of God's Holy Word is essential to furthering the kingdom of God.

Perfect vision is difficult, if not impossible, to attain. Looking back in time does allow a unique perspective. I, and many people I know, look back at the years spent at AFLBS with gratitude. No other educational experience has so anchored my thoughts, changed my behavior and given such long-lasting influence in my life and the lives of those around me than the years I spent studying God's Word at AFLBS. Am I making a sales pitch for AFLBS? No. I am encouraging any and all who have the opportunity to attend a Bible school where you will spend time learning to "rightly handle the Word of God."

— *Anders Macy*
Resurrection Free Lutheran
Beltrami, Minn.



Macy ('81) married Nancy (Woods, '82). They have four sons. He is a mortician who manages three funeral homes in northwestern Minnesota.

This song we sing



Music is heard almost non-stop, everywhere you go on the campus of AFLBS. Students play piano at several different locations concurrently throughout the day, and stereos are frequently heard playing praise music in the dorm rooms, office and kitchen. Hymns and worship songs are sung at the start of Bible classes, in the halls, during chapel services, before campus devotions, and at evening services in the chapel. There are rehearsals for choir, ministry teams, wind ensemble and voice and piano lessons. We have come to expect a myriad of joyful, worshipful and reverent sounds heard on campus from early morning until late in the evening. There's no doubt that AFLBS students enjoy daily involvement in music for pleasure (edification), worship and outreach.

Gift of God

Luther said, "Music is a gift of God," something that all of us can enjoy, something to enrich our lives. He also mentioned, "Music produces what otherwise only theology can do, namely a calm and joyful disposition."

In I Samuel 16:23, we read that David played the harp, and as he played, evil spirits left Saul. There were no lyrics, singing or message, nothing except the beauty of the music itself. David was asked to play

the harp, and it had a powerful effect. Luther expressed that "the devil, the creator of saddening cares and disquieting worries, takes flight at the sound of music almost as much as before the Word of God." God intended for us to have music that is peaceful, relaxing, uplifting, edifying, motivational and inspirational. It is a gift of God. AFLBS students regularly enjoy this gift as they listen, and perform music.

Worship

At AFLBS, music is used as a vehicle for worship. Students often spend time alone in the chapel, worshipping the Lord and praying. Students, staff and faculty frequently meet for informal times of prayer and worship through song. It is common to hear a pianist or guitarist playing and singing worship songs and hymns to the Lord, with God as the only intended audience.

It is difficult, if not impossible, for us to find words that adequately express our praise and love to the Lord. Music can help us express a deep reverence for an awesome God when mere words fall short. Music has always played an important part in our corporate worship experience at AFLBS, but the worship in our chapel services is heightened when students individually worship God through music every day during devotions.

Outreach

At AFLBS, we are very serious about striving for excellence in our music program. We encourage students to practice hard to improve their performance, but always with the intent of reaching people with a musical message of salvation through Jesus. We are not a liberal arts school where the emphasis is on performing quality music. Our goal is more focused, because we desire to perform quality music that points people to the Lord. What better topic is there for a composer or lyricist than God, who is the creator and sustainer of all life? Thankfully, there is a large repertoire of great compositions available. Many professional musicians agree that the best music is sacred music, and the last several centuries have produced an abundance of music to choose from.

Music is God's gift to us. He is honored and glorified as we use this gift to express our love and passion for him through worship, both individually and corporately. This gift also gives us the opportunity to communicate our faith in Jesus to a world that is hurting and in need of a Savior.

— Jerry Nelson
AFLBS music director





Music has played a big part in my life, ever since I was little. I remember putting on musical programs with my family, being involved in the church and community choirs, and taking piano, flute and organ lessons. Because I was brought up in a home school setting, I focused on music mainly at home. Piano was my main concentration and what I enjoyed the most.

I distinctly remember at about 15 years old, praying that the Lord would use me for His glory. I gave any musical ability I had to Him, knowing He gave it to me in the first place. The Lord gave me many opportunities to serve Him, such as praise band at church and youth group.

I am currently attending AFLBS, and the Lord is blessing me with a ministry in music. In my two years here, I have been involved in choir, instrumental ensemble and worship team.

Choir has been an awesome time ministering to others. Last year we had the opportunity to go to Eastern Europe on our tour during spring break. This was an amazing opportunity for us. The main reason we sing as a choir is to bring glory to God through the words of our songs and our worship toward Him.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, "Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man

glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches: But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me. That I am the Lord, exercising loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,' says the Lord." I believe these verses say what we believe as a choir, not to glory in anything we do, but that all the glory goes to Christ.

Worship became real to me in a new way on tour. I was reminded that because we all serve the same God, we can all worship together no matter what language we speak. It was a huge blessing to be able to minister in this way. It is awesome that we can spend time in the Word and in prayer before every practice, putting our focus in the right place.

Being on the worship team at AFLBS has been a great honor. The reason for a worship team is not to stand up in front of a group and sing and play for them, but to lead them in worship of our Almighty God. We have had chances to be involved in Campus Days at AFLBS and youth retreats. It is a wonderful ministry opportunity not only to worship, but to encourage students in their walk with Christ.

I know it is the same with the other music teams that go out — to be a blessing to others and minister

to them through music. I believe music can work in a very different way from words. Music can touch hearts that have been hardened toward God and His Word, and it can also bring joy to Christians who are serving and seeking the Lord.

Music here at AFLBS is a great opportunity to unite with other believers, excel in our musical abilities, encourage those we come in contact with and draw us closer to our Heavenly Father.

I plan on receiving a degree in music, perhaps focusing on church ministry. I am excited to see what the Lord has in store for me. He wants to use anyone who is willing, which is why He has given us all abilities and talents.

The gift of music has been given to us to bring glory to God, and I praise Him for this gift. I pray that God will continue to use AFLBS to encourage others and draw them closer to Christ, that we may all bring glory to His name. Psalm 95:6-7 says, "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand."

— *Nicole Papillon*
AFLBS senior
Wadena, Minn.





ABOVE: Zak in Texas training for the 1984 Olympics. RIGHT: The day he won his first championship against the Army man he challenged. His outfit bears the national flag.



Preaching and sports go

HAND

IN HAND

The government officials came one day to his high school. They pointed to his friends, pointed to him, and said, “you.” He had no choice. He was drafted into the Tanzanian National Service.

That was more than 30 years ago. And it was the beginning of a chain of events that would lead Zakayo Malekwa to China, Russia, South Korea, Finland, Canada and the United States. It would lead him to a national record and a bronze medal. It would lead him to study socialism, communism, village organization and, eventually, theology. It would lead him to the Free Lutheran Seminary.

“That’s the mystery of God,” said Zak.

Ask anyone on campus to describe Zak and you’ll hear words like “brother” and “passionate.” Big and dark, he can put a person at ease with his soft voice and ready smile. As a respected evangelist and pastor in his own country, Zak left four congregations in the bush country and his wife and two daughters to finish his master’s degree at the FLS. His long road here is a story he loves to tell.

Chosen to become a leader in the fledgling National Service, he often found that his desire to reach the unsaved clashed with military dogma. God, it seems, was a threat to the Army. So Zak, unwilling and unable to stem his ministry, was often threatened himself.

God used a javelin to protect him.

“One army man was a champion in the javelin in those days,” said Zak. “I told him, ‘I’m going to beat you.’ He said, ‘You can’t beat me.’ I said, literally, ‘In the name of my Lord, I’m going to overcome you next year.’ I remember that.”

But Zak had never thrown a javelin before.

“He said, ‘You can train. You can’t beat me.’ So I prayed, ‘Please God.’ This was the year revival started in the National Service.”

To train, Zak threw rocks and weight lifted wood. Without an actu-

al javelin, he cut trees and threw them. Meanwhile, the military had given him an ultimatum.

“I had been given a notice to chose between the Army and preaching. I said, ‘I’m going to do both.’ It was really a threat to the army people.”

A year after his challenge, in 1975, the championship meet was held between the Army and the National Service. It was the first time he threw a javelin.

“I threw 227 feet in my first try.” The national record was 218 feet. “I broke national record. Army record. I beat the man. Then I



repented because I said it like I was teasing, but God was serious.

“That winning event became my security, too. They couldn’t fire me because of my ability. It became national news. It became protection.”

Instead, Zak was sent to China to study village organization and socialism. Government officials threatened to kick him out because he began preaching in Peking (now Beijing). But he broke the national record, again, with a throw of 230 feet, and he was safe.

“The more I became famous, the more I was preaching. Preaching and sports go hand-in-hand.”

Back home in 1978, he continued preaching and training. And the military recognized his ministry. But his country soon sent him to Russia to learn about village organization. Because he was unable to finish his high school education, the govern-

ment offered him college scholarships.

So, throughout the 1980s, Zak spent much of his time in the Western Hemisphere, studying at Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, Oklahoma State, Ranger Junior College in Texas and Texas A&M. At Oklahoma, he gave up his government scholarship so that he could pursue his own desire: studying theology. He earned his own scholarships with his skill as a thrower.

His résumé of competitions reads like an accomplished athlete, including three consecutive trips to the Olympics — 1980 in Moscow, placing 16th, 1984 in Los Angeles, finishing 12th, and 1988 in Seoul, South Korea, placing 16th again. In 1982, he qualified for the Commonwealth Games in Australia, taking home the bronze medal. And he competed in two World Championships: 1983 in Helsinki and 1987 in Rome.

But in each country, in each village, Zak found a way to minister to the unsaved and preach the Word of God.

“They would find me playing my guitar,” he said. When they asked what he was singing about, “I would say I was singing about Jesus. ... Most of the time, when they came to my room I was praying, reading my Bible.”

He returned to Tanzania and became deeply involved in a revival in the remote villages. At the urging of FLS alum Pastor Z.A. Axwesso and missionary Dr. Norvald Yri, Zak returned to the United States last fall to finish his studies. At 51, he still has some major goals set for both the near and the far future.

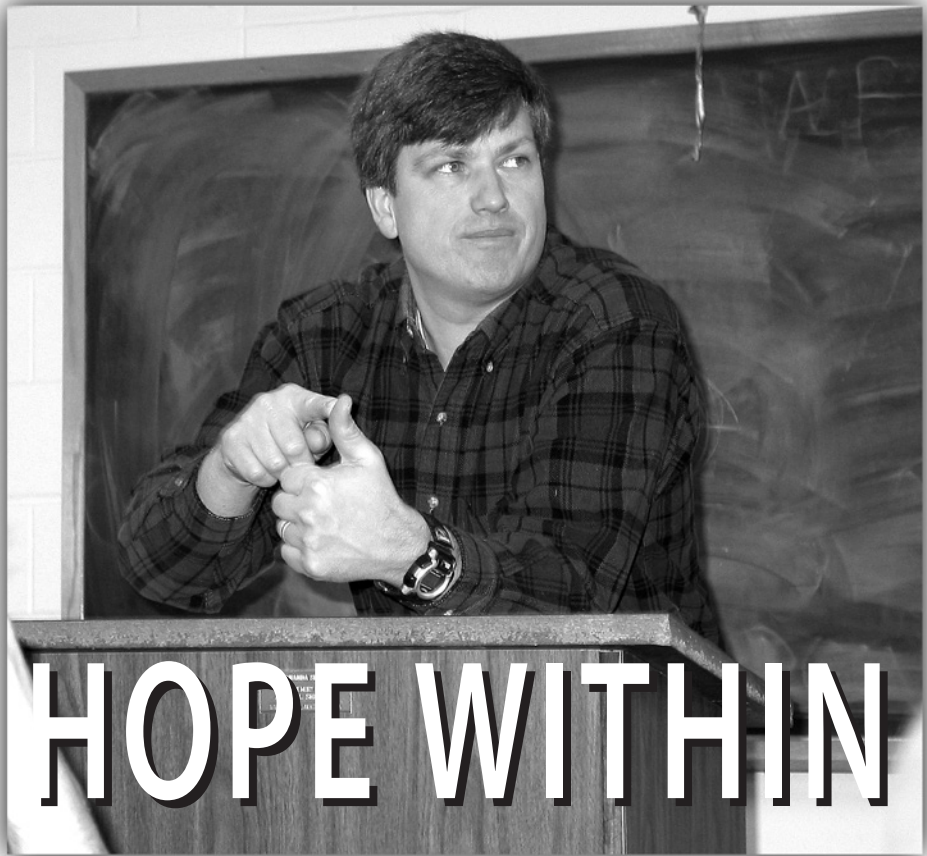
“One is ... to continue with evangelism to unreached people, to the primitive area where the gospel hasn’t reached,” said Zak. “My burning goal is how can I preach the gospel without being bound. For that reason I want to preach freely. Not to follow so much rules. It delays the message and people are waiting.”

— **Ruth Gunderson**
Assistant editor



Dr. Jonathan
Strand gives
AFLBS, FLS
students an
introduction to
apologetics

THIS HOPE WITHIN



Faith in Jesus isn't always the simplest and easiest belief to hold. The world tells us that Jesus is foolishness and describes the Judeo-Christian God as "glowering and whimpering" (Gregory Corso, "The Whole Mess ... Almost"). The world mocks us for our belief in an omnipotent, personal God. Not only non-believers have doubts and criticisms, but Christians also struggle in this area. During times when I don't feel God's presence around me, I also begin to doubt the truth of my belief in Jesus Christ as my Savior and of the existence of God. Satan consistently attacks both Christians and pagans with these doubts.

The course on Christian apologetics that Dr. Strand taught here at the AFLBS helped me and the other students develop confidence in our defense of the faith. Often, an antagonist of Christianity tries to challenge a believer by bringing up an argument pointed at a minute detail of the Gospel account that appears

errant. Dr. Strand emphasized not getting caught up in these little petty arguments, but to always focus the discussion on the basics. These include the existence of moral truth, God and the deity of Christ. Never argue just for the sake of arguing, but use the opportunity toward eternal results for the salvation of souls.

This applies to my own life as well, when Satan tries to confuse my beliefs by sidetracking me. Whenever I begin to stumble on an inconsequential detail, I should remind myself of the basic gospel truth. How Judas Iscariot died or what means God used to divide the Red Sea offer no everlasting consequence.

Even if there existed a possibility that Christianity was not real, it still makes good logical sense to put your faith in Jesus Christ. That is what my mom, Cathe, told me during an instance of doubt. Pascal, a famous theologian, philosopher, mathematician and physicist, made a famous wager that closely follows my mom's wisdom. The wager states that belief

in Christ has infinite rewards and only finite "pains" while living on Earth, while disbelief has infinite loss. If Christianity isn't true then only finite losses and gains exist. When in a time of doubt a Christian can always fall back on this assurance that they have chosen the most logical and rewarding belief.

The study of Christian apologetics provided me with the confidence to defend my beliefs from attacks directed at my heart as well as from other people. This assurance enables me to proclaim the message of Christ even to those who might strongly challenge the existence of God or Jesus. God is not a foolish belief as our atheistic society wishes us to believe, rather, He is a real and eternal being as described in John 1 who holds everything in His control.

— *Isaac Erhardt*
AFLBS junior
Elim Lutheran
Lake Stevens, Wash.



Walk onto any college campus, and you will be deluged with a veritable flood of ideas, most running directly against the Bible. The biology professor will tell you that all life evolved from simple one-celled organisms. Try to say that God created the heavens and the earth, and all you'll get is funny looks. The philosophy professor will say that truth is relative, that all religions are equal. Stammer something back about the Bible being the inspired and true Word of God, and you'll get laughed at.

Get the picture? Today's secular universities aren't just separate from the Church, they're running against the Church, head-on. If you're going to be a college kid these days and stay Christian, you have to know your stuff. You have to be prepared to give an answer for the hope within you — and that's where apologetics comes in handy.

This January, during interterm, Dr. Jonathan Strand taught a Christian apologetics class here at AFLBS. Dr. Strand, an AFLBS and AFLTS alum, holds a B.A. in philosophy from the U of M, and a Ph.D. in philosophy from Notre Dame. Currently, he is a professor of philosophy at Concordia University College of Alberta, in Edmonton.

"I really liked the class," said Wade Mobley, a current seminary student. "He even got into the mathematics side of it, which I enjoyed."

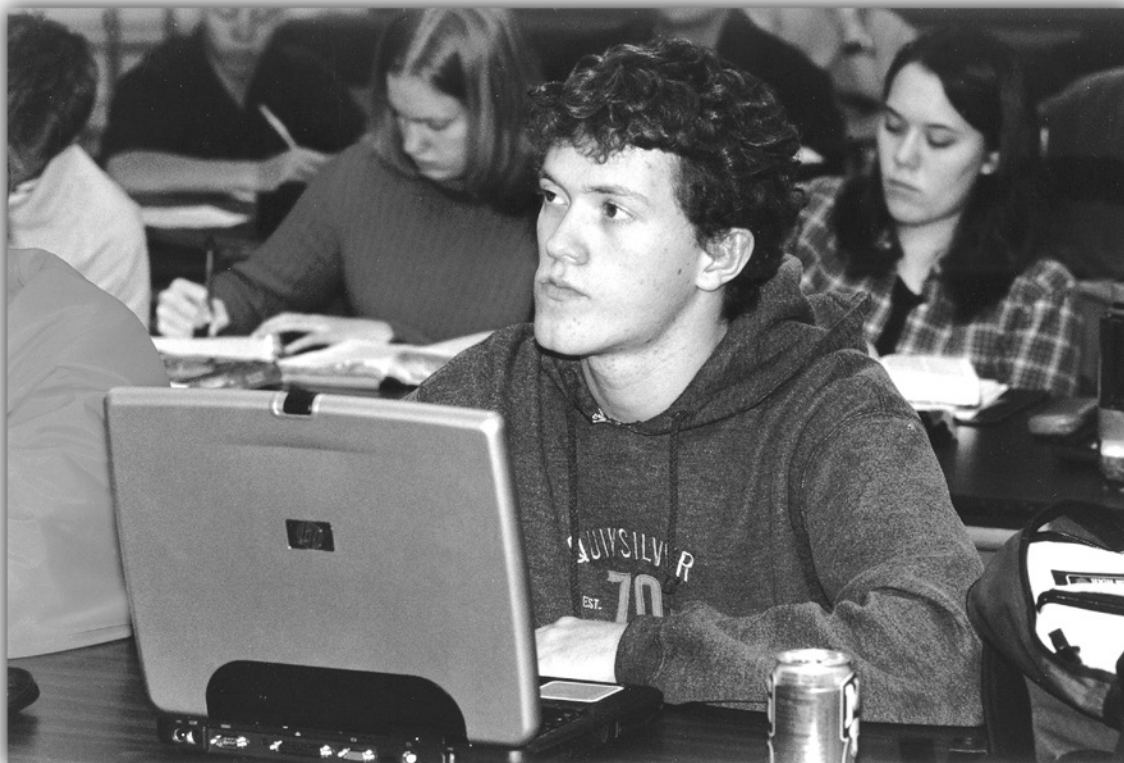
At first glance, math doesn't seem to have anything to do with the Bible, but after Dr. Strand's

class, it becomes perfectly clear. In fact, Christian faith is just as plausible as believing that two and two are four. Furthermore, he showed that all the arguments secular professors make are really much less defensible than Christianity. That's what apologetics is: the intellectual defense of the Christian faith.

In the short period Dr. Strand was here, he covered the basics of logical philosophy, summarized the traditional arguments for and against the existence of God (which uses mathematics), dealt with the problem of evil, gave the historical case for the divinity of Christ, and defended the authority of Scripture, all the while fielding the toughest questions the class could think of. In short, AFLBS students were given a crash course in the nitty-gritty "why" and "how" of Christianity.

Certainly, the students taking Dr. Strand's class will still face challenges to their faith in college. College is a tough place, no matter what you know — but, thanks to a week and one-half of tough questions and sound answers, most of us will be able to truly "give a reason for the hope that we have" (I Peter 3:15).

— *Jordan Hylden*
AFLBS junior
Victory Free Lutheran
Park River, N.D.



Jordan Hylden,
AFLBS junior, from
Park River, N.D.

VISION FUND-RAISING

Last summer, members of the AFLC Schools Board of Trustees decided to recruit individuals from our AFLC family to volunteer their time in service to a Vision 2004 fund-raising campaign. These volunteers were given information about our schools and a proposed expansion project. In preparation for ingathering deadline set by the board, many of these men and women attended a training session that included sessions in biblical giving and fund raising led by Dr. Fran Monseth and Pastor Michael Brandt. We are grateful to these individuals who have given and continue to give their time in support of our schools by making presentations in local churches.

Currently, our Bible school and seminary are at record enrollments. Our dormitories, classrooms, dining room and parking lots are crowded. We need more space for students — space to live, congregate for activities, attend classes, study, eat and be alone, quietly, with God. These are not projected needs. These needs are real today. We have only two actual classrooms in the Bible school and only a single classroom in the seminary, resulting in very large class sizes. When our dorms were constructed, two classrooms were included in each building. However, because of changing needs, one classroom in each dorm has been converted for other student services, leaving only a single classroom in each building. In addition, the lunchroom is regularly used for class.

Our students are not complaining. They have adjusted well to these conditions. But the quality of their educational experience suffers. And there is no space for increased enrollments. When the Vision 2004 campaign began, a common perception was that we were building for the future. At the time, that perception was correct. However, interest and enrollment figures have risen more rapidly than anticipated, so the crucial need is before us now. Simply put, we need these facilities today. The current building plans call for the construction of a student center/classroom building as the next phase. This building would provide classrooms, cafeteria, study areas, and office space that are so urgently needed at an estimated cost of \$3 million, but would not provide any additional living space for current or future students. To provide for these needs as well would

require building another dorm at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. These amounts are not trivial, nor will they be easy to raise. We are so grateful to all the churches and individuals who have given financially to this work. You encourage us greatly. As we consider how these funds can be raised, let us look at what the Bible teaches about giving.

As Monseth shared with us during the training sessions: biblical, “grace-abounding” giving has several identifying marks, as seen in II Corinthians 8.

- One, it is prompted by the grace of God (v.1). Because of His indescribable gift, received by God’s grace, we are prompted to give back to Him. No gift we can give can compare to what we have been given; yet through His grace we are motivated to give back to Him.
- Two, it is permeated by the joy of the Lord (v.2). God wants us to give cheerfully, freely offering back to Him out of our blessings.
- Three, it is promised with a willing spirit (v.3). Our nature is unwilling. But Jesus has freed us from that nature, and by His grace, calls us to give willingly, not grudgingly out of a sense of obligation, but willingly, because we have experienced the abundance of His grace.
- Four, it pleads for the privilege to give (v.4). Paul’s description is of people “urgently pleading, entirely of their own accord” to have the favor of being able to give to God’s work. Such an attitude is a result of God’s grace working in the heart of the believer.
- Five, it is preceded by a personal commitment (v.5). They gave themselves to the Lord first, then they gave of themselves to His work.

It is our prayer that His people would approach giving to the expansion of our schools in this manner. Let us seek the Lord, first giving ourselves wholly to Him. Then as we seek His will, prompted by His grace as we have experienced it ourselves, let us willingly, joyfully seek the privilege of giving back to Him, to continue His work in our Bible school and seminary.

When we approach our giving this way, as grace-abounding giving, God will bless us. As Monseth taught from II Corinthians 9, blessings are promised to the grace-abounding giver.

- One, it is a service to the saints (v.1), a ministry to

RAISING 2004

God's people. Jesus, in Matthew 20:26, says that whoever will be great among us must first be a servant. We are called to serve, and will be blessed through that service.

- Two, our giving stirs others to give (v.2). Our zeal and faithfulness are infectious, prompting others to give as they have seen us give.

- Three, it is a sowing that results in abundant reaping (v.6). The more sacrificial the gift, the richer is the return. This is not to be a selfish motivation for giving, but rather is simply a law of the harvest. His return to us, although not necessarily material, will surpass even our own expectations.

- Four, it is pleasing to God (v.7). God loves a cheerful giver. It pleases and glorifies Him when we respond to His outpouring of grace and give back to Him.

- Five, it brings with it a supply of grace to abound for all things at all times (vv.8-11). God will give us sufficiency in everything He calls us to do.

- Six, it serves as a stimulation of thanksgiving to God (vv.12-14). Men will praise God on account of our

giving, exhorting others to look at what God can do. Our giving is evidence of the work of God.

Let us prayerfully seek God's guidance, being prompted by His Spirit and through His grace, to give sacrificially to His work. As Pastor Brandt reminded us, "It's not equal gifts, but equal sacrifice." We can't all

give the same amounts; some can only give a little, others can give more.

God blesses all our giving when it is grace-abounding giving. Won't you please consider today what you can give to this work? God bless you as you serve Him.

We have set a goal to break ground for new construction this spring, and we have set Easter Sunday, May 31, as an ingathering date for gifts from God's people to His work through Vision 2004. Please pray that God will speak to our hearts and will raise up the funds for this expansion. God is faithful and will provide the people and the funds, according to His will. Pray that we may always remain in His will.

— **Dan Mundfrom**
Chairman

AFLC Schools Board of Trustees



Ready to graduate FLS

Clint Hoff

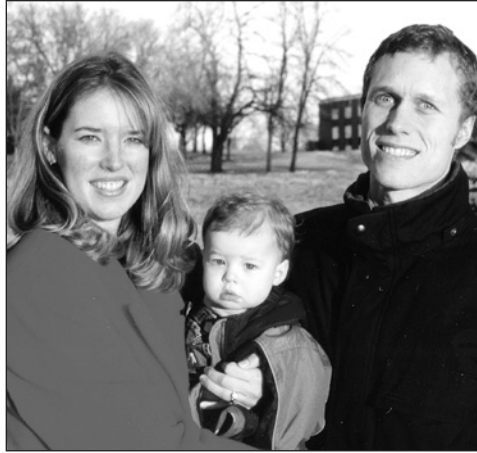
I was born March 20, 1968, in a small country hospital in the prairies of southern Alberta, Canada. I was baptized in a Lutheran church and grew up attending Our Saviour's Lutheran in Hussar, Alberta. It is a church in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), the equivalent to the ELCA here in the States. My childhood years were all spent on a farm near Cluny, Alberta, where my dad raised beef cattle and grew some grain. My parents, Ken and Judy Hoff, raised me to love the Lord and the Bible, especially my devout mother. I understood from my earliest years that Jesus died for my sins, God saves me by grace and his Holy Spirit enables me to live a godly life.

Having sensed a call to the pastorate even as a young teenager, I was never comfortable making

definite plans to go to seminary until later. I have always loved school and education, so I attended the University of Alberta and received my Bachelor of Science and Education, enabling me to teach.

I taught at a public school for two years in southern Alberta, then for a year and half at a Christian school near Vancouver, British Columbia. Around this time I met the girl who was to be my wife. I also sensed the call more strongly to pursue seminary training. Our Saviour's has traditionally been a conservative-minded church. That, plus my own parents' conservative position on biblical authority, sexuality, abortion and women in author-

ity, convinced me that the ELCIC seminary in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, was not the right place for me. It was a rather easy decision to attend semi-



Dana Coyle

Born: Nov. 1, 1972

Parents: Michael and Vonne Coyle

Hometown: Nicollet, Minn.

Home congregation:

Word of Life Free Lutheran, Mankato Minn.

Education: AFLBS, 1991-93; North Hennepin Community College, 1993-94; Northwestern College, 1995-1997; AFLTS, 1998-2002

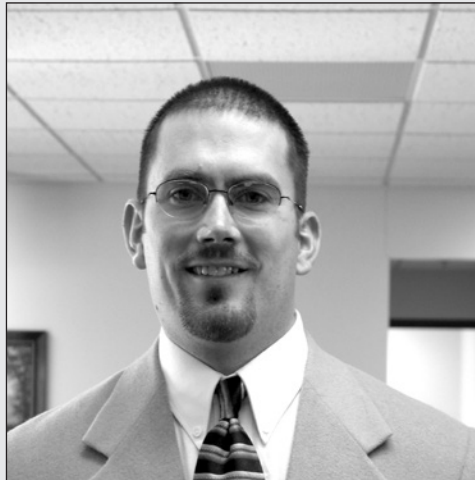
Family: wife Heather (Champeaux); kids: Micah, age 6; Mackenzie, age 3; Evelyn, will be born in February

I was born into a Christian home and family, where the importance of a relationship with Christ and a corresponding life of faithfulness to Him were always given a strong emphasis. Going to church and Sunday school was just something that was a normal part of life, and nothing was ever allowed to interfere with that. As a result of all of this time and training, I knew a fair amount about God and the Bible. As I look back I know

that I really believed what I was taught. I believe that by God's grace there was saving faith in my heart, though I probably couldn't have explained it very well.

The later years of high school became a time of wandering for me, and for the most part I pushed the Lord out of my life. In my senior year, I began to feel a strong pull on my heart to go to Bible school — and I did not want to go. But the pull was so strong that I could not ignore it. I know now that many people had come alongside my parents in praying earnestly for me, and the Lord heard and answered their prayers by placing in my heart this overwhelming need to go to Bible school. It was at AFLBS where

the Savior seized control of me and changed my life, setting me on a course that I never would have chosen for myself. During those two years, the Lord caused me to grow in Christ and in love for the Word of God, and placed upon me the call to enter into full-time service in His Church. I am so grateful to Him for these two absolutely foundational years of my life, and grateful that He



nary at Talbot School of Theology near Los Angeles, where my soon-to-be-wife was attending college.

I received a good education at Talbot. The school is interdenominational, but it wasn't enough to shake my Lutheran convictions. I agree with classic Lutheran doctrine. I believe like Luther and other reformers that people are only justified by grace through faith, for Christ's sake. I believe that the Augsburg Confession and the Book of Concord are based solidly on the Scriptures and are an accurate and useful testament of the Christian faith.

Just after I started seminary training at Talbot I was married to Lalita Hoff (Hahs). After I graduated from Talbot, I was eager to pursue ordination in the AFLC, which meant a year of study at Free Lutheran Seminary and a year of internship. I am currently in my one-year internship at St. Paul's Lutheran in Cloquet, Minn. I am married to a wonderful woman and we have one child, a daughter named Violette who is 9 months old.

God willing, at the end of my internship I will be attending Concordia Seminary in St. Louis for further study. I have sensed the call to pursue further training in God's Word for effective ministry.

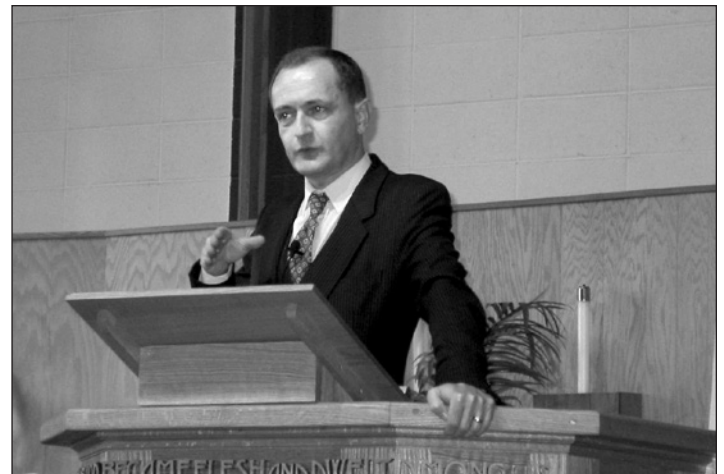
Psalm 16:8 "I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken."



never let go of me during all the times when I was wandering away from Him. His love and faithfulness is truly everlasting.

The following years have brought continued growth and change as God's Word has taken deeper root in my heart. He continues to faithfully make me smaller, guiding me in repentance and confession of sin so that I might cling all the more desperately to the full sufficiency of His grace, and grow all the more assured that I am a redeemed child of God. He has faithfully guided me into marriage and family, and through college and now seminary, preparing and equipping me to serve Him all the rest of my life. The years of seminary especially have been so rewarding, each year representing new avenues of growth and greater confidence in the power and faithfulness of God. My internship at Elim Lutheran in Lake Stevens, Wash., has been a cherished capstone to the training I received at AFLTS, and has provided many opportunities to be stretched in new ways as I both learn and teach. Here, too, God's faithfulness has been on display time and time again. This has been a wonderful year.

As I reflect upon seminary, and upon life with Jesus in general, John 1:16 comes to mind: "For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace."



TOP: Pastor Robert Lee, AFLC president, led a seminary class during January interterm on the history and aims of the AFLC.

CENTER: Nineteen pastors and laymen joined seminarians during interterm.

BOTTOM: Dr. Tomas Novotny, a professor and specialist on cults and isms at Ostrava University, Czech Republic, led a chapel service during January interterm. Novotny taught a class on cults and isms at AFLBS. Also teaching during interterm were Kim Gustafson and Pastor James Rasmussen, who led a class on reaching Muslims for Christ.

Revitalizing your women's ministry

**Sagging attendance?
Can't find officers?
The answers may
lie in finding a new
way to reach
today's women.**

George Barna tells us that 80 percent of 20-year-olds do not attend a local church on a regular basis. At AFLBS, Women's Ministry Director Michele Mobley is working with two programs in an effort to mold lives by God's Word, both in the classroom and through relationships. Mobley teaches a course on "Disciplines of a Godly Woman," where students study about God's design for their lives. The Naomi Ministry offers female students the opportunity to be mentored by an older,

godly woman. Praise the Lord that the supernatural is happening amongst the women at AFLBS.

Now, ask yourself the following: Is the enthusiasm in my church's WMF contagious? Would these young women find "a passion for truth that experiences the supernatural?" Is it meeting the needs of today's woman? What does our WMF attendance indicate? Read on to find out what the women at Faith Lutheran, Ottawa, Ill., are doing after wrestling with similar questions.

For the past several years our WMF group has had trouble finding people willing to be officers. The same few women had been taking the various offices for quite a few years, and they were burned out. Some women were getting "too old" to take the positions. At our monthly evening meeting, the same 12-15 women had been coming for quite a few years, and there was only one or two under 40 years old.

Some things are positive in our WMF. We have a successful bazaar and bake sale each year, the proceeds of which go toward various missions endeavors. We have many faithful workers that serve coffee and donuts each Sunday and help with fellowship dinners. And everyone looks forward to our Christmas gathering each year, where attendance can be from 80-100.

Because of our stagnant attendance we had been talking about the possibility of doing something different. Several committed to pray that the Lord would lead us. But this past fall, we could not find ANYONE willing to be president or treasurer. We felt that maybe this was our sign from God that now was the time to change our format to try to appeal to more church women. Those who have come to the monthly

studies have a nice time, but where are the other 70 women that come on Sunday mornings? We decided that as a group, we had to give of ourselves to reach out to them. We also wanted to try doing different kinds of activities that would help them feel a part of our church family.

We decided the best route would be to have a "reorganization meeting." It would be an open forum for people to express their ideas of what they would like to see happen for women in the church. We wrote a note in the church newsletter telling women that we were interested in their ideas and inviting them to come, even if they had not been involved before. We had the meeting on a Saturday morning so working women and older women who have trouble getting out at night could come and moms with children could easily find someone to watch their children.

The day came, and 20 women were there. A wide variety of ages were present. We were happy that so many women cared. I spoke first and shared about the needs of today's women. I also shared about balancing the activities of the WMF between winning, building and equipping, as presented in the packet material sent by the National WMF. Then we opened it up for discussion. People

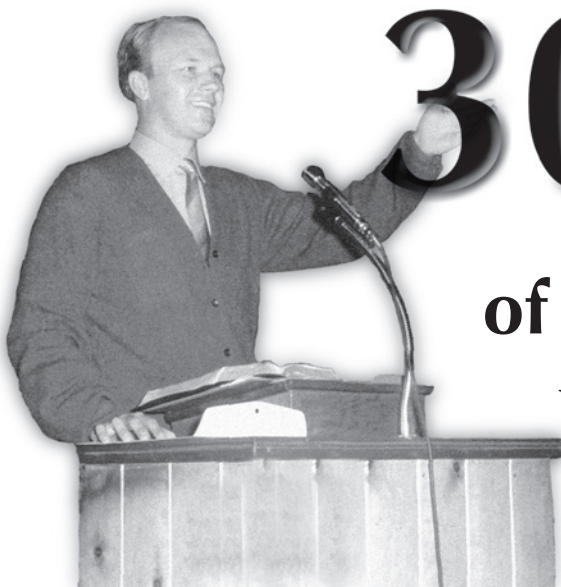
shared from their hearts about wanting to help each other and share each other's skills and gifts. We got many great ideas for social activities. And we talked about possibilities of having eight- to 10-week Bible studies on various topics in the spring and fall. We talked about dividing up the officer duties so that the president wasn't responsible for so much. We also decided to have our business meetings less often and to conduct them before or after social events so more people would feel comfortable coming.

What will we do now? Our officers will meet to look over the notes from that day. We will have a feedback meeting after a social event to make final decisions. We are excited about what God can do to change people's lives. All we need to do is be flexible and depend on Him for guidance as we head into uncharted waters. Please pray for us.

— **Lisa Arneson**
Faith Lutheran
Ottawa, Ill.



Contact Faith Nelson, WMF director, for more information on revitalizing your WMF. Find out how Christ's life lived out in the Great Commission is a strategy that will bring restoring balance to the activities of your WMF.



Circa 1970

Thirty years ago the Berlin Wall divided East and West, Richard Nixon occupied the White House, and Web sites were things associated with spiders. It was also 30 years ago that Dr. Francis Monseth began teaching at the AFLC schools. He was a teacher at the Free Lutheran Seminary and Association Free Lutheran Bible School the first 10 years and then 20 years ago added administrative duties to his teaching responsibilities as he became dean of the seminary.

Looking back over the 30 years Dr. Monseth, what are some of the things you have learned?

I do believe a teacher learns more than the students. That has been one of the blessings for me: continually studying of the Scriptures and trying to anticipate questions.

What have been some of your goals in teaching?

You want to be faithful, clear and complete in your presentation of the truth. One of my prayers has been to be freshly dealing with the Scriptures, not depending upon the same old outlines and worn out illustrations but having the text and the truths come alive again to me personally.

30 years

of blessings and learning

What are some of the changes you have seen over the course of these past 30 years?

Speaking in generalities, students are coming with less biblical background and not having a heritage of living Christianity; maybe a little weaker on Lutheran doctrinal distinctives. I think there is less real grounding in the faith on average.

What do you do to try to keep your teaching fresh?

Keeping in touch with students is one thing. You're aware of their questions, concerns, praying with them in the office. The most important is staying fresh in the Word. My own personal quiet time is so crucial to that. With that there's the importance of a sufficient quantity of study time. And the joy of sitting under the Word in my congregation. That is such a blessing. I need to be fed.

What are important qualities for students to have?

Have no pretensions; admit where you're weak in an area. You're not going to be thrown out of seminary if you ask a question that's off the wall. As long as you're teachable.

If you were starting over again what are some things you would do differently?

I had too high expectations of students at times. I think I've mellowed a bit. I think I've learned that not all is shown by what a student gained in a grade. In the beginning I should have said, "I don't know,"

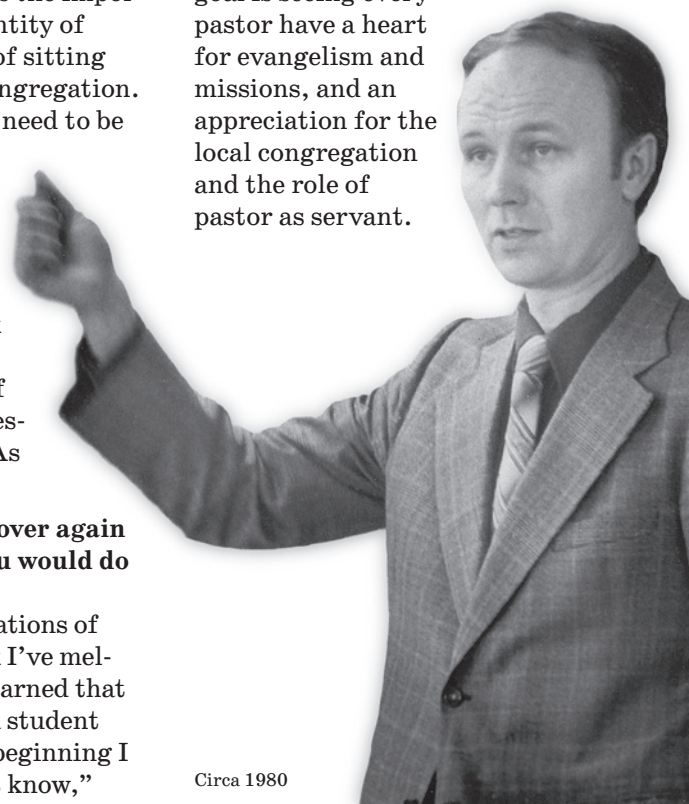
more often and, "I'll study that further."

What are some of your dreams for the future?

I certainly see the need for more pastors as our AFLC is growing. We don't want growth just for growth's sake, but to meet the apparent needs for pastors in this country and in missions work.

I'd like to see our seminary become accredited as a witness to our seriousness to teaching the Word effectively and with academic excellence for the glory of God. And also it could help us with the transfer of credits, veterans' benefits and it would help international students.

A continuing goal is seeing every pastor have a heart for evangelism and missions, and an appreciation for the local congregation and the role of pastor as servant.



Circa 1980

Yri publishes *Essential* guide to salvation

No one can call Dr. Norvald Yri lazy. Case in point: While on sabbatical from his revival work in Africa's Rift Valley last fall and winter, Yri not only became the co-director of the Ministry Training Institute at AFLBS, he spent what spare time he had translating and rewriting his published works into Norwegian, English and Kiswahili.

Yri's latest work, *What is Salvation? Essentials of Christian Faith*, is now available at the FLS Book Nook. Touching on such issues as the centrality of the Scriptures, the means of grace, the priesthood of all believers and the biblical view of the church, the 42-page booklet brings readers back to the central truths of Luther's Reformation in just 11 short chapters.

"To become Lutheran, that means the Bible is the highest authority. That means we are seeking answers from the Bible," said Yri, who returned to Africa with



Norvald Yri

his wife, Anna, in December. "My prayer about the booklet is that young people get a taste of the biblical reformation truth. It is not old or dead or dogmas. It is to get the vision for those who are lost."

Written in a simple format and touching on the basics of evangelical Lutheranism, Yri's booklet could easily be used as either a refresher course or text book for small-group studies. First written in Kiswahili, Yri published 30,000 copies of *What is Salvation?* while teaching a course on the fundamentals of Christian faith in Africa.

Yri said he writes "because of the various needs," citing biblical theology, renewal and awakening. "There are lots of movements as evangelical Lutherans. Are we left behind or do we have a contribution?"

For a copy, contact the FLS Book Nook at (763) 544-9501 or email (library@ aflc.org), cost is \$4.99.



With thanks for years of service

Hjermstad honored for talent, attitude

Very belatedly, although the intention was there from the beginning, I wish to honor Solveig Hjermstad for her long and faithful service to *The Lutheran Ambassador*. Twenty-two years, in fact. She hasn't received the public recognition she deserves, but then she wasn't seeking it, either.

Solveig and I worked together for 11 of those years. She began by taking care of the layout of the magazine and it was always amazing to see the many, many formations she arranged. The *Ambassador* became more attractive to the eye while still maintaining the placement of features in their assigned places.

It was easy to see that Solveig had a "feel" for journalism, both in the artistic sense and the writing she did, most often in the interesting and well-done interviews with people who had a story to tell.

It was after my time as editor that Solveig became, first, assistant to the editor and then assistant editor. One can easily note that she moved into these larger responsibilities well. We will miss her, too, with her camera at the ready at annual conferences and other special events.

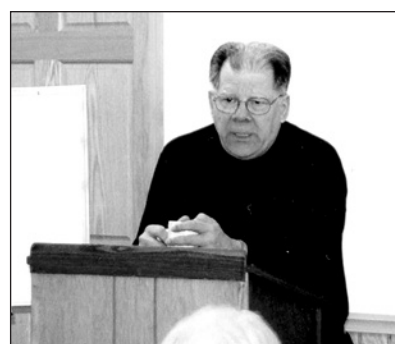
Always pleasant and careful for the feelings of others, Solveig had to wear more than one hat during her years of service to our church, as have the editors of the *Ambassador*. She has been, of course, pastor's wife and mother of their three children, but also worker in the congregations of several parishes in two states, member of a public school board and student.

I join our whole *Ambassador* family in wishing Solveig well in whatever ventures and tasks she finds before her and thanking husband, Wayne, and children, Micah, Rebecca and Gracia, for kindly sharing her with the AFLC, with us, these many years.

— **Pastor Raynard Huglen** Editor, 1963-90

Editor's note: I also would like to publicly express my appreciation for Solveig's years of service to this magazine. When I began in this position nearly nine years ago, she had already been working with the magazine for 14 years. Her patience, experience and assistance made assuming this position much easier than it would have been otherwise. She was always a joy to work with and a capable partner in the work. I appreciate also her help in the time of transition to a new assistant editor. God provided Solveig for a number of years for the magazine and now has provided a gifted and capable individual in Ruth Gunderson as assistant editor. We give thanks for God's good gifts. We appreciate Solveig's service to our church body and pray for her as she serves now in the important and challenging role of teaching in the public schools.

— **Pastor Craig Johnson** Editor



TOP: Pastors gathered during the conference for times of small group discussions and prayer.

LEFT: Pastor Bob Rieth of Media Fellowship International was part of a panel that led a workshop on "Sharing Christ in Crisis Situations."

RIGHT: Pastor Gary Jorgenson of Durant, Okla., led the Bible hours during the pastors' conference.

AFLC pastors convene for annual retreat at ARC

The 2002 AFLC Pastors' and Wives' Retreat was held Jan. 15-17 at the ARC in Osceola, Wis. The retreat began on Tuesday evening with an International Fellowship Night that included sharing by international students and others from the AFLC Schools' Ministry Training Institute. Wednesday and Thursday morning included Bible hours led by Pastor Gary Jorgenson of Durant, Okla., studying the book of II Peter. Pastor Jorgenson reminded his fellow pastors that "God doesn't cheat anybody," but has provided us with a great salvation. Workshops of a theological nature and ones providing practical instruction were offered as well.

At the Wednesday evening banquet, Pastor Robert Rieth, executive director of Media Fellowship International and a member of the first graduating class of the Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, spoke. A communion service was held following the banquet.

Another significant part of the retreat, as always, was the fellowship that happened in between the sessions. It was a time for renewing old friendships, making new ones and building one another up in the Lord.

Make plans for youth leadership conference

I remember building a toothpick bridge back in high school physics class. As my partner and I worked as a team, the goal, with the toothpicks and glue we had, was to attempt to build a strong bridge that would win first place. The hope was that our bridge would be able to hold more science textbooks than any other bridge that was made in our class. Unfortunately, our bridge did not win, but it finished in the middle of the pack.



So what did I learn out of that project? That if you don't win, you lose? No, not at all. Instead, I came away with the mindset that proper planning and strategy can build a bridge that is able to withstand quite a load. This is the same thinking of AFLC Youth Ministries, and this is why we offer a leadership training conference every other summer that gives junior and senior high students and adults opportunities for hands-on training in youth ministry to help them build on their foundation in Jesus Christ.

This summer, the AFLC Youth Leadership Conference will be **July 15-20** at the Association Retreat Center in Osceola, Wis. The theme is "Foundations for Life," taken from I Corinthians 3:11: "For no one can lay any foundations other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." Sessions and hands-on training will focus on building an environment for spiritual growth within youth ministry.

The material is solid and will benefit all who attend. Of course, there will be great recreation, food and fellowship. Make plans to attend with your youth group, bring your youth leaders along, get your registration forms in and prepare for a week of building, equipping and blessing.

— **Pastor Alan Arneson**
Ottawa, Ill.
AFLC Youth Board

Doing it for the sport of it

AFLBS hoopsters play at the Target Center

College athletics is big business at a lot of schools. But at AFLBS it's not about TV appearances or preparing for the pros. It's about fun and fellowship.

AFLBS has a men's and a women's basketball team. They play in the National Bible College Athletic Association.

"It's a good part of AFLBS," according to senior Mike Knapp of Kandiyohi, Minn., a member of the men's team. He sees playing on the basketball team as a lot of fun and also a chance to be witnesses for Christ as they play not only other Bible colleges but also some tech schools.

A member of the women's team, senior Shannon Mundfrom of Greeley, Colo., describes it as "fun playing with Christian friends. We have a common bond ... It's uplifting and encouraging." She knows "basketball is not all that important; being a Christian is what matters most, but still, playing basketball is a lot of fun."

The two teams had a special opportunity on the afternoon of Jan. 14. They played a doubleheader against teams from Vennard College of University Park, Iowa, at the Target Center in Minneapolis, the home of the NBA Minnesota Timberwolves.

The AFLBS women, coached by Dustin Sjaheim, hung in close but went down in defeat to Vennard by a score of 58 to 54. They were led in scoring by Hope Lombardo with 16, Shannon Mundfrom with 14, and Gracia Berge with 12.

In the second game of the doubleheader, the AFLBS men won in overtime by a score of 76 to 72. The men, coached by Eric Rasmussen with assistance from Nathan Jore, had a commanding 12-point lead at halftime, but Vennard roared back to tie the game in regulation. AFLBS pulled out the victory, however, in overtime. They were led in scoring by senior Mike Anderson with 29, which included 7 of 10 shooting from beyond the three-point line.



Mike Anderson drives to the basket around a pick set by Eric Swenson.



Following the women's game the two teams gather together for prayer.



The AFLBS women's basketball team, following their appearance at the Target Center.



Coach Eric Rasmussen discusses strategy with the AFLBS men during a timeout.

Study tours offered to Turkey and China

AFLTS is cooperating with Abiding Word Ministries in a study tour of the seven churches of the Book of Revelation from April 22 to May 1 in Turkey.

Bible study leaders include Pastor David Barnhart, Pastor Gerald Gettis and Dr. Francis Monseth.

Anyone interested is invited to be a part of this opportunity for travel, study and worship. The seminary will offer one credit for those who desire to complete assignments in connection with the study. A limited number of scholarships are available for seminarians and pastors who enroll.

Contact Barnhart, tour director, at Abiding Word Ministries, P.O. Box 410847, Melbourne, Fla., 32941-0847. Or call 1-800-253-6922 for more information.

Pastor Jerome Elness, serving Our Redeemer Free Lutheran, Superior, Wis., will lead his seventh study tour to China and Hong Kong. The 18-day tour is scheduled for July 23 to Aug. 9. The tour group will visit Zhong Nan Theological Seminary in Wu Han.

For more information, contact Elness at RevElness@aol.com, call (218) 724-1068, or visit <http://members.aol.com/revelness>.

AFLBS students publish weekly newspaper

They pay for publication themselves

When Jordan Hylden came to AFLBS last fall, he found just one thing lacking: a student newspaper. So, with the help of three other students, Hylden publishes a weekly rag he calls *The Crusader*.

"I saw the opportunity here. I thought it was something I could do. I enjoy writing and I enjoy arguing," said Hylden, editor.

Printed on both sides of a standard sheet of paper, *The Crusader* includes both news articles and opinions. The paper boasts two reporters who comb the campus for stories and an opinion editor who finds writers to tackle tough issues. The four, including juniors Hillary Hedin, Luke Pedersen and Paul Spooner, meet every Thursday night in the men's dorm classroom to



Hylden



Hedin



Pedersen



Spooner

brainstorm ideas for the next issue.

"Probably the best thing we did was interview Sonic Flood," said Hylden. The Christian worship group was at the bookstore Hylden works at

See AFLBS, page 22

Pastor David Barnhart, Melbourne, Fla., has accepted a call to serve Peace Lutheran Church, an independent congregation in Canal Winchester, Ohio. AFLC President Robert Lee will install him on April 14. Barnhart, who until last November served an AFLC congregation in Melbourne, will continue his work with Abiding Word Ministries.

Pastor Kent Sperry, San Diego, accepted a call to serve Grace Free Lutheran, DeKalb, Ill. He begins his work in April. Sperry came to the AFLC through colloquy from the AALC.

Wanda Jacobson began working for the AFLC's Missions Department in January as administrative assistant. She left a position with the

park and recreation department in the city of Spring Lake Park, Minn.

Pastor Daniel Klug, East Grand Forks, Minn., has accepted a call to be a celebration director and media specialist for the Billy Graham Association. The part-time ministry includes handling public and media relations for Dr. Ralph Bell's celebrations. Klug expects to begin his work in March.

Banners For Missions, a ministry dedicated to making banners for churches, missions, Sunday schools and Christian schools, has changed its address. The new address is 1900 Speedway Ave., Wichita Falls, Texas, 76301. They can be reached at (940) 723-1348. All proceeds from the project are given to an AFLC

mission endeavor of your choice. A new catalog will be available in March.

Living Hope is the newly named church plant in the northwest suburbs of the Twin Cities. Sponsored by Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn., the new congregation is seeking rental of a middle school in the city of St. Michael, Minn., for worship services.

Community of Grace Church has moved from Omaha, Neb., to a facility in Elkhorn, Neb. The new site was a former ELCA church with five times the space of the building in Omaha. Serving the church is Pastor Brad Hoefs. The congregation celebrated a grand opening on Jan. 20.

AFLC BUDGET

AFLBS, from page 21

and agreed to take some time out with Hylden. He talked to one member about their musical influences, how they got their start and the focus of their new album.

The Crusader also published an interview with visiting professor Dr. Jonathan Strand, who lectured on apologetics at AFLBS and FLS during January's interterm.

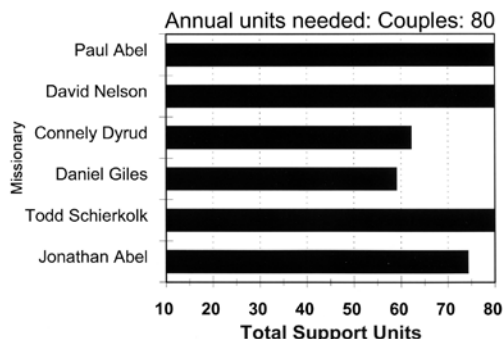
The back of *The Crusader* is devoted to opinion articles. The group has tackled such topics as gun control, predestination, baptism, capitol punishment and the Harry Potter books and movie. The idea is to get students talking.

"Just so there's open discussion about what's going on ... not just in class," said Hylden.

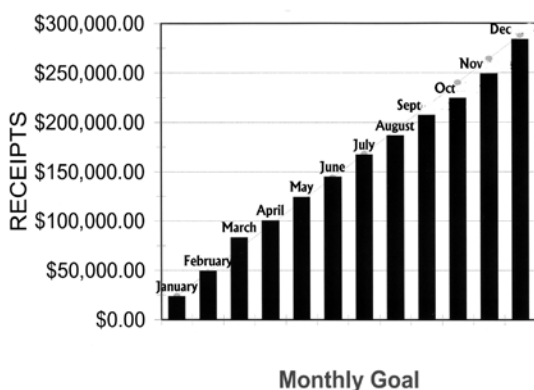
The Crusader is truly a student-run project, with just 177 copies printed weekly at a cost of \$17.70. And who pays for it? Hylden and his crew split the cost among themselves.

"PS" PERSONAL SUPPORT UNITS

January / December Goal = 80.0 Units



DECEMBER "PS" TOTALS



AFLC memorials – January

Department given to ...

In memory of...

Vision 2004

Tena Fruhling

Ruth Koger

Evelyn Benson (2)

Tonnes Pollestad Sr.

Mabel Buhler

Home Missions

George Sr. and Delores Wickstrom

Ingman Bolstad

Lavern Hendrickson

AFLBS

Mabel Buhler

Sheldon Mortrud

Greg Hoyden

Martha Hove

Elwood Boyer

Curtis Jordhiem

Lavern Hedrickson

Evelyn Benson

AFLTS

Clinton Gjevre

Perry Utne

Sparky Schultz

Hilda Goetz

Sheldon Mortrud

Carol Haas

FLAPS

Robert A. Olson

World Missions

Otto Myrvik

Mabel Severson

Estonia Bible School

Martha Hove

In honor of...

General Fund

Pastor Ivars Krafts

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (1 month) – January 1 - January 31, 2002

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN JANUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$268,060.00	\$26,269.71	\$26,269.71	10
Seminary	118,938.00	12,184.24	12,184.24	10
Bible School	217,227.00	19,771.41	19,771.41	9
Home Missions	278,872.00	21,702.03	21,702.03	8
World Missions	119,994.00	25,594.22	25,594.22	13
Youth Ministries	55,413.00	4,911.01	4,911.01	9
Parish Education	71,687.00	5,056.23	5,056.23	7
Church Extension	23,093.00	5,946.11	5,946.11	26
TOTALS	\$1,233,284.00	\$121,434.96	\$121,434.96	10
TOTALS 2001	\$1,119,759.00	\$126,869.16	\$126,869.16	11

Goal 8%

The Evangelism Department received \$2,298.63 in January.

Give them what they want to hear

A couple of years ago a group of AFLBS students met with the schools' board of trustees. When they were asked for ideas regarding what courses ought to be offered at the school their response was, "more Bible."

Some years ago our Free Lutheran Seminary was described as simply "a glorified Bible school." It was meant as a derogatory comment but taken as a compliment.

We give thanks that our schools mainly teach the Scriptures, but at the same time we remember that a person and a school can never have too much Bible.

It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking students want more "practical" instruction. We wonder if more how-to courses are necessary. We get deceived into thinking teaching of that nature is more useful and prepares students more effectively than simply studying the Bible.

"More Bible" is what we all need.

Scripture is "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17, NIV). The Word of God is more than adequate. It thoroughly equips us for whatever we might face. Instruction in other matters can be helpful, but nothing is as practical and as powerful as training in God's Word.

"More Bible" is a request that comes not only from students at AFLBS but also at times from people in the pews and prospective church attenders.

Last year Thom Rainer authored the book *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*. The book came about as Rainer pondered the question, "What if we asked new Christians and new church members what led them to the Savior and to the church they chose?" In pursuit of the answer to that question, Rainer and a research team spent two years interviewing new Christians, a group they call "the formerly unchurched." These people had not been in church, except sporadically, for at least 10 years (most for a lifetime) but recently became active in a church. They also recently became Christians, not merely church attenders.

When this group was asked, "What factors led you to choose this church?," 90 percent said the pastor and his preaching and 88 percent said the doctrines of the church. The third most commonly cited factor was the

friendliness of members, mentioned by 49 percent. Other things that we in the church often think are deciding factors rated much lower in the survey. Worship style and music was listed by 11 percent as a major factor and location was key to only seven percent.

The response of one who recently began attending church was typical of many: "I never realized before that the Bible had anything to do with my life. ... messages are so relevant. ... His preaching helps me to understand the Bible, which makes me desire to study it even more." Another one who was surveyed said, "You know what frustrated me the most when I started visiting churches? ... I had a deep desire to under-

stand the Bible, to hear in-depth preaching and teaching. But most of the preaching was so watered-down that it was insulting to my intelligence. I went to one church where the message was on fear. I was eager to hear what the Bible had to say about a subject that described my state of mind." But she was disappointed with what she heard. "It was more of a pop-psychology message. The bib-

lical view was never explained. Bible texts were hardly mentioned." The statement of another was, "Now that I am a Christian and an active church member, I have been telling the pastor and the church staff that meaty teaching and preaching attracts the unchurched. I think they're listening."

The Bible tells us, "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths" (II Timothy 4:3-4, NIV). That description is true of many in our day, but let us not make the mistake of assuming it is true of all. Some will not put up with sound doctrine, but others will. Some turn their ears away from the truth, but others are longing to hear it. God's Word is the truth that people need to hear. We have more opportunities to share it and more people around us interested in hearing it than we often realize.

In our congregations and in our schools let us always be giving "more Bible," knowing as we do so that we are offering more food for the soul, more wisdom for the mind, more encouragement for the heart, more joy for the present and more hope for the future than can be found anywhere else.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

**... nothing is as
practical and as
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SOMETHING TO SHARE

Sharing your faith with today's teens

Murdered. That was the buzz at the local high school football game last fall. A 17-year-old named Jo had been living alone in an apartment and was found murdered that day. The suspect was her sister's boyfriend.

I was sick when I heard it, wishing that it wasn't true. The newspaper said that even though she lived on her own, Jo was a good student who worked full-time and got good grades. I had attended many school events, yet I had never met Jo in the sea of 2,000 faces on campus.

My first thought was, "I wonder if anyone ever shared the love of Jesus with her?" Our community has several church youth groups, plus a thriving Young Life Club. My church is right next door to the high school, but I couldn't help but think, "Were we effective in reaching someone like Jo?"

Recently I read a statistic that Snohomish County, where I live, is one of the two most unchurched counties in the United States. Many kids don't know that Sunday is a day of worship or the basics of how to pray. Many come from good homes with parents who are involved in their lives, but somehow, the whole spiritual dimension of their souls has escaped them.

How do we reach those who have no idea that God cares about them and sent His Son to die for them? To evangelize kids, we can't leave it to the pastor or youth worker. It's up to each of us to love them, accept them and be an example of God's grace. Developing a

relationship is the forerunner to sharing your faith. When I read the Gospels, Jesus viewed each chance encounter as a divine opportunity.

So, what can we do?

Get to know kids — All ages, everywhere. In your neighborhoods, strangers on the street, in your church, wherever they are, greet them, smile, and let them know you care. Get to know the names of every child that comes to your church or lives in your neighborhood. Get beyond the piercings, tattoos, loud music and questionable clothing and see them as Jesus does — souls whom He loved enough to die for.

Pray for kids — By name, by face, pray that God would fulfill His plan and vision for each of these young vital lives. Pray over a class or team picture, pray through a yearbook, pray for those you pass on the street, pray for those in the newspapers, pray for those in trouble, pray, pray, pray.

Be an encourager — Write notes, send cards, acknowledge accomplishments, comfort their pain and let them know of your interest in their lives. Set a goal of writing one note a week, it will help you look for the good in kids.

Respect kids — I know that many adults think kids aren't respectful, but I've cringed with the way some adults bark out commands about cookies in the sanctuary, roller blades in the church basement, and note writing during the sermon. Kids need to be given guidance but in a loving, caring way. Is it a wonder why some kids don't want to come back to church when adults have treat-

ed them harshly?

Listen — Take the time to listen, not the head nodding, uh-huh kind of listening you do when thinking about your to-do list posted on the fridge, but eye-to-eye listening, honoring their point of view.

Read aloud — Books, devotionals, and short stories are a way to share the fruit of the Spirit, character qualities, a good laugh and true-life experience. My teens love it when the TV is off, candles are lit and I read to them.

Go where they are — Got a neighbor, a niece, a church member who plays in the band, on a basketball team, is in a skateboard competition or is participating in a spelling bee? Go to the event as a sign of support. If you can't go, be sure and ask how it went the next time you see that child.

Share your interest — Do you have a hobby, a talent, a special ability? Whether it's fixing cars, singing, or being a chocolate-chip-cookie-baking dynamo, share it with a kid. If you don't know children, volunteer at your local youth agency.

I was recently at the high school and saw a photocopy of Jo's picture with handwriting below that said, "We love you and pray for you." I couldn't help but think, "Did we love her and pray for her before she died?" I'm comforted by the thought that possibly Jesus made sure that somebody did.

— *Cheri (Carter) Russum*
Elim Lutheran
Lake Stevens, Wash.