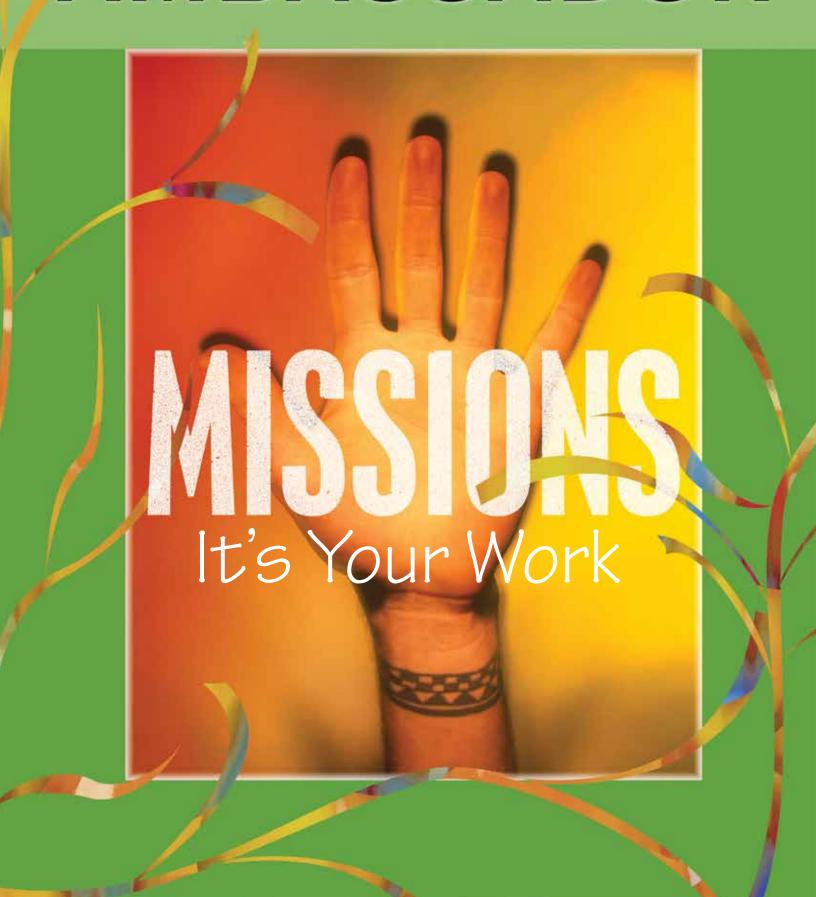
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[Encouraging Word]

Missions in Tazil

recently had the privilege of participating with the Brazilian AFLC churches (AILLB) as they celebrated their 40th year of work in Brazil. It was wonderful to renew friendships and see how God is working in and through the lives of many. Missions is alive and flourishing in the AILLB. Here are a few glimpses of missions past and present in Brazil:

Silvio — As a young boy of about 11 years of age playing soccer one day, he heard a missionary advertise the daily vacation Bible school at his neighborhood free Lutheran church. He decided to attend, and there he heard Bible stories and also earned his way to children's camp, where he came to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Returning home, he brought his mother and sisters to church where they, too, became believers. Silvio continues to grow spiritually and has become a leader in his local church and his home, active in the national AILLB, and a teacher at the Free Lutheran Seminary (SEMEAR).

Vanilda — Her family was one of the first to participate in the Brazilian Free Lutheran Church. Her father was the first elder at Central Church in Campo Mourão, where he was the choir director. Vanilda grew up in Central Church, and is now very involved with the youths of the church, who are her passion. She leads the worship team, "Pedras Vivas" (Living Rocks), along with her sister, Ilda.

Dulce — Her family was evangelized by Pastor Victor and D. Nayr, teachers at the Bible school in the early years of the AILLB. Her mother was the first in their family to accept Christ as her Savior, eventually bringing the whole family (husband and nine children) to church at Lar Paraná. Dulce, along with brothers and sisters, were all able to attend children's camps and

youth camps through the years, along with regular church activities. She studied at the Bible school for a year in the 1980s. Dulce now lives in Japan with her husband and two sons where they are active in a Japanese-Brazilian church. Dulce has a passion to teach children about the Lord, has opened her home to many children, and teaches them Bible stories and also takes them on outings. At the 40th celebration, Dulce was considered the Brazilian church's unofficial missionary to Japan.

Nilson and Zélia — Both are products of missionary outreach in their communities — Nilson in Rondonia and Zélia in Paraná. Both studied at the Bible school, and Nilson graduated from the seminary. They now pastor an AFLC church in the city of Vitória and are mothering a group in another city that has interest in the AFLC.

D. Terezinha — Through her son she came to church and became a believer. She was invited to be the cook at the Bible school and seminary in 1984, and has been there ever since. She is cook, mother, counselor. It is amazing to see the wisdom God has given to her as she ministers also in her local church. She considers annual conferences "family reunions" as she gets to see many of her "sons" and "daughters" and their families.

I could go on and on sharing about many Brazilian Christians and their outreach ministries. Be encouraged that God is using many to bring others into His kingdom. And please continue to pray for the Brazilian AFLC as they look to the next 40 years and the challenges before them.

— Carol Knapp Sunburg Free Lutheran Sunburg, Minn.

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Sound Bites

To better prepare for the realities of church-planting among the unreached, just about any uncomfortable place outside the secure walls of your church office will suffice. There are real challenges in Kingdom living all around us.

Joshua Massey

Every time I go on a mission trip, I pray that those whom I take to locations around the world will come home ready to serve wherever they are called for as long as they live. I hope they'll appreciate all they've been given. And I hope in the process they'll come face to face with Jesus Christ, for that is the true purpose of serving others.

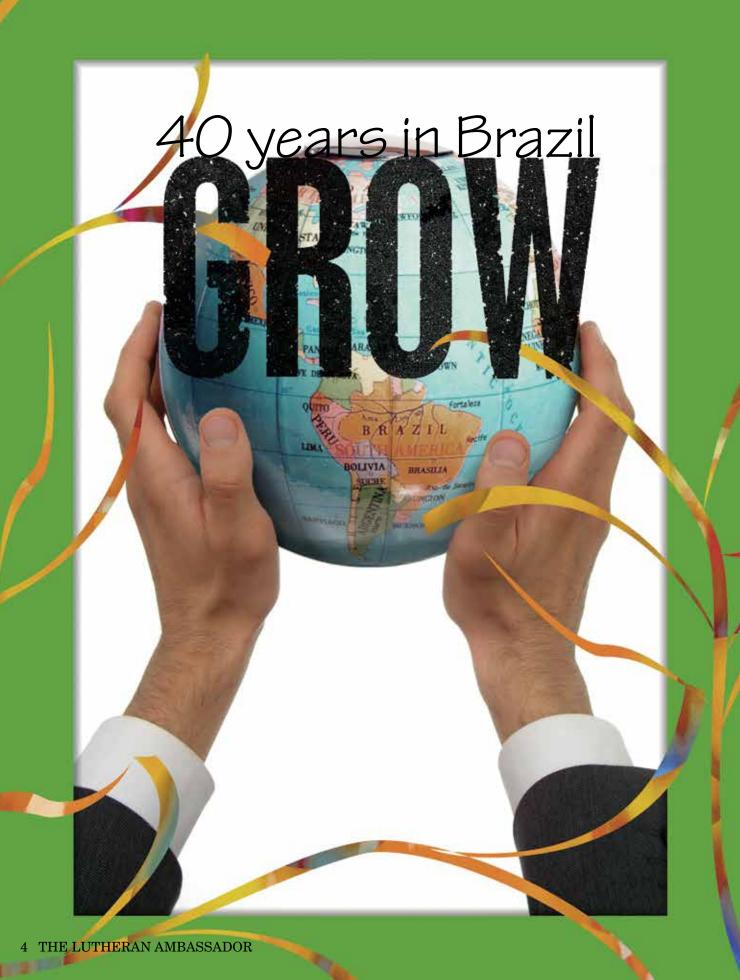
— Scott Meier

You wonder why people choose fields away from the States when young people at home are drifting because no one wants to take time to listen to their problems. I'll tell you why I left. Because those Stateside young people have every opportunity to study, hear, and understand the Word of God in their own language, and these Indians have no opportunity whatsoever.

> — Jim Elliot "Shadow of the Almighty"

My experience with the Motilone Indians has taught me how to deal with other cultures; how to promote positive change without tearing social structures apart at the seams. I try to share these things. But the most important thing that I can say to those who want to help primitive people is this: They will not be helped very much unless they find purpose in life through Jesus Christ.

> — Bruce Olson "Bruchko"



By Pastor Craig Johnson

n 1966 eight Brazilians and two missionaries from the United States, Pastors John Abel and Alvin Grothe, got together to talk about establishing Free Lutheran congregations in Brazil. They stood under a banner that said, in Portuguese, "First Conference of the Free Lutheran Congregations."

They were in the city of Campo Mourao, a place that had just recently been carved out of the jungle as the population began to expand into the interior of the nation. They were surrounded by red dust since the city had only one paved road at the time. They met around a table in the shade.

Forty years later things have changed.

The 40th Annual Conference of the AFLC Brazil was held Jan. 20-22 in Campo Mourao. The site was Central Free Lutheran Church. The large sanctuary couldn't hold the hundreds who were in attendance.

Campo Mourao is now a modern city with skyscrapers, more than 80,000 residents and pavement everywhere. It is also the site of three AFLC congregations, a Bible school and seminary, the Miriam Infant Home and a ministry to troubled teens called Amecam.

The 40th anniversary conference was a time to celebrate what God had done in Brazil over the past years. It was also a time for friends to reunite – some from various parts of Brazil and some from the U.S. The opening service was a time of giving thanks, in particular for pastors and missionaries who have served the congregations over the years. Testimonies of thanksgiving were shared about the way God had used Free Lutheran congregations to bring about changed lives. And a reminder was given by AFLC Brazil President Jamie Hartmann about the need to listen to the Spirit of God and the immense possibilities that continue to exist in Brazil.

The emphasis the next morning was the Bible school and seminary. Former students shared testimonies, graduates who were in attendance were called forward and

pictures and information on the history of the schools was shared.

Missionary Connely Dyrud, who has worked in Brazil for more than 30 years, shared about the beginning of the schools in 1968. A crucial first step in the beginning of the church body was the establishment of schools to train leaders for the church. The schools' administrator, Pastor Oseias Camara, spoke regarding Jesus' power to transform lives and the Lord's desire for Brazil to be sending out missionaries to the world.

That evening, long-time missionaries to Brazil, Pastors John Abel and George Knapp, were honored for both having recently cele-



Concluded on page 6

In Memorium

Orphanage addition dedicated to Dyrud

he 40th anniversary celebration of the AFLC Brazil concluded with the groundbreaking of a new addition to the Miriam Infant Home. The addition will be a memorial to missionary Carolyn Dyrud, who served for many years in Brazil with her husband, Connely Dyrud. Carolyn passed away in

September 2005.

The ministry of the Miriam Infant Home had a special place in Carolyn's heart. She was much involved in the home and the children were frequent visitors to the Dyrud home.

Children who are either unable to stay at home or are taken out of their home for one reason or another, are brought to the Miriam home, where their physical, emotional and spiritual needs are cared for.

Recently a 3-year-old girl and her young mother were brought to the home out of an extremely difficult living situation. The home usually doesn't take in mothers with their children, but made accommodations for her. When the two arrived, they lacked many things, including smiles. Their unhappiness was quite evident. But after receiving and hearing of the love of Jesus, the little girl now has the kind of smile that captures a heart.

The home's new addition will provide a reception area on the first floor, where officials who come can observe the children. The second floor will include a playroom, library and area where children can watch DVDs.

Gifts for the project can be designated for the Carolyn Dyrud memorial and go to AFLC World Missions, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441.

brated their 80th birthdays. They shared about God's faithfulness over the years, the importance of the local congregation and the foundation of the Word of God. A video presentation was also shared in which various people testified about the difference their congregation had made in their life.

On Sunday morning more testimonies were shared as well as information about what congregations are doing to serve needy people in Brazil. AFLC World Missions Director Del Palmer spoke on the need to depend on God, who is always faithful.

Music was a big part of the celebration. A choir from the Curitiba area sang at the various services. The praise team from the Central church led in singing.

A group from the United States first toured AFLC mission works in Brazil before attending the anniversary celebration. The group went first to the Curitiba area where missionaries Paul and Becky Abel are involved in various ministries, including

> church planting and Bible camps. A bus then took the group to Maringa where mis-

> > sionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel are in the early stages of planting a new church. After a time of

worship at the Abels' home with the new congregation,

> the group traveled to Campo Mourao, where they toured the campus of the Bible school and seminary, as well as the Miriam Infant Home.

They also visited the Amecam program, a government-run institution for young people who were not doing well in the public schools and were basically one step away from being sent to jail. Over the years the authorities tried various means of operating the facility and failed miserably. They

approached the AFLC Brazil and Pastor Oseias and asked if they would take over the leadership of the program. Using incentives instead of the harsh physical punishment, and relying on much prayer, the program has been blessed with success.

On Pastor Oseias' first visit to Amecam, a young man mocked him for being a religious man. Pastor Oseias assured him that one day things would change and the young man would be praying to God. The change happened within a week.

A change has also happened in Brazil. The development and technological changes are striking. But more significant are the changed lives. By the grace of God people who were once in darkness have come to know Christ, the Light of the world. That is reason to celebrate.



By Pastor Del Palmer

ike any mission work, the AFLC World Missions department is looking for opportunities to reach out and grow. Right now, members of the World Mission Committee are preparing for and envisioning the future of our department. In order to do so, committee members are following four steps to growth. First, they made sure the financial base of World Missions is solid. The next step was defining the purpose of World Missions, so that the department is focused on our goals. Now we are praying that God would give us a clear vision for His work on each mission field. This vision will then be promoted among prospective missionaries and mission supporters, so we will reach many souls.

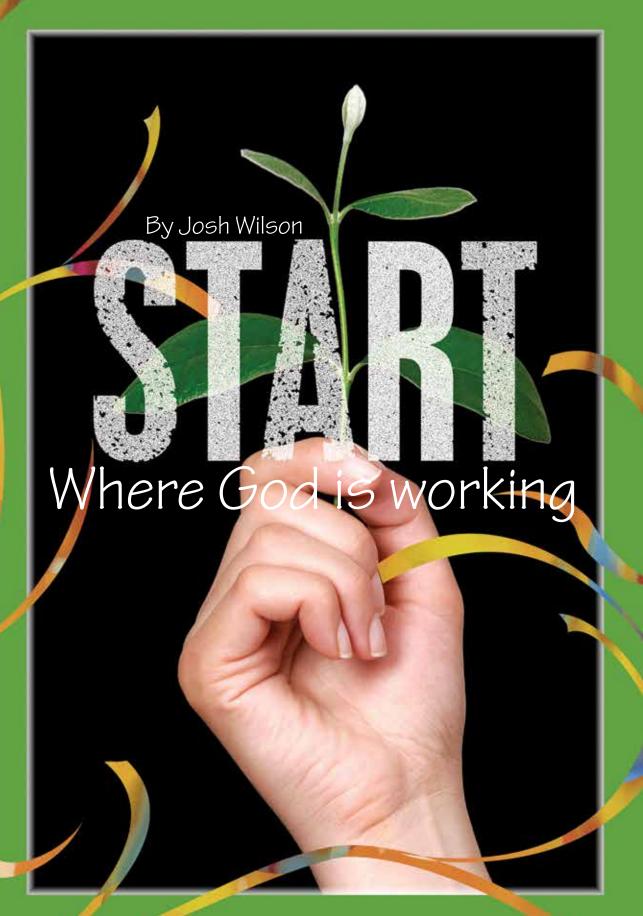
Last year's Annual Conference asked the World Mission's Committee to consider the possibility of partnering with the Brazilian national church to spread the gospel in the area near the Amazon. During the last two weeks of January, I spent time with the Brazilian national workers to explore a vision for the Brazil work. This vision could include one or more of the following goals.

- Partnering with the AFLC of Brazil to develop additional churches where we are now working.
- Providing additional teaching staff at our Bible school and seminary.
 - Pushing across the boarder into Paraguay.

● Pursuing a new mission work in the Amazon area. Because the Annual Conference requested the World Mission Committee to consider the possibility of partnering in the Amazon, we investigated a small portion of this vast area in January. Manaus, one of the main cities in this area, has a population of more than 2 million. A quick check in the phone book revealed a number of Roman Catholic and Pentecostal churches, but only one Lutheran church. As we traveled by boat, we passed village after village filled with people who have no evangelical influence in their lives. These people live in small houses on stilts to keep them dry when the river floods. Mission work in this area would be reaching many souls stranded in time, poverty and spiritual darkness.

Because we are attempting to nationalize the work in Brazil (turn the leadership of the mission work over to national workers), any vision that we adapt would also need to be the vision of the national church. Please be in prayer for members of the World Mission Committee as they consider the vision and future of AFLC mission work in Brazil.

Palmer, Shakopee, Minn., serves as director of AFLC World Missions.



or decades the Lord has called the members of Christ Lutheran Church in Hagerstown, Md., to carry out the Great Commission in our community. The congregation began as a network of Bible study groups meeting in homes during the first half of the last century. After building and outgrowing a small chapel, the growing fellowship moved into a new facility just up the hill. A strong commitment to teaching and learning the Bible and a heart for sharing Jesus with neighbors and friends were marks of the new church.

Despite being part of a denomination that has

become less and less concerned with the authority and trustworthiness of the entire Bible, many of the people of Christ Lutheran continued in their commitment to God's Word and retained a strong heart for sharing the gospel. Sunday school for all ages and a variety of large and smallgroup Bible studies were hallmarks of the church. Materials such as ALPHA, 40 Days of Purpose, and Becoming a Contagious Christian were used to introduce people to Jesus and help members become comfortable sharing their faith. In 2004 more than \$6,500 in special offerings were given during a twoweek span to buy out several showings of Mel Gibson's movie, "Passion of the Christ," so that members could bring family, friends and co-workers to

see the film at no charge.

Last year, many of the council members and a majority of the congregation reached the conclusion that we were part of a denomination that no longer reflected the biblical foundation and evangelical heart of Christ Lutheran. After a period of study and several congregational forums, the council recommended that Christ Lutheran change its affiliation to the AFLC—a process requiring a two-thirds majority vote at two congregational meetings held 90 days apart. In the first meeting, the required majority vote was achieved. However, at the second meeting the vote fell short. Many people were heart-broken. Some made plans to begin visiting other churches. Why would God allow this to happen after bringing together a body of people with so many valuable gifts?

The evening after the second vote, a group of congregants met to talk and pray about what to do next. There was a strong desire to continue pursuing the work of bringing a biblically conservative, evangelical church with a Protestant heritage to the Hagerstown area. A plan was formed to meet for a time of Bible study and prayer the Sunday after Thanksgiving—the first Sunday of Advent—at the local Red Cross building. We contacted the AFLC to ask for help starting a new congregation. Within a day, the

plans for a Bible study and prayer time developed into plans for a full worship service. Pastor Paul Nash, AFLC Home Missions director, just *happened* to have that weekend open and was available to meet with us and deliver God's Word at our first worship service.

Doors continued to open that week and the next as God prepared us to begin a new work in the community. A letter was written and mailed to the members of Christ Lutheran explaining that some of us would be moving on to form a new congregation. All were asked to spend time in prayer discerning whether God's Spirit was calling them to stay at Christ Lutheran or become part of the new mission to the community. No one knew for sure what would happen next.

The day arrived. Pastor Nash and a small planning group had met the night before for prayer and

preparation. Pastor Mark Benz from Gaithersburg, Md., was on hand to help out, wondering himself what role God

might have for him in this new work.

Would anyone come? How many chairs should be set up? That morning the planning group met early. After setting up the room we hit our knees. We prayed for God's will to be done. We prayed for protection from the Devil. We prayed for Pastor Nash. We prayed for the building, for every seat, for every soul that would gather that day to worship the risen Lord Jesus. The crowd began to

gather. In a short time every seat was filled and additional chairs were needed! Many people from the old church attended. Quite a few brought family and friends. In all, nearly 150 people gathered for the first worship service of the new church.

As I write this nearly two months later, it's still hard to believe what has taken place. Many of us are tasting freedom from major spiritual conflict for the first time in almost two years! Despite our desire for Christ Lutheran to remain intact and change affiliation to the AFLC, we now understand that God had other plans. He freed us from the past and from a denomination whose convictions about the authority of Scripture and bringing people to Jesus alone for salvation no longer matched our own. Our continued prayer is that God will give us tremendous passion for the Great Commission and that He will help us remain in a "mission" mindset when we are tempted to focus more on the institutional side of things. The journey of Christ Community Church has begun!

Wilson is a founding member of, Christ Community Church, a new AFLC congregation in Hagerstown, Md.



By Kayla Russum

ess than a year ago, I joined the staff of my church as the youth and children's ministry director. About that time, God opened the doors for me to go on a mission trip to Mexico with five other adults from my church. As it turns out, the mission-trip experience had an impact on everyone in our congregation, including our youths.

All age groups in our church worked together to send our small mission team out to the migrant fields prepared with the tools we needed. The youths and children worked to make more than 400 evangelism necklaces, while a Spanish teacher from our church volunteered hours of her time teaching us to use the necklaces to explain the story of salvation. Most of all, the people in our church committed to praying for us. In

preparing for this trip, we learned that a short-term mission trip rallies the entire church.

Our team flew to Mazatlan, Mexico, in November to work with a missionary from our church, Darwin Jackson. The trip's focus was to visit the migrant camps and invite the people to see the Jesus film we would show in their camp each night. We spent the early evenings meeting people in the camps and giving them invitations to come watch a movie featuring the life of Christ.

When the sun went down, the men from our team worked quickly to set up the movie, while the women gave the kids in the camps the necklaces the children from our church had made. Kids crowded around as we used our rudimentary Spanish to explain the story of salvation. As the starting time of the movie drew near, the people came from all over the camp with crowds pressing in. Everyone was mesmerized by the story they were seeing on the big screen.

At the end of the movie, some people walked away but some people stayed. Darwin shared a short message that ended with a prayer of salvation. The people standing around me were praying out loud for Jesus to come into their hearts. It was such a blessing to be with them and hear them receive Christ.

The mission trip had a powerful impact on the people in Mexico, our team and our church, but also on me as a youth worker. It was an unforgettable experience to share the gospel with people who have never heard the Word of God. My mission team and I sensed an indescribable urgency to share with the people around us. We were desperate for these people to make a commitment to Christ, knowing that they might not ever again be presented with the truth of God's saving grace. Every night when the people walked away from our time together, my heart cried out for the Holy Spirit to capture their hearts and give them the strength to walk with Jesus in a land that won't understand their fresh faith. It's the same thing I pray on behalf of the kids in my life here at home.

When I returned from this trip I had the opportunity to give my personal testimony about our God who is alive and moving in the hearts of people from all nations. It is my prayer that God would open young eyes to the world's need for the love of Jesus and the need for people to go into the world as Jesus commanded us. Now

> kids from my youth group are talking about a mission trip they want to take. I'm in full

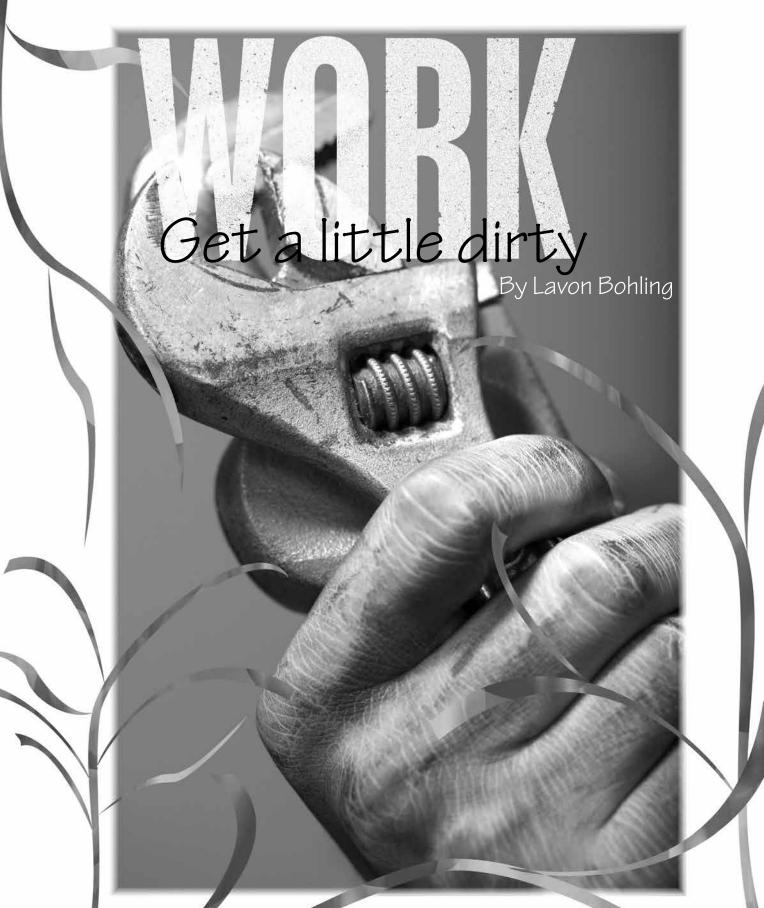
support!

Mission trips provide an opportunity to see firsthand God's work in changing hearts and lives. God uses mission trips to teach about teamwork and personal sacrifice. They also reveal the power of prayer in spiritual battles going on around us. These are lessons every youth worker needs to be reminded of as we lead our youth. Short-term mission trips renew our passion for reaching the lost and also help equip us to lead young people in our church to a closer walk with

A youth workers' trip to Tanzania is being planned for August to share Jesus with African people who may not have ever heard the clear truth of God's Word. It's the same work youth ministers do in our local congregations. But it'll be a special time to renew our passion for reaching the lost and to equip us to lead young people in our church to a closer walk with Jesus.

God uses mission trips to change the hearts of His people. I'm praying He will change the hearts of the people of Africa, the hearts of the youth workers that go there, our congregations, and especially the kids we minister to. One day in heaven we will all bow together before the throne of God and thank Him for these wonderful opportunities to follow Him to the ends of the earth.

Russum, a 2004 graduate of AFLBS, serves as director of youth and children's ministry at Elim Lutheran, Lake Stevens, Wash.



t takes just one look at the news to see that opportunities for ministry are abundant. It takes one look at our churches to see that we are surrounded by needs among God's people. And another look will tell you that there is a rich resource of talent and ability within our AFLC church body.

Thankfully, many of those talented and able people have a desire to help others. The crux is making them aware of specific needs. That has been the vision of the AFLC Missions Department for some time — identifying needs and matching them with resources, as outlined in I Peter 4:10, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Just a little more than five years ago, the Missions Department coordinated its first team of volunteer workers. The crew assisted with the construction of a new church building for Faith Lutheran in

Durant, Okla. Since then, many of our churches have expressed an interest in work/missions trips. Teams of volunteer workers from those churches have assisted with building and remodeling projects at several AFLC congregations, including Crown of Life Lutheran, Tomball. Texas: Calvary Free Lutheran, Mesa, Ariz.; Word of Truth Lutheran, Glen Rose, Texas; and Cornerstone Lutheran, Argyle, Wis. A team also trav-

Recently, there has been an outpouring of interest and concern for helping clean and rebuild in the hurri-

eled to Brazil to help with several

projects in the AFLC mission work.

cane-stricken areas of the South. The devastation is extensive and the needs are great, especially in southern Mississippi. In addition to trips that have been coordinated through Home Missions, several AFLC congregations have organized trips on their own. Several teams traveled to the South last summer and fall and two more went in January and February. Also in January, a busload of students from the Association of Free Lutheran Bible School spent nearly two weeks helping with the cleanup in Biloxi, Miss., through Samaritan's Purse.

This work is continuing. A team of volunteers spent Feb. 6-18 helping clean up in Kiln, Miss. Another trip is scheduled for March.

God uses people of all ages and abilities to accomplish His work. Volunteers who go on these work/mission trips do so as ambassadors for Christ. Team mem-

bers excitedly report witnessing the hand of God working through them to touch the lives of people who are receiving assistance. Several members of these teams have witnessed people coming to Christ directly as a result of volunteer work.

Until June of 2005, work/mission trips were coordinated through FLAPS, the AFLC's aviation ministry. At the 2005 Annual Conference, members of the FLAPS board of managers suggested the coordination of these trips be moved to Builders Fellowship, a ministry that has been a part of Home Missions for many years. Members of the Home Missions Committee accepted this ministry. In addition, the discontinuation of the Church Extension program has allowed Builders Fellowship to expand its goals.

There are three key components to Builders Fellowship. First, it provides a source of funds to be given as grants to help Home Missions congregations

> with building programs. The amount and quantity of grants given is determined by gifts received into this program.

> > Second, Builders Fellowship organizes and coordinates groups of volunteer laborers who will help with construction, remodeling, and humanitarian projects. Third, Builders Fellowship provides prayer support for the work of Home Missions. An army of prayer warriors is essential to support this ministry.

It is exciting to see what happens in the hearts and minds of people who participate in these projects. It seems those who give of themselves to

help others in need as they build up the body of Christ receive the greatest blessing. "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Galatians 6:10).

Looking ahead, two AFLC congregations in Minnesota are planning to construct additions to their worship facilities this year: Minnewaska Lutheran, Starbuck, Minn., and St. John's Lutheran, Duluth, Minn.

If you are interested in receiving information on future work projects, contact the Home Missions Department and ask to have your name added to the resource pool: Phone (763) 412-2052 or (763) 412-2018 or email homemis@aflc.org.

Bohling is assistant director of the AFLC's Home Missions Department.



By Dr. S. Anand Kumar

t is too painful to remember and too painful to forget the sad incident of the tsunami of Dec. 26, 2004. On that morning a new word entered the vocabulary of most Indians. I had never heard the word "tsunami." It was a word that would suggest that the sea had suddenly gone mad, that the ocean could no longer be trusted, and that the water had cannibalized the land. It was a word that spelled total and unimaginable upheaval, devastation on the earth, fear, sorrow and loss. Thou-

sands lost families, homes, and livelihoods.

More than a year ago, an earthquake triggered waves with its epicenter in the sea off the coast of Sumatra, measuring 8.6 on the Richter scale. Hence, tidal waves lashed coastlines from Indonesia to Africa, resulting in a gruesome toll of about 300,000 lives. The mark of devastation is still visible. Indonesia was the worst hit, accounting for nearly half the lives lost. Southern India was badly affected, too, leaving more than 10,000 people dead and 5,000 missing.

Near us, a few families who went fishing died in the killer wave. Near our congregation Elachetladibba, four people died. Near Chirala P.S.Palem, 10 people died. A few families, which went for a Sunday picnic to the beach, died in the killer wave. Boats and nets on the beach were thrown to more than half-a-kilometer distance. Houses and fields were destroyed. Even after one year many people are unable to come out of the trauma created by the killer wave.

Memorial services along silent and beachside marches were held. Fishermen did not go to the ocean out of respect for the victims. People have built small shrines and planted casuarinas and coconut saplings in memory of friends and families they lost. Still, it is a scar in the minds of many. Parents have lost children, hundreds of children have been orphaned, and whole families have perished in the fury of waves.

In our churches we have prayed for the victims.

Many agencies — national and international — came forward to rehabilitate the affected areas. Still the work is going on. The services provided by the Christian organizations were incomparable. We directly saw the gratitude of the affected people toward the Christian organizations. We are happy for help given to the needy with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a lot of difference between Christian organizations and other helping agencies. The difference is the concern and the loving

We are very thankful to AFLC World Missions, which responded immediately, and the help the AFLC has pro-

> vided. The food packs, rice, and household material were supplied with the funds you gave. Help from World Missions was

not small, we did the relief work satisfactorily, but there is more work to do.

The funds for the water project World Missions has given to Elachetladibba was very helpful to the villagers. They will remember World Missions' help throughout their lives, and the coming generations also. The shelter for a church is also a great help

to the villagers.

We conducted free medical camps regularly for five months in many villages, supplied preventative medicines and treated their diseases. Pastor Alvin Pinno and the church in Canada also supplied medicines and help for the medical camps.

We can see that the rehabilitation work did help rebuild lives. We are still continuing the free medical services in 10 villages regularly. I want to continue these services because there is a lot of need. There are so many experiences to share.

Thanks to all the people who responded immediately for the relief and rehabilitation work.

Dr. Kumar, who works with AFLC India, has provided medical relief to many victims of last year's tsunami.

Teaching missions

s children hear about missionaries around the world, they will learn many things that may be different about living in another country. But they will also see that all people have one thing in common: We all need Jesus as our Savior! Children can be encouraged to pray for others and to be missionaries for Christ wherever they are. Here are some ideas you can use to teach children about the importance of missions.

Mission Club

Meet once a month after school to teach about missions. Include mission stories and letters from missionaries, and do handcrafts and service projects. Talk about how students can be missionaries every day right where they are.

Bulletin Board Map

Cover a bulletin board with a large map of the world. Mount photos of missionaries around the edges of the map. Run yarn from the pictures to the countries where the missionaries serve. Pray for these missionaries regularly in church and Sunday school.

Greeting Cards

Send birthday, Christmas, and other special day cards to missionaries. Encourage children to send cards to missionary children their own age.

Exchange Recordings

Tape favorite songs, recited memory verses, or tell about what you are studying in Sunday school. Send the tape to a missionary family and ask questions about their Sunday school.

Support a Missionary

Select a specific missionary to be your missionary. Take an offering once a month for this missionary. Keep students regularly informed about the mission work.



Foreign Student

Sponsor a foreign student individually or as a church. Have the student stay with a family from your church. You will learn much about the country and culture he or she comes from and can also share the love of Jesus through your words and actions.

Short Wave Radio

If you have a ham radio operator in your church, ask him to make contact with a missionary. Let the students talk with the missionary.

Book Reports

Have each student read a book about a missionary. Then ask them to give an oral report to the rest of the class.



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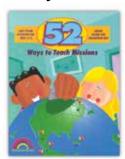
Available from AFLC Parish Education at (763) 545-5631 or parished@ aflc.org. Note that some of the materials may be borrowed from the Parish Ed lending library.

Further Resources

AFLC Parish Education also has a lending library of visualized mission stories for children and resource books for teaching missions, available upon request. Contact Parish Education at (763) 545-5631 or email at parished@aflc.org

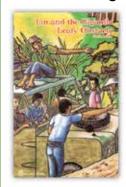
AFLC Parish Education RESOURCES

52 Ways to Teach Missions



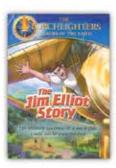
Crafts, games, outreach ideas, and more will help teach children and adults to be missionaries in their own neighborhoods plus get them involved personally with missionaries serving in other countries. \$9.50

lan and the Gigantic Leafy Obstacle



A fallen tree, a missing elephant, and a prayer of faith. Set in Thailand, this true story booklet for children demonstrates how God works to answer prayer. \$4

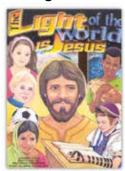
The Jim Elliot Story



This first episode in the new "Torchlighters" Heroes of the Faith series, geared for ages 8-12, brings to life the story of missionary martyr Jim Elliot. Follow Jim from his college years to his work in the jungle, showing

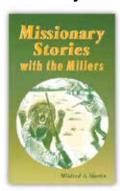
his faith in action as he answers God's call to do the seemingly impossible. Downloadable 26-page guide includes discussion questions and reproducible activity pages. DVD or video \$14.95 each

The Light of the World Is Jesus



Visualized song includes full color illustrations, printed music, reproducible miniature song sheet for children. and devotional text for leader. \$8

Missionary Stories with the Millers



Adventures with Christian missionaries as they meet disease, drought, witch doctors, some of them miraculously escaping danger while others are martyred for Christ. A brief historical note follows each chapter on the life of each missionary. \$6

Ringu of India's Forest



A boy and his family live in fear of sickness, evil spirits, and fierce tigers until missionar-

ies share with them the power of the one true God who can protect them. Visualized story contains 5 chapters, 40 illustrations, and review questions. \$13.50

Why was here and there? I born here you there?

— By Pastor Connely Dyrud —

hump! Thump! Thump! Pastor Joel's head snapped up from his chest. He had been dozing. Thump! Thump! Thump! On the windshield again. He had been waiting in the car in the cold winter rain since 5 a.m. at the Campo Mourao, Brazil, bus depot. Now he braced himself for the good-natured teasing that would come when the friend he was to pick up saw that he had fallen asleep: "Ha! Asleep on the job, Pastor Joel!"

He quickly rolled down the window but was surprised to see a man he had never seen before. Soaking wet, a rough calloused hand reached into the car. "I need money for food," he whispered. Pastor Joel's first thought was a common reaction to beggars, who all too often spent money they were given on drink or drugs. Instead of reaching into his pocket, he reached into his Bible and pulled out a tract. "Here. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life."

The man looked at Pastor Joel strangely. "I'm hungry, I can't eat paper!"

"No," Pastor Joel said, "read what the tract says about Jesus. He is the one who wants to save you!"

He put his head down and muttered, "I ... I can't read."

Pastor Joel opened the car door and stepped out.
The man was barefooted in the rain. He had no coat and was shaking uncontrollably in the cold July rain.

"Could you please buy me some hot coffee and bread? I'm so cold and hungry."

They walked over to the luncheonette, out of the rain. Pastor Joel asked him why he was out of work. The man shook his head, "No, I have work."

Then, cupping his hands around the warm cup, he began. "My parents were farmers in Yugoslavia. They lost everything in World War II — their home, their land, everything. Shiploads of my fellow countrymen were sent to other countries. They were called 'displaced per-

sons.' Some were sent to Canada, some to America, some to Argentina, and some to Brazil. My parents were sent here to Brazil." The man continued to tell the tragic story of losing his parents at a young age and the years of struggle to provide for his family.

The man was crying now. He turned to Pastor Joel, his blue eyes glazed with tears. "You are not Brazilian either, are you?"

"No," the pastor agreed, "I am an American. My grandparents also came from Europe. I grew up on a farm in the United States."

The man shook his head. "But that's not fair! Why were you born in America and I was born in Brazil?"

Pastor Joel put his arm around the shivering man. "I cannot say why I was born in one place of this world and you in another, but God our Father is near today. He never left you nor abandoned you, and today He wants to save you and give you a much better life."

That morning, the man gave his heart and life to Jesus. As the bus slipped away in the morning dawn, Pastor

Joel couldn't help but think of his question again, "Why was I born here, and you there?" Why, thought Pastor Joel, was I born in a Christian home when so many are not? Then the words of Isaiah 55:8 came to him: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord."

As he sat once again in his car waiting for the bus from Curitiba, he thought of what a great responsibility America has according to Luke 12:48: "From everyone who has been given much shall much be required."

Dyrud has served the AFLC in Brazil as a missionary. This story has been condensed from a longer version to be published in a collection of missionary stories by AFLC Parish Education. If you have a mission story to submit, contact Parish Education at (763) 535-5631.



On Jan. 15, Pastor Robert Lee, AFLC president, installed Pastor Lee Hoops at West Prairie Free Lutheran, Kindred, N.D. West Prairie was formed on Jan. 11, 1891. Many of the current members are descendants of the founding families. Formerly an ELCA congregation, the church joined the AFLC in January 2005. Pastor Hoops accepted the congregation's letter of call in November 2005 and began serving on Dec. 11.

Pictured are David Strand, treasurer; Debby Strand, secretary; Pastor Lee Hoops; Pastor Robert Lee; Robert Schrader, deacon; and Senster Vangsness, president.



Alsace Lutheran Church, Reading, Pa., a 2,400-member congregation that withdrew from the ELCA, was welcomed by the AFLC Coordinating Committee on Jan. 17. Established in 1732, prior to the organization of any Lutheran church body in America (prior to the establishment of the United States of America), the congregation is currently served by Pastors Mark Brophy and Richard Nelson.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Pastor Jerome Nikunen, who currently serves as pastor of Zoar Free Lutheran and chaplain at the Tri-County Retirement and Nursing Home, both in Hatton, N.D., has announced his retirement from the full-time parish and chaplaincy ministries. He and his wife, Phyllis, will be moving to Minneapolis in March.

Pastor Dale Lankford, a 2005 graduate of AFLTS, was ordained on Jan. 29 at Our Redeemer Lutheran, Kirkland, Wash., by Pastor Ken Moland. Lankford serves Lord of Life Lutheran, Mount Vernon, Wash., which joined the AFLC in October 2005.

Tom and Lidia Lumppio, graduates of AFLBS in 1995 and 1999, respectively, and 2001 graduates of MTI, began mission work in Mazatlan, Mexico, in February with World Mission Prayer League.

Pastor Todd Erickson, Apple Valley, Minn., has accepted a call to

serve Rose Free Lutheran and Spruce Free Lutheran, Roseau, Minn. Erickson, who currently serves Minnesota Valley Lutheran, Lakeville, will begin his ministry in Roseau on May.

Pastor Jim Johnson, dean of AFLBS, has accepted a call to serve Good Shepherd Lutheran, Camarillo, Calif. Johnson will step down as dean in June during the Annual Conference at the Warm Beach Conference Center, Stanwood, Wash., where he was elected in 1996. He will begin his ministry in Camarillo on July 1.

Senior seminarians **Dean Iverson** and **Richard Ramsbacher** completed their campus studies at the end of December and began a six-month internship program in January. Iverson serves the Roseau, Minn., parish (Roseau Free Lutheran and Norland Free Lutheran in Salol), with Pastor Larry Severson serving as pastoral supervisor. Ramsbacher is serving Bethel Community, Culbertson, Mont., and Faith Free Lutheran, Brockton, with Pastor Jon Wellumson serving as pastor supervisor. Upon successful completion of their internship and recommendations from the various boards and committees, they will be eligible for call as AFLC pastors as of April 1. Four other interns serving 12-month internships will be eligible for call as of March 1. They include John Brennan, Tomasz Chmiel, Nathan Jore and Mark Richardson.

[FLY]

unshackled

o you remember those clunky iron bracelets that prisoners used to wear? Those shackles usually had a large metal ball connected to one end of a chain, which would rub against prisoners' skin. Worse yet, the shackles

served as a reminder of the horrible existence of a prisoner. The dungeons they were chained to were smelly, rat-infested places that reeked of hideous

body odor. The life of an inmate s e e m e d hopelessly helpl



Our theme for the 2007 FLY Convention is, simply,

sin.

"Unshackled." Being shackled is a word-picture of anything that keeps us from living an abundant life in Christ. What type of bondage shackles you?

Do you deny that you are a sinner? It is hard at times to admit that sin has a grip on our lives. During these times, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (I John 1:8). This denial does not remove the fact that we are indeed shackled. On the other hand, it is equally destructive to think that once being unshackled we have a license to sin. "What shall we say, then?

Shall we keep on sinning so that grace may increase? May it never be!" (Romans 6:1-2). This type of life is not only hazardous for the captive, but it also gives a bad reputation to Christianity.

Regrettably, even good things can take us into their custody, choking us in legalism. Pious acts

such as church attendance, Bible reading, prayer, and evangelism can become shackles for us if done out of a guilty compulsion rather than by an honest heart that humbly seeks to please the Lord. Performing these duties can be a way to merely ease our consciences and please onlookers. Such lifeless and powerless rituals suck the life out of a vibrant relationship with Christ, demonstrating II Timothy 3:5, "... holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power." It is here where even true Christians can find themselves under spiritual arrest. During these times, we once again ask ourselves, "Am I shackled?"

Most of us are quite familiar with the sin that so easily entangles us, and we constantly make resolutions to rid ourselves of them. We go to Bible camps, hear great messages, repent, and then a week later, find ourselves captured again by the same old grotesque sin that we thought we were released from. We can turn out to be simply hearers of the Word and not doers of the Word (James 1:23-24).

The FLY Committee believes we need a fresh movement of God's Spirit to unlock us from the enslavement that we each face. Life in Christ is not meant to be dull and frustrating. It is meant to be one of excitement and passionate devotion to the Lord. The truth is that we will not be able to enjoy that rewarding life until we are unshackled.

Paul and Silas were thrown into jail for their outspoken devotion to the Lord Jesus. However, Acts 16:25 tells us that their physical shackles were not ruining their day. At midnight they ardently worshipped the Lord with hymns and prayers to God. Suddenly, their world was turned upside down. A great earthquake rumbled and Paul, Silas, and all of the prisoners were unshackled! Paul and Silas took this God-given opportunity to share Christ with their jailer. The jailer was saved that very night.

God wants to raise up an army of young people who are unshackled from the bonds of sin so that they may powerfully and effectively serve Him. We are praying that God will work in your hearts to give you that passion at the 2007 FLY Convention.

— Brett Boe Treasurer Free Lutheran Youth

www.aflc.org/women

[WMF]

The body of hrist



ornerstone Christian Church, Brandon, Fla., began in 2004 as a group of Christians meeting together for Bible study. Soon they contacted AFLC Home Missions for help. What is unique to Cornerstone is the type of ministry they provide in the greater Tampa Bay area. Free coffee, breakfast bars and car washes have been given to the residents of the apart-

ment complex where the congregation meets. Bag lunches have been given to residents of a downtown homeless shelter. At Christmas and Thanksgiving they packed food boxes (25 each time) to feed a family of five for a holiday dinner. They partner with Matthew2535 and Metropolitan Ministries to feed a hot meal to homeless people every Saturday afternoon. A parking lot is transformed into a dining hall by bringing tables, chairs, and a tarp for a roof. Anyone who is hungry may come to eat as a message of hope in Jesus Christ is shared and Christian music is played.

Pastor Paul Nash, AFLC Home Missions director, reports they often conduct worship services in a neighborhood park, wearing t-shirts that say, "I am a Body Part," on the front and quote I Corinthians 12:12 on the back: "The body has many parts ... so it is with the body of Christ." This approach has led many people in the park to join them for worship.

This group of about 50 wants to establish more churches in the Tampa Bay area, hoping to reach the lost for Jesus. As they work together, they envision fruit that gives glory to Jesus Christ. Pray for a pastor with a similar vision who can provide outreach training and help start other churches. Pray for the laymen of the congregation as they preach, teach, and lead Bible studies while also seeking new outreach opportunities.

The National WMF Board has decided to designate 2006 WMF funds given for Home Mission work to Cornerstone Christian Church. Members of this church have deliberately gone outside of their comfort zone to reach people on the fringes. The Lord wants to develop a vision for the lost that reaches outside all our comfort zones. One way of fostering such a vision is through a World Class Christian seminar at your church. See the list at the right for presenters.

By Lorilee Mundfrom
 First Vice President, WMF

Seminar presenters

Contact person: Cheryl Skordahl, National WMF president, (763) 497-5863, wmf@aflc. org

Eastern states: Ruth Hinkleman, 116 Rae Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15228, (412) 343-8624, ruthink@msn.com

Illinois & southern Wisconsin: Susan Garner, 3476 N. State Rt. 71, Marseilles, IL 61341, (815) 496-9511, greenpastures@ mylifeline.net

Iowa and southeastern Minnesota: Bonnie Handsaker, 3339 Ziegler Ave., Radcliffe, IA 50230, (515) 899-2438, pbhandsaker@hotmail.com

Minnesota: Jeannette Benson, PO Box 220, Upsala, MN 56384, (320) 573-4452, jbens@ upstel.net

Mary Pollestad, 13935 Northwood Dr. NW, Andover, MN 55304, (763) 754-2669, tonnespollestad@bibleleague.org

Nebraska and Colorado: Deanna Larson, 1014 G St., Fairbury, NE 68352, (402) 729-3297, sonview@alltel.net

North Dakota & Montana: Lynn Wellumson, 1814 8th Ave. E., Williston, ND 58801, (701) 572-0853, jwellums@yahoo.com

Pacific Northwest: Jan Gee, 23522 Jordan Rd., Arlington, WA 98223, cell: (425) 231-3100, home: (360) 435-5818, jangee@johnlscott.com

Lori Crowell, PO Box 3655, Arlington, WA 98223, cell: (425) 231-5755, home: (360) 652-1688, loricrowell@juno.com

Southern California & Arizona: Geri Graham, 2406 Barbara Dr., Camarillo, CA 93012, home: (805) 491-2931, cell: (805) 251-5223, kgraham767@aol.com

South Dakota & southwest Minnesota: Arlys Jorenby, 3615 220th St., Brookings, SD 57006, (605) 693-3382, amjorenby@yahoo.

Elaine Kohl, 21776 472nd Ave., Brookings, SD 57006, (605) 693-4668, rkohl@itctel.com Southern states: Debbie Giles, Apartado Postal 439, Jerez, Zacatecas, Mexico 99300, 11-52-494-945-2437, 11-52-494-945-2438, dgiles@prodigy.net.mx

Wisconsin: Vicki Johnson, 311 Montgomery St., Amery, WI 54001, (715) 268-4330, 7pack@ameryflc.org

School board seeks names for new dean

Members of the AFLC Schools Board of Trustees are seeking recommendations for the position of dean of AFLBS to replace Pastor Jim Johnson who has resigned to accept a call to serve Good Shepherd Lutheran, Camarillo, Calif., beginning in July.

We are grateful to Pastor Johnson for his 10 years of faithful service to the Bible school and we praise God for the work that He accomplished through Pastor Johnson and the faculty and staff under his leadership.

Please send any recommendations you would like to make for the position of AFLBS dean to the board chairman, Dr. Daniel Mundfrom, at 2630 17th Street, Greeley, CO 80634. Any and all recommendations received by board members will be prayerfully and seriously considered. Thank you for your prayers and your continued support as we begin the process of calling a new dean to the Bible school.

[ABCDEFG]

What does it mean?

FLY: The Free Lutheran Youth, formerly called the Luther League Federation, serves the AFLC by planning a bi-annual national youth convention, which provides congregations with a tool to win the lost, build the believer, and encourage student discipleship in the local congregation.

VISION: Formerly called Vision 2004, this fundraising and development arm of the AFLC Schools was formed in 1997 in order to meet the expansion needs of the growing campus, including staffing and buildings. So far, funds raised through Vision have paid for Heritage Hall student center and seminary housing projects. To date, more than \$5 million has been raised towards these projects. For more information, visit the AFLC's web site at www.aflc.org.

JANUARY AFLC Memorials

AFLBS

John Herset Roy Larson Don Rodvold **AFLTS**

Robert Gunderson

All departments

W. Jerald Hansen George Johnson

Earl and Edith Bounds

Evangelism

Gayle Herman

General Fund

James Tobin

Home Missions

Lyle Mitzel Charlie Hrdlicka

Roy Larson

Miriam Infant Home

Carolyn Dyrud Cecil Schmidt

Parish Education

Margery Stone Boschoff

Vision

Jo Herset

Lucille Thundercloud

Ida Monson

WMF

Carolyn Dyrud (2) Esther Smith Myrtle Stutrud LaVanche Petersen

World Missions

Edna Haugen Ralph Kluck

Vision to host dean's luncheon

A dean's luncheon is planned for March 16 at the AFLC Schools campus in Plymouth, Minn. Anyone interested in touring AFLBS, MTI and AFLTS are encouraged to come. The day will begin at 9:30 a.m. and will include attending classes at both the Bible school and seminary and conclude with a lunch.

If you are interested or would like more information, contact Karen Floan at (763) 544-9501 or visit www.flbs.org.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (1 month) - January 1 - January 31, 2006

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN JANUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund*	\$424,030	\$35,113	\$35,113	8
Youth Ministries	57,949	4,665	4,665	8
Parish Education	96,477	12,665	12,665	13
Seminary	189,224	15,222	15,222	8
Bible School	296,257	22,053	22,053	7
Home Missions	293,287	17,992	17,992	6
World Missions	260,933	22,951	22,951	9
Personal Support	376,641	34,569	34,569	9
TOTALS	\$1,994,798	\$165,228	\$165,228	8
TOTALS 2005	\$1,860,474	\$165,076	\$165,076	9

The Evangelism Department received \$4,700 in January.

These are the Annual Conference-approved budgets but do not reflect all the financial needs of the departments. Contact the individual departments for further information.

^{*} Includes Evangelism totals

Freedom for **EVETY** congregation

missionary had one idea about how a church's new building ought to look. The congregation had a different one. What happened, according to the missionary, was, "We went with what the congregation wanted." That's how it is suppose to work in Free Lutheran congregations, whether they are in



Craig Johnson

the United States or in another country. "The congregation directs its own affairs, subject to the authority of the Word and the Spirit of God, and acknowledges no other ecclesiastical

authority or government above itself" (Fundamental Principle 5). The congregation is respected and free to follow the Lord's leading. "The congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth" (Fundamental Principle 1), no matter what country on earth it might be located in.

The heart of our mission work is planting free and living Lutheran congregations throughout the world. Those congregations are free, right from the start. They may need financial assistance, training and other kinds of help; but that does not take away their freedom.

Freedom is not something a congregation receives after it matures or proves itself. If it was a reward that had to be earned, none of our congregations would be truly free. All of them are made up of sinful human beings. None are perfect. None are fully mature. It is only by

the grace of God they are free.

The congregation in Corinth is maybe the most immature congregation we read about in the New Testament. Yet the apostle Paul is inspired by the Holy Spirit to tell them: "You do not lack any spiritual gift ... you yourselves are God's temple ... you are the body of Christ" (I Corinthians 1:7, 3:16, 12:27, NIV). He also declares, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (II Corinthians 3:17). The congregation was falling far short of the ideal, but by grace the Spirit of the Lord was there, so there was freedom.

The Spirit of the Lord is present in Brazil. It was my privilege to witness evidence of that again recently when I attended the 40th anniversary Annual Conference of AFLC Brazil. God has raised up free and living Lutheran congregations and has worked through them.

Congregations in Brazil experience many of the same joys and challenges that we do in North America. They are to be respected as recipients of the same kind of freedom.

When a teenager gets her driver's license and then comes to her parent looking for the keys to the car and the freedom to drive, it can cause a little fear. The parent might wonder if she is ready. Freedom can be a scary thing.

As Brazilians assume greater control over the affairs of the church in Brazil and are more and more in the positions of leadership, we in the U. S may think we're giving the keys to the car to the church in Brazil. That's not exactly the case. We aren't really the parents and we never had the keys.

Freedom is not something a congregation receives after it matures or proves itself.

Those are in the hands of our heavenly Father. The church in every country belongs to God.

The Lord has been letting the Brazilian church do some driving. He has given them the freedom to follow Him, and good things have been happening. We can trust the Lord will continue to guide them and keep them in His care.

Some of us in certain parts of the world have simply heard the message first. That doesn't make us any better or wiser than people elsewhere. It does mean we have the responsibility to tell the good news of Jesus to those who have yet to hear. Mission work has been described as simply beggars telling other beggars where they can find food.

Christians in Brazil are our brothers and sisters in Christ. They have learned some things from us. We have learned some things from them. In their freedom the Spirit of God occasionally leads them to do some things differently than we do it in the U.S. That is part of the beauty of free congregations. May that beauty be seen more and more in Brazil and throughout the world.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

[Something to Share]

Let's get personal

ind if I get personal with you?
"Whoa," you say, "I don't even know you!"

Exactly. I like to encourage others to pursue a personal relationship with Jesus. Some folks are really put off by

the notion of a personal relationship with the God who made the universe, was born from a virgin, lived a sinless life, sacrificed His life on a cross for the sin of the world, rose from the grave, etc., etc., etc. "Where does the Bible say I need a personal relationship with Jesus anyway?" Glad you asked!

Mind if I quote from the Bible to answer your question? "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (What's the Father's will? Believe that Jesus is His Son, unto salvation! See John 6:28-29). Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never *knew* you. Away from me, you evildoers'" (Matthew 7:21-23, emphasis mine).

Jesus commands willing workers of miracles in His name to depart from Him! Why? Because Jesus never *knew* them. He didn't have a personal relationship with them by faith. They didn't *know* His love, His grace, His holiness, His righteousness. They didn't *know* His Word

or abide in it. They didn't *know* Him! Jesus commanded them to depart from His presence, not because they had made mistakes in life, but because Jesus didn't know them in a personal relationship of faith, love, and trust.

This is not an isolated passage in Scripture. Jesus speaks elsewhere of believers "abiding in Him, and He in them" (John 15:5). To live/abide *in* someone seems to beg for personal relationship, does it not? Jesus calls the disciples, who were total strangers when Jesus called them to follow Him three years prior to His death, "friends" (John 15:15). It's awfully difficult to call someone a friend without having any kind of personal relationship with them!

Ok, just one more. "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:19-20). Sounds to me like Jesus wants to come have dinner with you, and begin that personal relationship thing we've been talking about. *Know* what I mean? Jesus wants to *know* you, in an awesome, amazing, personal, eternal way. In this New Year, let's make a resolution that we keep: to pursue a deeper, personal relationship with King Jesus. Amen!

Pastor Joe Ocker
 Dell Lutheran
 Frost, Minn.