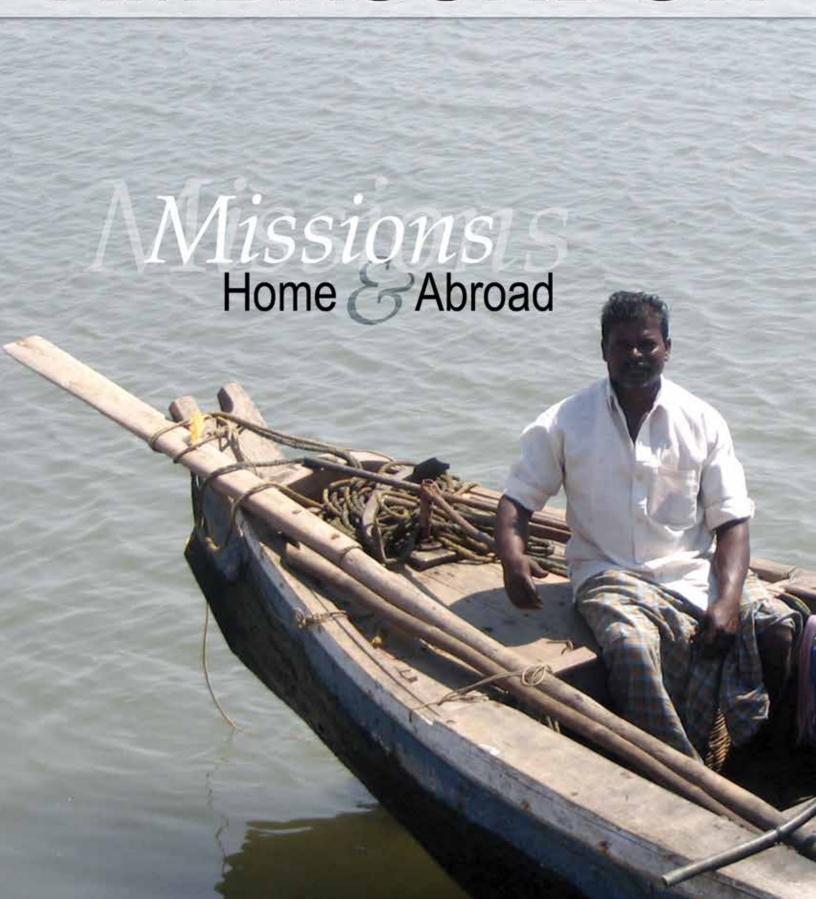
# THE LUTHERAN SADOR



## [Encouraging Word]

# A missionary heart

'm just home from Brazil! What perfect timing for this special issue on missions. Every day of the trip was soul-charging: staying at the ARCA with the Paul Abel family, joining youth camp, visiting the Bible school and infant home, and worshipping with many different AFLC congregations. I'm bursting with excitement for what God is doing in Brazil.

My sister asked me what one spiritual lesson stood out to me from this trip. How can I say only one thing? Qualities that nurture long-term discipleship — like patience, hospitality, and boldness — lived out by the Abel families and in the Brazilian church truly inspired and challenged me. But especially, God used this month-long trip to emphasize a chief characteristic of a missionary heart, the type of heart God desires for you and me.

The test of my commitment to the Great Commission is not public; it is in my secret closet of prayer, where no one but the Father sees. Ever since I was a little girl I've wanted to be a missionary to some distant country and tell people about Jesus. I am convicted, however, that talking and reading about missions and noting prayer requests, while a good thing, is pointless and powerless until I start praying for those who have not yet heard. Praying does not replace giving and going — it is the place it all starts.

Jesus Christ is passionate about missions. He is passionate that people from every tongue and tribe come into a loving relationship with Him and bow before the throne of His Father. He is not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9). Do my prayers reflect His priorities?

A missionary heart prays daily, untiringly, for God to send out faithful laborers to His harvest. Along with the great need in Brazil, there is an estimated 10,000 people groups who have never had any gospel witness. "Pray ve therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38). A missionary heart intercedes for and with those on the front lines for spiritual protection, direction, and provision. "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (I Samuel 12:23a).

One thing that helps remind me to petition specifically and "without ceasing" is to surround myself with visual mission reminders, such as pictures, maps, and quotes. You know the old adage, "out of sight, out of mind." We have to intentionally fight complacency and remember that heaven-shaking promise, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16b). What a privilege!

"Many of us cannot reach the mission fields on our feet," said missionary James Fraiser, "but we can reach them on our knees." I pray the Father would fill me with His missionary heart to see every tongue and tribe worshiping the Lamb upon the throne. He is worthy, so worthy. "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee" (Psalm 67:3).

> By Christie Ballmann Word of Truth Free Lutheran Glen Rose, Texas

May 2005 Volume 43, Number 5

**Praying** 

does not

replace

giving and

going — it

is the place

it all starts.



### **발LUTHERANAMBASSADOR**

Editor

Pastor Craig Johnson craigi@teleport.com

**Managing Editor** 

**Editorial Board** 

Ruth Gunderson ruthg@aflc.org

Pastor John Mundfrom Oryen Benrud Pastor Jerry Moan Pastor James L. Johnson

The Lutheran Ambassador (USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413) is published monthly by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. AFLC headquarters and publications office is at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441. Phone: (763) 545-5631; fax: 763-545-0079.

For subscription changes and information: The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine

Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441. 763-545-5631 or e-mail at luthamb@aflc.org

**Subscriptions rates:** 

\$15 a year, Group Rate, U. S.

\$16 a year, Individual, U. S.

\$18 a year, International

Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, MN, and additional mailing office.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441



t is often said, and we truly believe, that missions is God's work; He is in charge, and it is our privilege to work under His lordship. Everyone who professes the name of Jesus is to be a part of this great work. But, we also realize that this great task takes physical strength and stamina. Such are associated with youths and those in the prime of life. Does that mean that as we grow older we are less able to be a partner with Christ in building His church? Indeed not.

Over the years I've known people, far beyond the prime of life, who are very much involved in the work of building the church. People who are very in tune with Jesus, the Master Builder, and we call them prayer warriors. My grandmother was one of them. At age 95 she was bedridden, blind and nearly deaf, but in one of my last visits with her she said, "I can't do anything anymore except pray, but that I will do as long as He permits."

It has recently been my joy to read again Ole Hallesby's classic book, "Prayer." In the third chapter Hallesby says, "Prayer is the most important work in the Kingdom of God." I know there are some seniors who truly believe and earnestly devote themselves to this very important work. Over the years I have met some of them. Three who always come to mind have now gone home to be with their dearly loved Savior.

One of them was a widow, and would regularly send a love offering to the AFLC, and a note with it would remind us that she was praying for God's work and for His workers. I remember the times when she was in attendance at the Annual Conference of the AFLC and prayers flowed from her heart and lips as she partook in the prayer hour. One time she told someone she didn't have a telephone because it would interrupt her prayer time.

Filling the role warriors of a dying generation

By Pastor Elden Nelson

Another prayer warrior I am reminded of is my own father. In his last years he would come and stay with us for a few days, and over and over I would find him in his room with the door shut. When I knocked and asked, "What are you doing?" His response was always the same, "I am praying."

The third warrior is Sidney Swenson, a former lay pastor. When I was serving the church of which he and his wife were members in retirement, he would ride with me to the pastor's conference every January. As he got into the car and settled in for our ride together he would say, "OK brother, you drive, and I'll pray." For the next 45 minutes or so he would pray through the names of pastors in the directory. He would pray for specific needs of which he was aware and for the congregations they served. He didn't need the book, really, because he had prayed through it so many times he knew the names in alphabetical order.

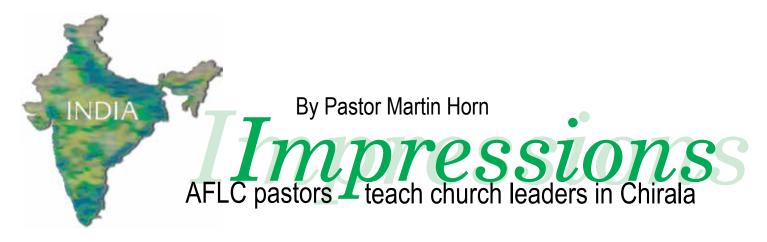
Jesus tells Peter in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Looking at the rest of Scripture, it is obvious that Jesus did not mean He would do it alone, because several places in the Gospels clearly state that Jesus wants to use His followers in this great task. Look at Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:16, Luke 24:46-48, John 20:21 and Acts 1:8, which are referred to as Great Commission passages.

As I think of those warriors who have now passed from this life, I often wonder, who will take their place? Who will stand in the gap?

On behalf of mission workers, both world and developing Home Mission congregations, let me take this opportunity to thank all who are praying and encourage you in that very important role as a prayer warrior. Development of new congregations and reaching other cultures is not an easy task in this day and age. The Home and World mission committees, their directors and pastors and field workers often face difficult situations, and they need the backup and support of those warriors who uphold them daily before the architect and builder, Jesus Christ.

Will you be a part of a new generation of prayer war-

Nelson, former Home Missions director, is now the AFLC vice president.



e arrived in Chennai in southern India at 3 a.m. on Feb. 6. Pastor Connely Dyrud and I were asked by AFLC World Missions to teach a two-week seminar for the pastors of AFLC-India.

Pastor Luther Sastry, president of the AFLC-India, and Doctor Anand Kumar, his brother-in-law, met us. We traveled from there by train to Chirala, a town of about 80,000 where AFLC-India is based.

For two weeks, we taught 25 pastors and five Bible women. The students were eager to learn. Many of them

#### Pastoral training program

Almost every year the AFLC has sent pastors from the United States and Canada to India to train pastors. After a discussion with the AFLC-Canada, the World Missions Committee made the decision to invest time and effort to develop a comprehensive plan for pastoral training in India. Dr. Francis Monseth, dean of AFLTS, helped us develop a six-year curriculum that would offer a balance of the four theological disciplines (exegetical, historical, systematical and practical)

This February, Pastor Connely Dyrud, Pastor Martin Horn and Pastor Al Pinno traveled to India to present the first year of the sixyear plan.

World Mission's vision is to continue to find ways we can help the pastors in the AFLC-India become effective shepherds of their congregations.

only had an elementary education, and very little formal Bible teaching. Since only a few of the students could follow lectures in English, we had the help of a Telegu translator.

It seemed the students' interest was in two areas. First, they wanted to learn more about how to correctly interpret the Bible so they could more confidently preach the Word. Second, they wanted to know more of the biblical basis of Lutheran doctrine so they

could answer not only the questions of non-Christians, but also the questions of non-Lutheran Christians.

One of the highlights of our trip was a visit to a

coastal village that had been flooded by the Dec. 26 tsunami. The village, located on an island at the mouth of the Krishna river, was home to about 500 families of whom one-third are now Christian. Although there was little loss of life, the village faces the increased risk of waterborne disease such as typhoid.

While we were in the village, Dr. Kumar conducted a free medical clinic. In six hours he and a colleague examined and treated more than 200 villagers.

We visited several other AFLC-India congregations. These visits were usually at night, and came after very bumpy one- to two-hour rides into the countryside. I had the privilege of preaching three times in these congregations.

What did I learn about AFLC-India? It is not our mission field; AFLC-India is our partner. It is a sister body of congregations that we have partnered with in the mission of reaching the lost in India. We are there to stand with them and work together for the kingdom of God.

I also learned that the pastors and congregations of AFLC-India have the same concerns we have. They want to remain Lutheran. They are concerned for souls and therefore are deeply interested in evangelism. They are concerned with planting new congregations. They desire that the members of their congregation live Christ-honoring lives.

I will remember the people of India. It is the second most populous country in the world, having recently passed one billion people. I will remember the incredible city traffic — bicycles, motorcycles, buses, cars, taxis, trucks, ox-carts — all moving together five or six abreast on city streets barely wider than main street in a small Midwestern town. I will remember the hospitality of our Christian hosts and of complete strangers.

But above everything else I will remember the children — so many children with bright shining eyes, who are curious and eager to learn. These children represent another generation who need to hear the gospel of Christ.

Horn is pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran and Hauge Lutheran, both of Kenyon, Minn.





# **Iganda's**mission fields

he purpose of AFLC World Missions is, by the grace of God, to make disciples of all nations through teaching and evangelism.

After a number of years of communication and exploration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Uganda (ELCU), the AFLC World Mission Committee is seeking prayer for continued guidance. We would like a resolution at this year's Annual Conference whether or not to continue to move forward with this work. We have received a request from the ELCU to partner with them in establishing a Bible training center in their country. This center could provide both Bible school and seminary training, which is desperately needed at this time. A training institute is an effective tool — as we have found in the United States — because we will not only train disciples for Christ, but also send these disciples out to train others. The ELCU's desire would be for

a full-time US missionary family to relocate with them and provide evangelism and project coordination, as well as to build communication and trust. There is also a need for an orphan compassion ministry, a consequence of the AIDS epidemic.

Nate and Rhoda Jore have applied to the WMC to be AFLC missionaries in Africa. They both traveled with the exploratory team to Uganda in 2004 and have felt God call them to serve in that part of the world. Even though the World Mission Department has been blessed with a legacy for the purpose of starting a new work, the Jores will be looking for personal support funding for their ongoing ministry.

Missionary opportunities are available in the current AFLC mission fields as well, including Brazil, Mexico, and India. For those sensing God's call to the mission field, please call the AFLC World Mission office for more information.

The doors seem to be open at



Nathan, Rhoda and Elijah Jore.

this time, so it is with eagerness that we seek God's direction to continue forward.

"Then he said to his disciples, The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37-38).

> Tom Caouette, Chairman **AFLC World Mission Committee**



### Help celebrate 40 years of missions in Brazil

ave you ever thought about visiting our missionaries in Brazil? Here's vour chance. Plans continue to develop for a January 2006 trip to Brazil to help celebrate the mission field's 40th anniversary.

A tentative schedule includes a departure date of Jan. 17, with travel to Curitiba, two Primavera project churches, the Annual Conference at Campo Mourao, and Iguacu Falls. A return date has been set for Jan. 23.

The estimated cost of the trip is \$1,500, including air travel, hotels and transportation in Brazil. Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt will coordinate a group package and application of visas. A July 1 deadline has been set for acquiring a passport and for sending the first downpayment of \$500, with incremental payments in August and September.

For more information, contact Pastor Unverzagt at (608) 781-5821, or email millpondguy@centurytel.net.

# Finding a church By Amy Andresen \*\*Tomation of the company of the

had to know if what I was reading was the truth. I thought I knew this man's position on the issue. I decided to call my hometown friend, Rob Regier, who would know the truth about the senator and his stance on homosexual marriage. Rob is the executive director of the South Dakota Family Policy Council. When I gave him a call, he told me that the senator's statement was, in part, true. You know, one of those partial truths.

My former church in Madison, S.D., is having trouble with partial truths. According to them, the parts of the Bible that deal with homosexuality being a sin and the accuracy of God's Word are not true. Their stance troubled me.

While I had Rob on the phone, I thought I'd ask him what church he was attending. "Abiding Savior Free Lutheran," he replied.

I must admit I was shocked to hear he was still a Lutheran. I asked him for the pastor's name and after I hung up the phone, I proceeded to immediately dial up Pastor Michael Brandt. He filled me in on some details and gave me a name and phone number to call at the church's denominational headquarters in Minneapolis — the AFLC. I immediately called the number and had another helpful and encouraging visit with a pastor. During that conversation, I was given the name of Home Missions Committee Chairman Pastor Steve Mundfrom, who just happened to live 24 miles from me.

I wept and prayed my thanks to God. But I was quickly back on the phone, calling Pastor Mundfrom. I poured my heart out to this stranger about the need for a church like the AFLC's in Madison. He was understanding and said he would send information and visit with me again.

Visit again, indeed! AFLC Home Missions sent men to visit with a group of interested people at a public library. There were no partial truths in their presentation about the beliefs held by the AFLC.

In the meantime, my family and I visited three nearby AFLC congregations: Calvary Free Lutheran in Arlington, S.D. (Pastor Mundfrom's church), Christ the King Free Lutheran in Pipestone, Minn., and Abiding Savior Free Lutheran in Sioux Falls, S.D. What we experienced was an answer to prayer. The services were simple, yet powerful, with focus on Jesus and biblical truths. Petitions of praise and prayers of need were spoken directly from the congregations. The Spirit of the Lord could be seen in the warmth and love of the people who greeted and talked with us after the service.

Pastor Mundfrom suggested we have a picnic to invite friends who might be interested in the AFLC. I got busy calling people and planning the event. He got busy preparing the meeting. He even got eager members of his congregation to walk the streets of Madison and pray for us. Members of Calvary had been praying for God to raise up a mission church in their area.

As a result of the picnic, a handful of people began meeting for Bible study. Right away we talked about starting a church. The most wonderful part of this whole story is that God was leading and directing our every move. The whole process seemed effortless, as if we were being carried along. I'm reminded that the Lord promises us that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

We had our first service on Sept. 19, 2004. The Lord has kept His promise that He will build His church. We've experienced many joys and our share of sorrows, too. Death, accidents, and illness have struck our small congregation, yet the Lord sustains us with peace and joy under all circumstances. The blessings have been poured upon us. Members of Calvary have prayed for us, visited our services, given financially and befriended us as their mission congregation. I know the special friends from Pipestone have been praying for us and have given financially as well. We are humbled by the genuine love, giving, sacrifice and service of our Christian brothers and sisters of the AFLC. It is our hope that we will in turn spread the love of our Lord Jesus to the people of Madison, and that the truth of God's Word will fill the hearts and minds of people everywhere.

Andresen is a member of Madison Free Lutheran, Madison, S.D., a Home Missions congregation.



veryone thinks Mexico would be a warm place to travel during the cold winter months of January and Feb-■ ruary. Not so in many parts of the country, as I found out this winter. But despite the cool weather, World Missions committee member Pastor Richard Gunderson and I found the people to be warm and open to the Lord. This warmth was seen in exciting ways at almost every stop.

The Giles and Schierkolks are missionaries in Jerez. One of their avenues of ministry is kids clubs. The week before we arrived, a member of the congregation started a new club. Though she was out of town because school was not in session, we decided to check out the club anyway, hoping that some kids would show up. They did. When the club eventually started, there were 20 kids there to hear about Jesus.

South of Jerez the Central Mexican Lutheran Church ministers in the cities of Leon, Irapuato and Celaya. One morning we feasted on the Word of God and tamales as a group of faithful men met to pray for their church and community. The air was cold and damp, but the fellowship and food were warm in more ways

than one.

Halfway back to the United States boarder, near Obregon, we worshiped with Pastor Gabriel Mercado. There we were introduced to Manuel Castro, an elderly man who had run from the Lord all his life until Pastor Mercado spoke to him about Jesus. Now Manuel is trusting the Lord and living for Him.

Although the temperature was cool, everywhere we went we were warmed by the food, the fellowship and the way Jesus was working in the lives of people.

Palmer is director of World Missions.



Left: Manuel Castro with Pastor Gabriel Mercado. Middle: Pastor Samuel Flores. Right: Children from Celaya kids club.

# life story Commitment in Jesus at last

an Giles and Todd Schierkolk picked us up at the bus station in Zacatecas at about 11:30 p.m. We had boarded the first possible bus at 8:30 that morning, so it had been a long day. Now we were only 40 miles from our destination in Jerez.

We piled into the vehicle, with Dan and Todd in the front, while Pastor Richard Gunderson and I sat in the back. A few miles into the trip, Dan asked Todd if he had heard Jerry bought the donut shop in Broken Arrow, Okla. He was going to be moving in a few weeks to run the shop.

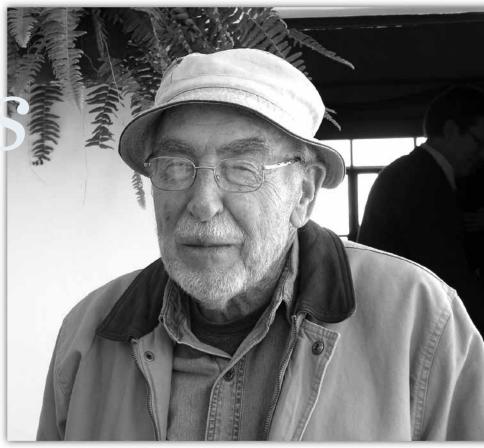
Todd became silent. Anyone who has ever pastored a church can understand. A valued church member, a valued friend, was leaving. When it happens, pastors have a sense of grief few can understand.

So who was this Jerry? We found out nine hours later when we met him at the church.

Jerry seemed to have a rough outer shell, like many Americans in Jerez. His father and grandfather were both pastors. But at the age of 11, Jerry decided to make up for their piety by following the opposite road with his own life. He stood out in his yard one day and told God to leave him alone. And that is where things stood for the next 70 years.

Meanwhile, Jerry's life took him to NASA as an engineer and around the world (but not in a spaceship). In retirement he drifted to a number of places, ending up in Mexico. The town he lived in became too popular for Jerry. There were too many people, too many tourists for his comfort, and he became

An acquaintance from Jerez invited him to come and get away. He told Jerry there was a small band of Americans there who met at the local café at 10 every morning. When Jerry arrived there, they were waiting for him. They knew his name. He figured this was his kind of place, if all the people had to do to keep themselves busy was drink coffee and wait for his arrival.



One of the Americans Jerry saw at coffee was Dan. He found out that Dan was the local Lutheran missionary. He thought to himself: "I'll put as much distance between him and myself as possible."

His determination worked pretty well until one day he saw Dan trying to fix his cell phone with a switchblade. Jerry spoke up, "That's a mighty big knife to use on a phone."

Dan replied, "It not only works with the phone, but when I use it to trim my fingernails before Bible study, people really listen."

That was it. Jerry decided he had to attend this Lutheran missionary's church to see what it was all about. There, Jerry heard the gospel and allowed Jesus to forgive his sins. He's been faithfully attending the church ever since.

The last time I saw Jerry was Sunday afternoon. We had just finished dinner at the Giles' home. Both missionary families were singing, and Jerry sat on the couch. He was leaning forward in attentiveness with a relaxed, contented smile on his face. He sat worshipping a Savior who had covered a lifetime of sins.

I wonder who will hear about Jesus next at a donut shop in Broken Arrow.

— By Pastor Del Palmer



avid Wilkerson's latest newsletter, "Why the World Hates Christians," refers to the Pharisees and their obsession with adding to their numbers. He quoted

Jesus from Matthew 23:15: "You hypocrites! You cross land and sea to recruit a single follower, and when you do, you make that person twice as fit for hell as you are."

Wilkerson then took the liberty of paraphrasing this passage as follows: "You roam sea and land for new concepts, ideas, programs. And it's all to get people into your church. You've been bitten by the hypocrisy of numbers. You measure success by how many bodies fill your seats."

Harsh words. Perhaps too harsh. After all, we are to be engaged in the Great Commission, aren't we? Yes we are! But if our approach is to just get people into the church and keep them there with "feel good" messages and no challenge to true repentance, what have we accomplished?

The Great Commission is not about numbers. It's about making disciples and teaching them "to observe whatsoever the Lord has commanded." If we are faithful in preaching and teaching the Word of God, and applying it to our daily relationships with others, He will take care of the numbers.

It's not about the numbers, and I hope I'm not saying that simply because our numbers are small at my congregation. I would love to have more people sitting in our pews on Sundays, but I will not compromise God's Word for the sake of increased attendance. Rather, I will pray that the Holy Spirit will feed those who are in the pews with the bread that is prayerfully broken before them.

It's not about the numbers, but invariably that's the first question one asks when considering the health of the church. As a pastor of a Home Missions congregation, I hear that question every time the subject of our church comes up.

I recall a time of personal struggle for me last June related to our lack of numerical growth at Living Word Free Lutheran. We planted the church in 1999, and in June 2003 the decision was made to leave my radio job of 15 years and devote all of my time to the duties of pastor. We had about 20 people in attendance and enough funding to last one year.

When May 2004 rolled around, we could see that our finances were dwindling. Unless something happened, we would have to close the doors and just admit that it was all a mistake. Incredibly, it was at this time that my old job at the radio station opened up again. It was beginning to look like leaving the ministry was a no-brainer!

While doing my morning devotions on June 2, the Lord spoke to me in John 21:15-17. This is the passage where Jesus challenged Peter, "Feed My lambs," "Take care of My sheep." "Feed My sheep." I really needed to hear this. I had been so consumed with our lack of numerical growth that I had forgotten the major reason for the call! It was during this time of morning prayer that God impressed on me that He would not send any more sheep until I started to really tend, love, and feed the ones He had given me. He told me to stop worrying about the numbers. These people aren't numbers; they are His sheep!

Even though I had the employment application in my hand, I never bothered to fill it out. I was convinced that God wanted me to stay and tend the precious lambs and sheep He had given me. Later that day, one of our members called me. She had no idea what I had been wrestling with. She sheepishly admitted to me that she never "does things like this," but God had told her to call me and say, "that He has me right where He wants me to be, that it is not about numbers."

Wow! I still get goose bumps when I think about that call! Oh, what a wonderful, caring, all knowing, and affirming God we serve!

What a help it has been to my ministry as I no longer am obsessed with numbers. My only obsession is how can I feed, tend, and love the sheep God has given me.

But what about the financial concerns? It was shortly after the decision to stay that we received a couple of checks in the mail from Home Missions and St. John's Lutheran in Duluth, Minn. I wonder if they knew what an encouragement that was to us to press on.

Nonetheless, we were still very concerned about finances. Our monthly budget reports always included a day that we projected as the end of the financial line for Living Word. Then, one of our board members got a crazy idea. He said, "Let's start to believe God and tithe our offerings to our 'storehouse,' the AFLC."

"Right" we answered. "We're projecting closed doors in September and you want to give 10 percent of our offering to the AFLC?"

Of course we agreed and have been tithing ever since. Do I have to

tell you what happened? The "doomsday" date was moved from September to October, then November, then December, and now we don't even bother thinking about it. God is so faithful.

Malachi 3:10 says, "Bring one-tenth of your income into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house. Test me in this way," says the LORD of armies. "See if I won't open the windows of heaven for you and flood you with blessings."

Oh that all believers and individual congregations would believe this promise from God! God has blessed us in so many ways at Living Word and He gets all the glory! We still fall a little short of our budget with our offerings, but we're still here! We are still feeding, tending and loving the sheep He brings our way, and we will remain as long as God wants us here.

Matz is pastor of Living Word Lutheran, Menasha, Wis.

It's not about the numbers, but invariably that's the first question one asks when considering the health of the church.



ho is she?" I found myself reflecting upon this question when asked to write about the life of a Home Missions pastor's wife. Panic set in. Was I experiencing an identity crisis? After all, I am the wife of a Home Missions pastor and yet, when it came to describing "her," I was not certain who "she" was!

During the past month, the Lord has challenged my heart concerning the calling of the pastor's wife. By God's grace she is one who is devoted to Christ, devoted to share in the call of the gospel, and devoted to a life of prayer. The calling is not unique in itself, but the perspective and experience is.



#### **Devoted to Christ**

I am not sure I have ever struggled in my devotional life as much as I have since becoming the wife of a pastor. The struggle is not the fault of my husband or the church. The struggle is spiritual. There is an enemy who knows the power of God's Word. With such knowledge Satan tempts me to neglect my source for truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation. Without God's Word I am found unprepared for service, spiritually defeated (Ephesians 6:14-17).

Serving my husband and supporting his calling as a shepherd becomes impossible when my thoughts are far from Christ. "What about me? What about my needs," I am tempted to ask myself. During times of spiritual defeat the doors of a spa are much more inviting than the doors of the church. When I have neglected God's Word I am unprepared to share His love with my husband. When my heart cry is selfish in nature I am left wanting and unprepared to share in both the joys and trials of the ministry. The knock at the door and the ring of the telephone are seen as one more interruption of "my life," instead of an opportunity to minister the love of God. Yes, the wife of a pastor must be devoted to Christ by "holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain" (Philippians 2:16).



#### Devoted to the call of the gospel

As a Christian, I am called to spread the truth that Jesus Christ shed his blood to redeem sinners from the penalty of sin. I have always struggled to be a bold witness of the gospel. I'm afraid that since becoming the wife of a pastor my excuse can be, "I've done my time." I'm embarrassed to admit that I can slip into viewing my calling within the church as an employee views a time clock. Sunday morning, Wednesday night, weekly Bible studies, telephone calls, visitation, council meetings, committee meet-

ings ... I punched in, but my family's time away from church is meant for me.

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm honored to serve Christ as a pastor's wife. The list above is an honor, a privilege from the Lord and the local congregation, one that humbles my spirit before my Savior. But sharing Jesus with my neighbor is Christ's call, too. What about the lady ahead of me in the slow-moving checkout line? She looks as if a kind word may just open up a conversation that would lift her spirits. If I'm not obedient to lift Jesus' name high outside the church walls, my witness for Jesus will grow stagnant within.



#### Devoted to prayer

"To pray is to let Jesus come into our hearts," writes Ole Hallesby in his book, "Prayer." I need Jesus to work in my heart. Maybe you have not noticed, but this young pastor's wife is helpless on her own. I'm guessing you are too!

When I neglect prayer, I neglect my husband. The ministry places the pastor in many vulnerable situations. He is in need of God's wisdom and the Spirit's leading as he studies God's Word. He will be in need of discernment as he ministers to a couple whose marriage is seemingly falling apart. The pastor needs the heart of a shepherd as he encourages and shares godly vision for each new beginning. If my heart is not open to Jesus in prayer, my heart is not sensitive to the joys and burdens of my husband's call.

I need Jesus to be at work in my heart. Am I concerned for the spiritual needs of those within my church, my neighbor next door, or the youngest child in the Sunday school? When I neglect prayer my thoughts tend to turn inward. When I'm obedient in prayer those thoughts are brought before the throne of God. What amazing ministry takes place in my heart at His throne.

So, who is she? She is called to be a disciple of Christ, dear friend, and so are you! Jesus has been working on this wife's heart and she is forever grateful! My Lord has shown me the spiritual battle, where I have fallen, and a world in need of His love. The pastor and his wife get to love and be loved by the body of Christ, they get to carry your burden's with you, and they get to grow in grace as they minister *with* the body of Christ. Congregations, thank you for this most blessed opportunity!

Mobley serves Living Word Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D., with her husband, Pastor Wade Mobley.

### **Chaplaincy**

# a.work.of MUSSIONSS

By Pastor Jerome Nikunen

od's calling into chaplaincy has been frequently misunderstood. Some have thought it's an escape for a pastor who doesn't have what it takes to be a parish pastor, or a good way to supplement your income while keeping a little busy after retirement. When I told a pastoral mentor that I felt a calling into chaplaincy, his reply to me was, "Oh Jerry, why don't you just stick to preaching!" — meaning the parish ministry.

But I could not ignore God's calling into chaplaincy any more than I could ignore His call into the ministry in the first place. I continued volunteering as a chaplain in both the nursing homes and hospitals as well as hospice settings near the various churches where the Lord has called me to serve. The Lord also opened the door for me to take further training in clinical pastoral education and complete a two-year residency in a hospital setting.

Time after time I have seen how the prospect of having to endure physical pain, uncertainty of the future, dependence and vulnerability brings strong feelings and serious questions about the meaning of life and death. A chaplain has the unique mission opportunity to "walk with" people and share the love of Christ with them. This unique opportunity often extends to family members as well as staff.

When you think of how Jesus' ministry here on earth included healing the brokenhearted and binding up their wounds, doesn't our call to missions also include those in the nursing home, in the hospital, and the hospice setting?

Think for a minute why people call a pastor. Isn't it when they feel scared, lonely or isolated? Or when they are discouraged or in despair? When they are dealing with questions about life and death? Or when there are family problems? When they are faced with grief, loss or change? What about when they just need a listening ear, or before surgery or other medical procedures? Or when

they
have a
joy, a prayer
answered, or
some accomplishment to share? It's no different for a nursing home resident, a
patient in the hospital or someone in a hospice setting.

Only occasionally in other ministries have I sensed the same hunger for the Word that there is in my Bible studies at the nursing home.

While it's true that many have pastors who do visit them, there are many who don't. I've had the privilege of ministering to a resident and her family who, in the seven years she had lived in the home before she died, never was visited by a pastor from her home congregation even though she was only 35 miles away. Or what about the man whose priest I called late one night as he lay dying only to have the priest tell me, "I was there last week to administer last rites." Who would be there to share Christ with them, or sit with the woman dying alone in the nursing home, holding her hand as she slipped into eternity?

The Lord still asks the question, "Who will go for Me?"

"Here I am, Lord, send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

Nikunen serves as Pastor of Zoar Free Lutheran Church and chaplain at Tri-County Nursing and Retirement Homes, both in Hatton, N.D., and chairman for the AFLC Division of Institutional Chaplaincy.

# Isaiah 40:8

### 2005 Annual Conference

June 14-17, 2004

Valley City State University, Valley City, N.D.

#### Tuesday, June 14

9 a.m. The conference committees meet for devotions,

instructions and room assignments.

11:30 a.m.

1:30 p.m.

Noon

7:30 p.m. The opening service of the conference with communion

> Leader: Pastor Ken Moland Speaker: Pastor Peter Franz

AFLC President Pastor Robert Lee will open the confer-

ence and appoint necessary committees.

Election of nominees for the Missions, Schools & ARC corporations Report of Committee No. 1 (Administration)

Prayer Hour — Pastor Henry Mohagen

Builders Fellowship Luncheon

Chaplains Luncheon (Institutional, military, police & fire)

Devotions

Report of Credentials Committee

Election Procedures

Elections

◆ Vice President — One-year term

Secretary — One-year term

Selection of nominees to the Home Missions

Committee — one pastor; World Missions Committee — one layman; Board of Trustees — one pastor;

ARC Board — one layman

Election of nominee to the Coordinating

Committee — one layman

Election of Committee No. 1 for the 2006 Conference Report of the Chairman of the Board of Publications and

Parish Education, Pastor Philip Haugen, Crystal,

Minn.

Report of the Director of Parish Education, Marian Christopherson, Crystal, Minn.

Report of the Chairman of of the Youth Board.

Pastor Alan Arneson, Fosston, Minn.

Report of the President of the Free Lutheran Youth,

Pastor Jason Holt, Fergus Falls, Minn.

Report of Youth Ministries Director,

Pastor Kevin Olson, Savage, Minn.

Report of Committee No. 4

(Publications, Parish Education and Youth Work)

Schools Corporation annual meeting

The Mission Festival Service conducted by the Women's Missionary Federation Speaker: Pastor Tim Hinrichs, missionary to Poland

#### Wednesday, June 15

7:30 a.m.

Schools' Breakfast

9 a.m.

Devotions

Report of the Credentials Committee

Adoption of the Conference Agenda

Election of the Nominating Committee for the

2006 Conference

The President's Report

Report of the Chairman of the Coordinating

Committee, Pastor Kenneth Moland, Kirkland, Wash,

Report of the Chairman of the AFLC Foundation Lee Schierkolk, Prairie Farm, Wis.

Reports of Chaplaincy Ministries

Institutional: Pastor Kerwin Sletto, Ottawa, III.

Military: Pastor Tim Skramstad, Eagan, Minn.

Report of the Director of the ARC, Eric Westlake,

Osceola, Wis.

Financial Report, AFLC Bookkeeper, Andrew Anderson, New Hope, Minn.

Report of the Family Bible Camps

● Lake Bronson — Treasurer, Sonia Balmer, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Wilderness — Treasurer, Jon Dryburgh, Grafton,

5:30 p.m.

7 p.m.

N.D. Report of the Budget Analysis Committee,

Tim Berntson, Buffalo, N.D.

Report of the Nominating Committee, always in order

#### Thursday, June 16

7:30 a.m. Missions Corporation annual meeting

9 a.m. Devotions

Report of the Credentials Committee

Election of member to the Board of Publications and

Parish Education — One pastor

Election of member to the Youth Board — One pastor Election of Committee No. 4 for the 2006 Conference

Report of the Chairman of the Stewardship

Board, David Bjornson, Valley City, N.D. Report of the Chairman of the Board of Pensions,

Glenn Espe, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Report of Committee No. 5

(Stewardship & Pensions)

Election of member to the Stewardship Board —

One pastor

Election of member to the Board of Pensions —

One pastor

Election of Committee No. 5 for the 2006 Conference

11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour — Pastor Henry Mohagen

Noon The ARC Corporation annual meeting

Partners in Mission Outreach annual meeting

1:30 p.m. Devotions

Report of the Credentials Committee

Report of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees,

Dr. Dan Mundfrom, Greeley, Colo. Report of the Dean of the Seminary,

Dr. Francis Monseth, Rogers, Minn. Report of the Dean of the Bible School,

Pastor James L. Johnson, Plymouth, Minn.

Report of Vision 2004, Karen Floan, Plymouth, Minn.

Report of Ministry Training Institute,

Pastor Richard Gunderson, Cambridge, Minn.

Report of Committee No. 2 (Schools)

5:30 p.m. Pastors Banquet

7:30 p.m. Laymen's Service

> Leader: Irving Schmitke Speaker: Greg Schmitke

#### Friday, June 17

9 a.m. **Devotions** 

Report of the Credentials Committee

Election of Committee No. 2 for the 2006 Conference

Report of Schools Corporation annual meeting Report of the Chairman of the World Missions

Committee, Tom Caouette, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

Report of the Director of World Missions, Pastor Del Palmer, Shakopee, Minn. Report of Partners in Mission Outreach Board President, Kenneth Sletten, Duluth, Minn.

Report of the Chairman of the Home Missions

Committee, Pastor Stephen Mundfrom, Arlington, S.D.

Report of the Director of Home Missions,

Pastor Paul Nash, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

Report of FLAPS Executive Director,

Lavon Bohling, Golden Valley, Minn.

Report of WMF President Cheryl Skordahl, Gifford, III.

Prayer Hour — Pastor Henry Mohagen

Noon AFLC Foundation Lunch

1:30 p.m. Devotions

11:30 a.m.

5:30 p.m.

7:30 p.m.

Report of Credentials Committee

Report of the Chairman of the Commission on Evangelism, Gene Quist, Bloomington, Minn.

Report of the Director of Evangelism,

Pastor James Rasmussen, Maple Grove, Minn.

Report of Committee No. 3 (Missions and Evangelism)

Report of Missions Corporation annual meeting

Election of member to the Commission on Evangelism — One pastor

Election of Committee No. 3 for the 2006 Conference

Report of the Chairman of the Colloguy Committee —

Pastor Tim Johnson

Election of Colloguy Committee for the 2006 Conference

Report of special committees

Election of two members to the Budget Analysis

Committee — Two three-year terms

Report of Committee No. 1 as the Committee

on General Resolutions

Other Reports

Youth Banquet

Closing service with ordinations

Grace Free Lutheran Church, Valley City

Leader: Pastor Tim Skramstad Speaker: Dr. Francis Monseth

Conference Committee

Pastor Robert Lee, President Pastor Brian Davidson, Secretary

\* Members of the Coordinating Committee passed a resolution limiting the time allotted for each report at the Annual Conference to 20 minutes. Combining two reports, such as the president of a board and the director of the same department, will be counted as one report and given 20 minutes.



he congregations of Grace Free and Zion Free Lutheran in Valley City, N.D., extend to you a warm invitation to attend the 2005 AFLC Annual Conference. The conference will be June 14-17 on the campus of Valley City State University.

Many volunteers on 11 subcommittees have been preparing and making plans, which hopefully will make this Annual Conference enjoyable for you!

The first stop you should make at the conference is the student center on the VCSU campus. (A map is available at www.vcsu.edu) We will have a table there with all the information you will need about what is happening and where. Conference registration will also be there, as well as meal tickets. All the conference and special meals will be served from the cafeteria, which is located in the student center. The only exception is the pastor's banquet. It is important to preregister for the meals you would like to attend, as there will be a limited number of tickets available for these meals when you come to conference. There are a number of meeting rooms in the student center that will be available for various boards and committees meetings. For those making housing arrangements on campus, the place to check-in for that is also in the student center.

The main sessions for both the WMF convention and the conference will be in the padded-seat equipped Vangstad Auditorium, which is connected to McFarland Hall. Rooms nearby will also house displays of various AFLC and other ministries. Other rooms will also be available in this building during the

conference for boards and committees. Registration for the WMF convention will take place just outside Vangstad Auditorium.

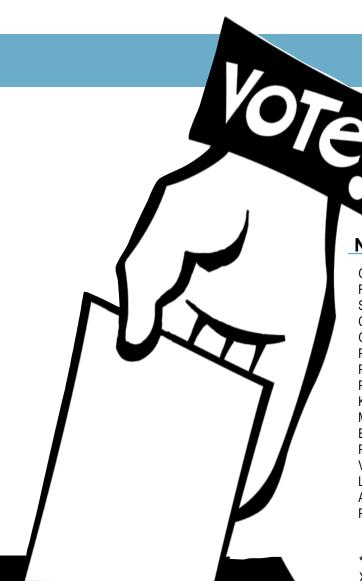
If you plan to come as a family, we are also planning a vacation Bible school for those ages 3 through sixth grade and youth Bible studies for junior and senior high students from 9 a.m. to noon each day at Grace Free Lutheran, 202 NW Third St. From 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. we will also have some planned youth activities each day. Childcare is also being planned during the conference sessions. For a location, visit the student center information area. We would really appreciate knowing the names and ages or grades of your children who will be a part of these activities.

A number of you were here during the 1994 conference. Some will see that changes have occurred in these last 11 years. The conference theme this year, "Unchanging God in a Changing World," is taken from Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God shall stand forever." Praise God that He and His Word are unchanging!

We invite you to come to the conference and visit the place we call our town. Enjoy the beautiful scenery in this city of bridges and the meandering Sheyenne River. Enjoy the fellowship in Christ with your AFLC family. We await your arrival.

Pastor Joel Rolf, Grace Free Lutheran and Zion Free Lutheran congregations, Valley City, N.D. Wally Bjornson, chairman of conference planning committee

**Pastor Milton** Flores, Celaya, Mexico, and **Pastor Raul** Hernandez, Irapuato, Mexico, were special guests at the 2004 Annual Conference at the ARC in Osceola, Wis.



Nominees presented to the **2005 AFLC Annual Conference** 

**Nominating Committee members** 

Gene Finstrom, Buxton, N.D. — Eastern North Dakota Ron Jorgenson, Beulah, N.D. — Western North Dakota/Eastern Montana Solveig Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D. — South Dakota Chaplain John Rieth, Grand Forks, N.D. — Northwestern Minnesota Glen Larson, Fosston, Minn. — North Central Minnesota Pastor Jim Johnson, Fergus Falls, Minn. — Southwest Central Minnesota Pastor Rick Larson, Fairbury, Neb. — Nebraska/Kansas/Colorado Pastor Donald Norr, Proctor, Minn. — Lake Superior Kermit Nash, Rogers, Minn. — Minneapolis Marlin Benrud, Goodhue, Minn. — Central Tri-State Erling Langness, Ishpeming, Mich. — Northern Michigan Pastor Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City, Okla. — South Central Vint Bruflat, Mesa, Ariz. — Southwestern Lois Grothe, Astoria, Ore. — Pacific Northwest Art Wilson, Bethel Park, Pa. — Eastern Pastor Jeff Swanson, Newark, III. — Illinois

\* Incumbents

X Nominees not named by publishing deadline

#### Coordinating Committee

(One layman, 5-year term) Tim Bertson, Valley City, N.D. Bob Christian, Newark, III.

### AFLC Schools Board of Trustees

Voted on by corporation members (One pastor, five-year term)
\*Pastor Jon Wellumson, Williston, N.D.
Pastor Jon Benson, Upsala, Minn.

#### ARC Board

Voted on by corporation members (One layman, five-year term) Dennis Holmquist, Maple Grove, Minn. Roger Timm, Wilson, Wis.

#### Stewardship Board

(One pastor, five-year term)
Pastor Greg Schram, Northwood, N.D.
Pastor Rick Larson, Fairbury, Neb.

#### Youth Board

(One pastor, five-year term)
\*Pastor Alan Arneson, Fosston, Minn.
x

#### **World Missions Committee**

\*Tom Caouette, Brooklyn Park, Minn. Ken Sletten, Duluth, Minn.

#### FLAPS Board of Managers

Voted on by corporation members (One layman, five-year term) \*Eldwyn VanBruggen, Valley City, N.D. X

#### Commission on Evangelism

(One pastor, five-year term)
\*Pastor Michael Brandt, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Pastor David Barnhart, Canal Winchester, Ohio

## Board of Publications and Parish Education

(One pastor, five-year term)
Pastor Terry Olson, Thief River Falls, Minn.
Pastor John Mundfrom, Eugene, Ore.

#### **Home Missions Committee**

Voted on by corporation members (One pastor, five-year term) Pastor Tom Schierkolk, Eben Junction, Mich. Pastor Jerome Nikunen, Hatton, N.D.

#### **Board of Pensions**

(One pastor, five-year term)
Pastor Tom Gilman, Lakeville, Minn.
Pastor Larry Haagenson, Loveland, Colo.

#### Missions Corporation

(20 terms of five years each) \*Wendell Berg, Mayville, N.D. \*Dr. Peter Dyrud, Plymouth, Minn. \*Pastor Dale Finstrom, Glyndon, Minn. \*Gene Finstrom, Buxton, N.D. \*Arley Hartsoch, Ray, N.D. \*Pastor David Hinrichs, Ortonville, Minn. \*Pastor Ted Kennedy, Nogales, Ariz. \*Pastor Steven Odegaard, Everett, Wash. \*Kevin Olson, Eden Prairie, Minn, \*Ralph Peterson, Portland, N.D. \*Dr. Wayne Sletten, Faith, S.D. \*Loren Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minn. \*Eunice Will, Springfield, Mo. Pastor Ray Ballmann, Kopperl, Texas Bob David, Canal Winchester, Ohio Brad Folsland, Oldham, S.D. Pastor Tom Gilman, Lakeville, Minn, Pastor Gary Haug, Bloomington, Minn. Dan Johnson, Glyndon, Minn. Mark S. Johnson, Albertville, Minn. Pastor Rick Larson, Fairbury, Neb. George Lautner, Bethel Park, Pa. Bill Minor, Canal Winchester, Ohio Clifford Nelson, Wannamingo, Minn, Pastor Wayne Olson, Faith, S.D. Linda Peterson, Beresford, S.D. Philip Peterson, Beresford, S.D. Todd Rasmussen, Glyndon, Minn. Mark Richardson, Bethel Park, Pa. Daniel Rugroden, Hickson, N.D. Enoch Thorsgard, Northwood, N.D. David VanHoveln, Milford, Ill. Wayne Walker, Kenyon, Minn.

Χ

Χ

Χ

Χ

Χ

X X

#### Schools Corporation

(Ten terms of five years each) \*David Borg, Maple Grove, Minn \*Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn. \*Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, Minn. \*Pastor Ken Moland, Kirkland, Wash. \*Pastor Rodger Olson, Tioga, N.D. \*Brent Peterson, Valley City, N.D. \*Kenneth Rolf, McIntosh, Minn. \*Dr. Lyle Westrom, Crookston, Minn. Gary Erickson, Fergus Falls, Minn. Mike Feil, Zumbrota, Minn. Bonnie Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa Dale Lankford, Buxton, N.D. Mike McCarlson, Webster, S.D. Pastor Brent Olson, Bethel Park, Pa. Nathaniel Olson, Argusville, N.D. Pastor Michael Peterson, Ortley, S.D. Mark Sletten, Crystal, Minn. Jason Strand, Glyndon, Minn. John Talley, Helmar, III. Wendy Westlake, Osceola, Wis.

#### **ARC** Corporation

(Ten terms of five years each) \*Donald Balmer, Thief River Falls, Minn. \*Orven Benrud, Goodhue, Minn, \*Rodney Kjersten, Roseau, Minn. \*Pastor Tonnes Pollestad, Andover, Minn. \*Lee Schierkolk, Prairie Farm, Wis. Pastor Michael Burke, Ishpeming, Mich. Pastor Jason Holt, Fergus Falls, Minn. Pastor Jan Horne, Ashkum, III. Paul Kyllo, Kasson, Minn. Kyle Mackey, Ishpeming, Mich. Jim Minard, Ishpeming, Mich. Chris Nelson, Ishepeming, Mich. Dennis Parsley, Pipestone, Minn. Chad Peterson, Northwood, N.D. Χ

X X X X

# Nominees to serve at the 2006 Annual Conference

#### Committee No. 1

#### (Administration)

Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D. Wes Kunz, Northwood, N.D. Pastor James Molstre, Bethel Park, Pa. Kermit Nash, Rogers, Minn. X

#### Committee No. 2

#### (Schools)

Pastor Orville Hiepler, Fallbrook, Calif. Dale Lankford, Buxton, N.D. Bill Minor, Canal Winchester, Ohio X X

#### Committee No. 3

#### (Missions and Evangelism)

Pastor Herb Hoff, Salinas, Calif.
Pastor Joseph Schultz, Buckley, Wash.
X

X X

#### Committee No. 4

#### (Publications and Parish Education)

Bill Fish, Everett, Wash.
Pastor Rick Larson, Fairbury, Neb.
Julie McCarlson, Webster, S.D.
X

#### Committee No. 5

#### (Pensions and Stewardship)

Tom Johnston, Bloomington, Minn. Pastor Joel Lohafer, Ferndale, Wash. X

X X X



# The 2005 AFLC

### [ANNUAL CONFERENCE]

June 14-17

Valley City State University, Valley City, N.D.

Hosts: Grace Free Lutheran and Zion Free Lutheran, Valley City, N.D.

Note: Please fill out forms separately and mail to respective registrars

# Conference registration

| Name:               |      |  |
|---------------------|------|--|
| Spouse:             |      |  |
| Address:            |      |  |
| Phone (D):          | (E): |  |
| City / state / zip: |      |  |
| Congregation:       |      |  |

**Are you:** pastor / visiting pastor / lay member / lay visitor **Spouse:** pastor / visiting pastor / lay member / lay visitor

Registration: \$30 single, \$40 couple

Make checks for registration only payable to AFLC and send to 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441.

Registrations received after June 1 must add a \$5 late fee.

A downloadable copy of this form is available at www.aflc.org See page 22 for housing information.

| Name:         |  |
|---------------|--|
| Spouse:       |  |
| Address:      |  |
| City / state: |  |
| Zip:          |  |

|                 | MEAL                          | # |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---|
|                 | Schools breakfast \$6         |   |
| ay              | Conference breakfast \$6      |   |
| Nednesday       | Chaplain's lunch \$7          |   |
| ne              | Builders fellowship lunch \$7 |   |
| eq              | Conference lunch \$7          |   |
| >               | Schools Corp. dinner \$8      |   |
|                 | Conference dinner \$8         |   |
|                 | Missions Corp. breakfast \$6  |   |
| ay              | Conference breakfast \$6      |   |
| <b>Fhursday</b> | ARC Corp. lunch \$7           |   |
| Ę               | Conference lunch \$7          |   |
| È               | Pastors banquet \$12          |   |
|                 | Conference dinner \$8         |   |
|                 | Conference breakfast \$6      |   |
| ay              | Foundation lunch \$7          |   |
| Friday          | Conference lunch \$7          |   |
| 교               | Youth banquet \$8             |   |
|                 | Conference dinner \$8         |   |
|                 | Total cost:                   |   |

Please write check for meals only to Grace Free Lutheran.

Mail to Grace Free Lutheran P.O. Box 37 Valley City, ND 58072



June 14

# The 2005 National Convention

Valley City State University, Valley City, N.D.

# Who is God but the Lord II Samuel 22:32

ow can a Christian woman walk in confidence, wholly dependent on God? How do we distinguish between God's will and society's norms? When we know His will, are we armed to speak up for His ways? Our WMF convention this year will focus on God as our solid rock.

We look forward to welcoming missionaries to Brazil, Pastor Connely and Carolyn Dyrud for our morning session. Carolyn will lead our devotional and prayer time. Connely will present a Bible study emphasizing our dependence on the God whose power is proclaimed around the world. During the business meeting, we will vote on the constitutional amendment to add two additional officers to the National WMF board: Third vice president and recording secretary.

Music and a skit are planned during lunch, along with a greeting from missionary Renata Hinrichs. We will break into smaller groups for the afternoon. Choose from two of the following workshops:

- "Reclaiming Your Godly Position": Pastor Steve Heilmann will delve into the lies women believe, and the truth that sets them free.
- "Reclaiming the Tongue": Pat Lewis will discuss how gossip and idle chatter damage our witness, and

how we can have Christ-filled speech.

- "Reclaiming the Times": Pastor John Eidsmoe, a constitutional lawyer, will explain how to respond to opponents in schools, government and marketplace.
- "Reclaiming the Generations": Beth Bergren will present a mini-version of the well-received "Link-Up" seminar on women mentoring women.

At our evening banquet,

Pam Olson has some fun





Pat Lewis

Steve Heilmann





John Eidsmoe

Beth Bergeren

things planned before introducing Faylin Myhre, who has been called to be the women's outreach coordinator.

June 15 is the annual mission festival service, with special speaker Pastor Tim Hinrichs, missionary to Poland. Join us as we meet together and celebrate because our God is a Solid Rock!

Robin Jameson
 WMF secretary

| FEES                          | \$ |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Luncheon — \$7                |    |
| Banquet — \$10                |    |
| Registration — \$7            |    |
| TOTAL                         |    |
| Number of children attending: | #  |
| ~Nursery kids                 |    |
| ~VBS kids                     |    |
|                               |    |

Registrations received after June 1 must add a \$3 late fee.

Please mark the registration form above if you have children attending either VBS or are in need of child care.

| Name:               |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Spouse:             |  |  |
| Address:            |  |  |
| City / state / zip: |  |  |
| Congregation:       |  |  |
| Address:            |  |  |
| City / state / zip: |  |  |

Make checks payable to Mary Ann Berntson, WMF and send to 4416 113th Ave. SE, Valley City, ND 58072

# **Annual Conference** housing information

Americinn: 280 Winter Show Road; indoor hot tub and pool, continental breakfast. (701) 845-5551 or 1-800-634-3444. Ask for Annual Conference rooms. Wagon Wheel Inn: 455 Winter Show Road; indoor pool, continental breakfast. (701) 845-5333 or 1 (800) 319-5333. RV hookups available. Ask for AFLC Annual Conference rooms.

**Super Eight Motel:** 822 11th St. SW; Continental breakfast. (701) 845-1140.

**Another Time Guest Cottage:** 116 5th Ave.. SW (701) 845-3171.

Victorian Charm Guest Inn: 535 Central Ave.. N (701) 845-0887. Private baths with some rooms. Carousal Lodge Exit 292 near Valley Bed and Breakfast. (701) 845-0887.

**Valley Bed and Breakfast:** 3611 117th Ave.. SE- Exit 292. (701) 845-5893.

**Sheyenne Riverbend Farm Guest Inn:** 3716 117th Ave.. SE, Box 456. (701) 845-1377 or (701) 845-2547. Email: RiverbendFarmND@aol.com. Web site: www.riverbendfarm.com.

VCSU Campus Dorms: Shirley at Grace Free Lutheran (701) 845-2753, or at home (701) 845-1806. Flickertail Inn: Exit 290 on Interstate 94. (701) 845-5278

**Prairie Inn:** 140 Third Ave.. SE (701) 845-1560

#### **Surrounding communities:**

**BesteMor Inn:** (701) 490-0801

Tower City Inn Bed & Breakfast, (701) 749-2660

Dakota Inn, Jamestown 1(800)726-7924 Gladstone Select Hotel, Jamestown (701) 252-0700

**Days Inn,** Jamestown (701) 251-9085 **Holiday Inn Express,** Jamestown 1(800)465-4329

JR's North Forty Bed and Breakfast, Sanborn (701) 646-6260

#### Camping/RV stations

**East Ashtabula Crossing:** 37 sites, playground, swim area, picnic area, showers, flush toilets, boat ramp and alcohol free. Call 1-800-444-6777.

**West Ashtabula Crossing:** 40 sites, electric hook-ups, boat ramp, and picnic area. No reservations. (701) 845-2970.

**Bayshore Resort:** Cabins, camping, and RV sites. (701) 845-1066.

**Municipal Tourist Park:** On business loop I-94. No reservations required. All hook-ups. Showers and water available. (701) 845-3294.

### **AFLC** memorials — March

#### **AFLBS**

Bernhard Nelson, Helen Hove, Myrtle Gunderson, Donna Bokn, Thelma Sheldahl, Adeline Skramstad, Ray Kinneberg, Roy Losse, Herbert Woodbury, Delores Hendrickson, Eldora Monger, Amy Haugen **AFLTS** 

Helen Hove, Bernhard Nelson, Arlitte Swenson, Amy Haugen, Adeline Skramstad, Ray Kinneberg, Geneva Flaa

#### **Evangelism**

Arlitte Swenson, Raymond Kinneberg, Junie Mellby

#### **General Fund**

Rev. Wallace Jackson, Martha Lundgren, Raymond Kinneberg, Adeline Skramstad

#### **Home Missions**

Mrs. Berge Moe, Rev. Wallace Jackson, Ivan Swanson, Hazel Stueland, Bernhard Nelson, Herbert Woodbury, Raymond Kinneberg, Amy Haugen, Daryl Overby

#### **Miriam Infant Home**

Arlitte Swenson

#### **Parish Education**

Amy Haugen, Bernhard Nelson

#### **WMF**

Arlitte Swenson, Arthur Haakenson, Myrtle Gunderson, Jerry Collins, Adeline Skramstad, Karen Ambrosius

#### **World Missions**

Myrtle Gunderson, Wesley Ballmann, Tom Gray, Raymond Kinneberg, Junie Mellby, Helen Hove, Bernhard Nelson, Amy Haugen

#### Vision

Nathan Nelson, Conrad Carlson, Oris Moen, Myrtle Gunderson, Margaret Rennerfeldt, Bernhard Nelson, Roy Losse, Harvey Hess, Amy Haugen, Florence Dimick

... in honor of Ken and Wanita Sletten (AFLBS, World Missions)

#### **Association of Free Lutheran Congregations**

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (3 months) - January 1 - March 31, 2005

| FUND             | TOTAL<br>Subsidy | REC'D IN<br>MARCH | TOTAL REC'D<br>TO DATE | % TOTAL   |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| General Fund*    | \$387,377        | \$42,062          | \$112,704              | 29        |
| Youth Ministries | 56,062           | 5,421             | 12,147                 | 22        |
| Parish Education | 81,988           | 4,865             | 19,272                 | 24        |
| Seminary         | 156,804          | 21,026            | 47,195                 | 30        |
| Bible School     | 269,308          | 29,031            | 66,389                 | 25        |
| Home Missions    | 277,870          | 29,154            | 63,523                 | 23        |
| World Missions   | 262,377          | 19,589            | 57,293                 | 22        |
| Personal Support | 368,688          | 27,972            | 94,270                 | 26        |
| TOTALS           | \$1,860,474      | \$149,964         | \$409,270              | 22        |
| TOTALS 2004      | \$1,739,460      | \$114,341         | \$378,504              | <b>22</b> |
| Goal 25%         |                  |                   | . ,                    |           |

The Evangelism Department received \$13,453 in March.

\* Includes Evangelism totals

Please contact individual departments for more information on projects.

# Choose Life

Ierri Schiavo, a disabled woman in Florida, became the subject of court cases, Congressional action and much media attention. The courts permitted her feeding tube to be removed. This led to her eventual death. Her husband insisted this is what she would have wanted if she could have expressed her



**Craig Johnson** 

wishes. Her parents and siblings strongly disagreed.

Terri's wishes were never written down. Those who knew her best were deeply divided as to what she wanted. Medical experts were

divided regarding her condition, what kind of brain activity existed and her prospects for the future. Decisions had to be made. That led many to declare, "If we are going to err, we should err on the side of life."

All parties in this tragic case agreed on one thing: without food and water Terri's death was certain to be soon. The chance of a miraculous recovery was slim even if the feeding tube remained. Without it there was no chance.

No matter what her chances were, she was still a human being. No matter what she might have been capable of mentally and physically, she should still have received the basics of food and water as long as her body would take them in.

Sometimes it might be appropriate to stop extraordinary medical care. I've had to face those decisions in my own family and I know they are extremely difficult. In the

Schiavo case, however, it was not about extraordinary medical care, but about the basics of life.

Missions is about sharing with people the basics for spiritual life. Jesus said He is "the bread of life" (John 8:48). He offers "living water" (John 4:10). He is not an extra. He is essential. A person without Christ isn't going to make it spiritually. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Some people in this world have never heard the good news of Jesus and His death and resurrection. Some Christians, when confronted with that fact, have attempted to soothe their conscience by believing God will provide some other means for those who have never heard. The Lord hasn't spoken in Scripture about any other means. It says instead regarding Jesus, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Rather than thinking God will provide another way and taking the terrible risk that we might be wrong, should we not err on the side of life?

Some people are offered the bread of life and the living water but they don't receive it. That is tragic. It is even more tragic, however, that some are spiritually like Terri was physically in her last days. They are not even being offered that which could give them spiritual life.

We share the good news of Jesus in whatever opportunities God brings our way. Sometimes it may look like there is no hope of spiritual life developing. It would take a miracle. But it always takes a miracle for sin and the blindness

Sometimes it may look like there is no hope of spiritual life developing. It would take a miracle. But it always takes a miracle for sin and the blindness it causes to be overcome and for spiritual life to be formed.

it causes to be overcome and for spiritual life to be formed. We serve the God who is in the business of doing miracles. The disciples "asked, Who then can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:25, 26).

You may share the good news of Jesus with your neighbor or with someone in another part of the world, and they may say, "No." Or they may say, "Yes." The good news at least needs to be shared. We present the opportunity. We err on the side of life. "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Romans 10:15). If they never hear, they won't come to Christ. If they do hear, they might come. And if they come ... "Everyone who believes in the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

All who come find life.

#### THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

# [Building the Base] Forgiven forgotten

hat can we expect from God when we become Christians? Previously I wrote about God's gift of eternal life. Now, I want to communicate the wonderful expectation we can have in being forgiven.

Forgiveness is a precious gift from God, as is salvation. As I came to know God in the person of Jesus Christ, I came to know the great gift of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not earned because of any goodness in us. While it is a free gift given to us by God, it did come at a very high price — the death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary and the shedding of His blood. Hebrews 9:22 says that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

Why is forgiveness so important to the child of God? Everyone needs forgiveness; but it is for the Christian at the very core of our spiritual existence. Our lives are like an ongoing accumulation of debit accounts of failures, offenses and shortcomings. Without forgiveness we live as alienated individuals, and that leads to deep feelings of guilt, unhappiness and, in the end, bitterness. Without forgiveness our record book is full of sin.

In the reconciliation between God and man, Jesus wiped out anything that would cause separation between us. As God in Christ makes us His children and we become citizens of His kingdom, we

have, as Paul writes in Colossians 1:13,14, "redemption, the forgiveness of sins." To be forgiven! The record against us is wiped clean!

As I came to know Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, forgiveness began to be an ever-expanding experience of a deepening of my spiritual life. Permit me to share a few of these discoveries.

First, is that we are *totally forgiven* if we confess our sins. I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgiven us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Second, this same verse tells us that we are *cleansed* from sin.

Third, the record is not only wiped clean, but sins are removed "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12).

The next truth and blessing received from forgiveness is found in Hebrews 8:12, "... and I will remember their sin no more." God has the divine ability to forget. When sin is forgiven, it is forgotten. I cannot fully tell you how liberating that verse was to me! Forgiveness came to mean no one can accuse me if God has forgiven me.

What freedom we experience when the sins of the past and present are washed away in the blood of Christ!

> Pastor Richard Gunderson Cambridge, Minn.

God has the divine ability to forget. When sin is forgiven, it is forgotten. I cannot fully tell you how liberating that verse was to me!