

The Lutheran
AMBASSADOR

MAY 23, 1995



CHERISH THE TREASURE

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Living free

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.
John 8:36 KJV

Missionary Leonard Patzold used to say, "When we interview missionary candidates we do not only see if they are evangelical, we look to see if they are free."

We may well ask, "Is it possible to be free in a world so filled with pain and confusion?" Jesus said it is and He offered this freedom to all those who would have it.

Sin is the culprit

The context in which Jesus uttered the verse above was among those who were blind to their own sin. To these Jesus said, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). There will always be those who use "Christian freedom" as a license for sin. This denies the fundamental principle and result of sin which does not bring freedom at all but only bondage and death. The words of Scripture answer them best: "live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God" (1 Peter 2:16).

The people Jesus was speaking to didn't seem to need anything. They certainly did not need Jesus! Beware of any religion or philosophy that can get along without Jesus Christ!

Failure — the first step to freedom

Strange as it seems, spiritual bankruptcy is the first step to spiritual freedom. Before the "no condemnation" and liberty of Romans chapter 8, Paul experienced the agony and failure of Romans chapter 7 and finally cried out: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Roman 7:24).

To the discouraged who seem to see nothing but failure at every

turn, let me say this: "You are closer to victory than you think, for you are finally seeing things as they really are."

We cannot free ourselves

Our first tendency is to struggle to free ourselves, but like the animal caught in a snare our efforts only tighten the noose. As we struggle with ourselves and the things around us, we begin to feel our helplessness. At first we thought certain things were too much. Finally all of life seems beyond us. The words of Jesus come to life: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

We are ready to be set free.

Christ can set the captives free

Jesus preached "deliverance to the captives" (Luke 4:18). He paid the price for our sins on the cross. Now He proclaims the victory and we need only receive it by faith. "Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace" (Roman 6:14). We are free when we stop struggling and rest in the victory already won for us on the cross.

Kept free in Christ

Spiritual freedom is not like some commodity we can buy and get title to. Our freedom is **in Christ** — by association with Him. The analogy of the sheep and the shepherd helps me here. When the shepherd snatches the lamb from the lair of the lion the lamb is free — but only as long as it stays close to the shepherd. The lamb is as helpless as ever away from the shepherd.

Make me your captive, Lord, and then I shall be free indeed.



— by Pastor
Martin Christensen
Elbow,
Saskatchewan

Surviving, and even Enjoying, those teenage years

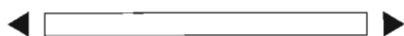
What follows is an interview with Helene Olson. She and her pastor husband, Rodger, of Calvary Lutheran in Fergus Falls, Minnesota have four sons, ages 15 to 26.

Q. How did you address sibling conflicts?

A. We laugh at it now, but the biggest fight was over who got the most breakfast cereal. We solved it by going out and buying each one their own box.

In our home there were times when some wanted to be the center of attention. We acknowledged that each child was unique and tried to make each feel equally loved and admired. Yes, there were times we had to remind them we are a family and we need to forgive and respect. There were also times when my husband reminded me not to get in the middle of a squabble and let them fight their own battles.

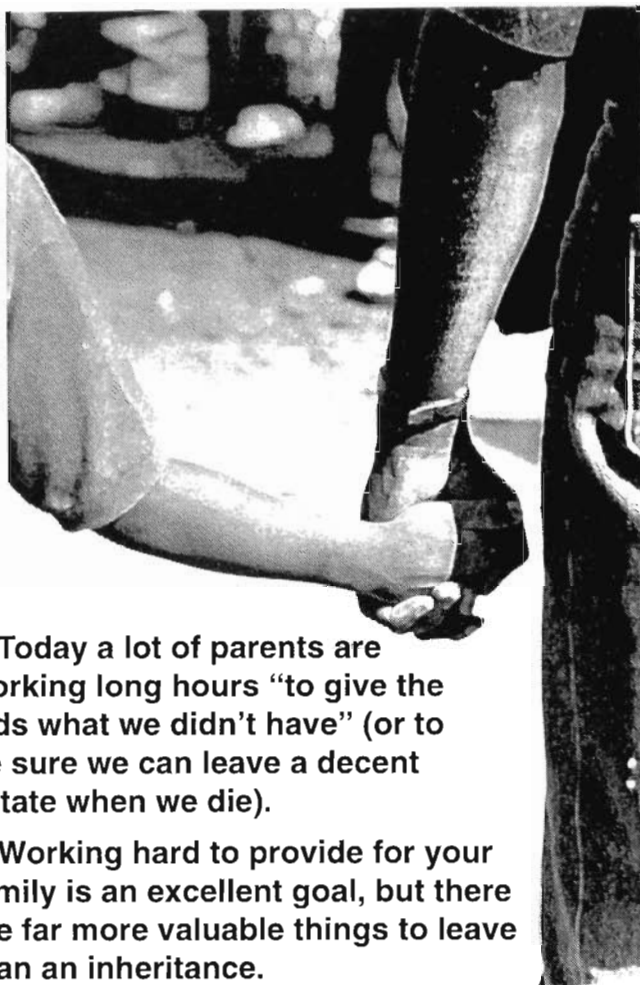
Each Sunday evening we held a family meeting to talk about our joys and hurts, then to pray for one another. As our boys grew into their teen years, they recognized their need for one another and the bond of love grew. Today they consider each other their best friends. One son commented, "We experienced solidarity fostered by suffering."



Q. How did you grant your teens' freedom and independence?

A. Our number one guideline was to trust our boys. We had one rule for them: "If you are going to be out past midnight, call us." They never did anything that broke that trust.

When it came to dating, we encouraged
(continued on next page)



Today a lot of parents are working long hours "to give the kids what we didn't have" (or to be sure we can leave a decent estate when we die).

Working hard to provide for your family is an excellent goal, but there are far more valuable things to leave than an inheritance.

Bestowing the blessings of God on your family doesn't have a whole lot to do with money. What really counts is right priorities.

Provide for your family, yes.

The Bible teaches that. But don't try to buy them off. Seek first God's Kingdom and ask His help to build the kind of home where people have high self-esteem, strength and confidence to face whatever life throws at them.

Give your family a clear sense of right priorities and a spiritual heritage that will not fade or rust.

These are the things that are far more valuable than all the gold and silver on this earth!

— from *Families Are Forever*
The Goad Family
with Fritz Ridenour

That *glorious* position in Christ

Encouraging our children
to understand who they are
as a child of God

A great evangelist of the past once said:

“We do not need great faith in God nearly so much as we need faith in a great God.”

I believe that disregard or misunderstanding of this fact is a chief reason for the current malaise among our children.

Too often subjective faith and feeling supplants rock-ribbed dynamic objective truth! When this happens it is not unusual for even Christian young people, who are already riding the roller coaster of emotions and feelings, to have difficulty realizing they do indeed have value and occupy a unique and glorious role in the universe simply because they are Christ's.

What we can do is live our faith before them and accept nothing less than the same from them (in love, of course). It is their job to rebel against our ways and beliefs. It is how they discover what is true and worthwhile. It is our job to live in such a way that even when we fail through the weakness of our flesh, they can see that we trust that indeed, Christ is working in us (Romans 8:28).

Each of us parents could likely tell a story similar to that of Abe Lincoln walking quite a distance to return correct change to a customer. It is the example of our fellow sinners who have been made

ENJOYING TEENS

group dating. We also made sure we welcomed their date into our home.

We encouraged them to have friends. We let them have sleep-overs. They could invite friends to family Bible camp even if it meant that we paid for their friend's way. My husband had an annual tradition of taking the boys to the state hockey tournament. Yes, they were encouraged to bring a friend along.

If the teen was going to make a choice that involved some risk, we would talk over their plan and possible consequences of their choice. There were times unwise choices were made, but they learned valuable lessons while still under our roof. We talked a lot about drinking, drugs and sex. Their dad warned them often of the dangers. He always told them, “Don't even take that first drink; you might like it.”



Q. Parenting is a challenge. What is God's perspective that parents need to remember?

A. We reminded our boys they were a

child of God and their purpose was to bring honor to Him. They were aware they could ruin their father's ministry but more importantly, they knew how much we cared about them and they did not want to hurt or disappoint us. That often kept them from going along with the crowd.

We understood the need to bring in an outside person who was a godly Christian to help us through a difficult time. Rodger especially tried to be sensitive to times of disappointment and hurting and would spend extra time with that individual. We both tried to listen to them and avoid the temptation to be critical of them. By nature, young people feel they are being “graded” by peers and even parents. We need to communicate our approval and love for them to counteract that.


We often talked of the love of God as unconditional and saw the need to be sure our love for them was also unconditional. I know there were times when our sons felt our love for them was based on performance: “I love you because you got straight A's, captain of the team, or your beautiful

saints by the blood of Jesus which has helped us through the times when we could not see our own esteemed position in God's eyes.

My earthly father's highest praises came to me not when I won a superior rating in music, but when I took over caring for the fires in a neighbor's home when she broke her hip. My fondest memory of him took a few years to become real. That was the day we missed a grand gathering of our family because he was down at the bank looking for a measly forty-five cent error in someone's account! I was angry and frustrated as any other teen at seeing my plans and desires go array. But even in my wrath, I perceived something special; something of the hand of God that made integrity important.

Those days occur when we send our young people out to do things that might seem less than pleasant. Our role is not to cushion them from the ordeal but to show

them just how grace-filled it is. After all, none of us took on responsibility for our lives and actions until it was necessary.

When our children see that, even though we at times can be rather inept at being righteous examples, there is a glorious power at work which is more than compensating for our shortcomings. They too, will know that because they belong to Christ (because He says so, even when they do not feel it), that same power is at work in their lives as well! Our Christian young people too are of the "chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, His own special people" (I Peter 2:9 NKJV). 

— by Rev. Fred Faughn
Paducah, Kentucky

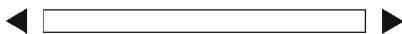
The author and his wife Karen, over a period of 20 years, took in 36 foster children, some of whom they adopted. The majority of the children were teenagers, the last of whom was married in 1987.

If you, as a parent, should find that you are not enough to meet all your child's needs for love, you may want to go where I have often been driven — to your knees. For in the unconditional, unlimited love of God in Jesus Christ, a parent can meet his or her own deep love hunger, and find more than enough to fill his child's heart, too.

—5 Needs Your Child Must Have Met at Home by Ron Hutchcraft (Zondervan, 1995)

hair." I did not mean to communicate that but I did nevertheless.

Our sons needed to know they were loved and appreciated and that we saw each of them as a worthwhile and capable person regardless of physical attributes or success in outward performance. We learned the importance of telling them, "Our love for you does not change. There is nothing you can say or do that will make us love you any less."




Q. Is it important to model or live a godly Christ-like example to our teens?

A. Yes, so often people are different behind closed doors. Teens see through that so easily. In our family of four sons, Father had an important role by the way he "walked his talk." He did not do things he asked the boys not to do. They did not

see dirty magazines hidden in our home or car. There were no questionable movies watched late at night. They heard no filthy language. By the way he lived, our sons learned how to treat women with respect as well as all adults. They were taught to stand up for what they believed to be right and to voice their opinion.

There were times when they told us we were out of line and we said we were sorry and asked for forgiveness.

Over the years they said we were not only their parents but their best friends. A vivid memory for all of us is the boys sitting on the sofa for a family discussion that often continued into the wee hours of the morning. Though we felt at times we neglected them, they say today they knew we were always there for them and gave them needed support. Even in college, they knew we would call them often just to check in to see how they were. 

AFLC Youth Ministries

Philosophy of working with youth

We acknowledge that this ministry is under the leading of the Holy Spirit and that God is the only One who can cause change in a person's life. As an arm of the AFLC, we recognize that this ministry exists in order to give guidance and support to the local congregations in their endeavors to achieve a high quality of Christian life among their youth. The desire is not to entertain, rather we desire to place a dominant emphasis upon a living and personal Christian experience.

We must endeavor to meet the needs of all we come in contact with (of all who hear): the believer who desires to grow in his life with God; the seeking and uncertain souls who want to see Him; the hypocrite who must be awakened from his self-righteousness; and the hardened sinner who must still be called to saving faith. To establish this kind of ministry, the following are key concepts that will guide this ministry:

Christ-Centered Focus: Everything we do must ultimately help achieve our mission statement, which is: "We purpose to serve our Lord Jesus Christ by encouraging and challenging the local congregation to win, build and equip youth in Jesus Christ" (Colossians 1:28).

Word-Centered Focus: All endeavors must be focused on strengthening our dependence upon the Word of God. It is the only inerrant and completely adequate source and norm of the Christian faith (II Timothy 3:16,17; Hebrews 4:12).

Congregational-Centered: Recognizing that we believe the local congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth, all we do must ultimately support the ministry of the local congregation (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Relational vs. Entertainment Ministry: Our desire is not to simply entertain young people through activities and programs, but rather we seek the establishment and strengthening of the personal relationship between Jesus Christ and the individual (II Timothy 2:1-2; I Corinthians 13:2-3).

Safe, Affirming Environment: Everything we do must ultimately reassure the young people that Jesus and His unconditional love for us is a shelter in the time of trouble (Psalm 91).

Service/Missions: We must give opportunity for young people to express their faith and to serve the Lord; to live out their faith in order for it to remain alive (Mark 10:45; James 1:22; I Peter 3:15).

Student Leadership: We desire to foster an atmosphere that embraces opportunities for young people to improve their leadership skills and develop a sense of ownership within their group (I Timothy 4:12).

Mentoring/Intergenerational Ministry: Recognizing the fact that youth and adults need each other in the body of Christ, we encourage relational activities between the generations. The youth must be strengthened in their faith for the "long run" (Hebrews 12:1; I Samuel 1-3; I Timothy 1:1,2).

Parental Involvement: Each aspect of our youth ministry is to be designed to build up Christian families, not separate its members or undermine parental authority. Therefore, we encourage parental involvement in the youth ministry (Joshua 24:14,15; Deuteronomy 6:5-9).

Leader As Role Model: Jesus is to be reflected as the model leader, recruiter and equipper (Colossians 1:28; II Timothy 2:1-2; Matthew 11:28-30).

Team Approach: We promote an effective and orderly Christian fellowship through the uniting power of Christian love and cooperation (Philippians 2:1-4).

Impact Events: Everything we do must have as its aim to win the unbeliever and strengthen and challenge the believer to a closer walk with the Lord. These events should not detract from this aim or merely entertain (Proverbs 2:2).

Active Learning: In following the example of Christ in His teaching, we must encourage a living Christian life by offering active learning opportunities using practical application Bible Studies, illustrations, object lessons, word pictures, etc. (Luke 10:30-37).

Long-Range Strategy: We must always remember, "Where there is no vision the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18).

Foundation of Prayer: Prayer, the child-like communion with God, is essen-

A Reminder: Please pre-register if you plan to attend the AFLC Annual Conference at the ARC, Osceola, Wisconsin, during June 14-18, 1995. Pre-registration fee for the ARC is \$5 per person or \$10 per family. This is separate from the conference registration fee of \$15 per person or \$25 per couple for the AFLC conference expenses to be paid at the time of arrival. This fee also includes the cost of one annual report, which will be mailed to you.

A reception for Rev. Elden and Faith Nelson, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will be held after the annual conference's Thursday evening service on June 15, at the ARC. Pastor Nelson is returning to parish ministry and is leaving his position as the AFLC's Home Mission Director, which he has held since 1976.

Rev. Paul Nash, Maple Grove, Minnesota, will be installed as the new AFLC Home Missions Director at the Sunday morning worship service on June 18, 1995 during this year's annual conference at the Association Retreat Center.

My life was changed in Colorado

After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him and led them up on a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them.
Mark 9:2

I never had a "defining moment" in my faith; it was a natural growing process. I had always known that my life was God's during my short fourteen years, but in the spring of 1993, I realized I needed to say to Jesus, "You can have me."

After that, my life did not really change dramatically until I got to Colorado later that summer. Because my parents are divorced, I spent the first part of my summer at my dad's house, away from any church life or Christians. Being separated from fellowship, I was very thirsty for the Word of God.

As I heard the Word at the FLY convention in Colorado, I came to know the person of Jesus

Christ in a new way. Even though I had been saved, I had not yet experienced the awesome power of God. Jesus Himself didn't really change, I changed. I began to realize that life as a Christian isn't just for Sundays; it is for eternity.

For me, the most influential part of the days in Estes Park, Colorado was the afterglow times. Through testimonies shared there I saw that Jesus Christ is alive! He has the power to forgive drug users, comfort the abused and brokenhearted, and change lives forever!

Colorado had such an impact on my life. I believe that if I had not gone, I would have fallen away from the faith I had before I went. I thank Jesus for leading me "up on a high mountain."

— by Brooke Schrage
Christian Free Lutheran Church
Wheatland, Iowa

Attention:

There is still time to register for the FLY Convention! Registration closes on July 1, 1995.

Counselors still needed for the FLY Convention in Colorado, July 17-22.


Please:

1. Fill out application.
2. Include your pastor's recommendation.
3. Register for the convention, including \$50 registration fee.

Contact Rev. Dennis Gray by the first week of June, at 845 Old Ridge Rd., Box M, Greenbush, MN 56726 (218) 782-2249.

tial to this ministry and to growing in our relationship with Jesus Christ (Colossians 4:2; James 5:16b).

We on the AFLC Youth Board strongly believe in these principles and pray that this ministry will be useful in fostering a living and personal Christian experience among the youth in our AFLC. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19,20). 

— by Rev. Lloyd Quanbeck
Northome, Minnesota
Chairman, Youth Board



1995 AFLC Bible Camps

Family Camps

Association Retreat Center (715) 294-2877

30th Avenue & King's Way,

Osceola, Wisconsin 54020

July 30-August 5

Evening Speaker: Rev. Peter Franz, Cloquet, MN

Bible Teacher: Dr. Craig Jennings, Minneapolis, MN

Wilderness Bible Camp

Lake Park, Minnesota (701) 772-1846

July 11-16

Evening Speaker: Rev. Larry Haagenson, Buxton, ND

Bible Teacher: Rev. Dale Mellgren, McIntosh, MN

Galilee Bible Camp

Lake Bronson, Minnesota (218) 754-6321

July 9-14

Evening Speaker: Rev. James Fugleberg, Fargo, ND

Bible Teacher: Rev. Robert Lee, Minneapolis, MN

Youth Teacher: Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush MN

Children's Teacher: Mrs. Linda Mohagen, Towner, ND

Orcas Island Camp

Orcas Island, Washington

August 7-12

Evening Speakers: West Coast District pastors

Adult Bible Teacher: Lowell Stime, Lutheran Bible

Adventure Seminars

Southern AFLC Family Camp

Oakridge Camp, Anadarko, Oklahoma

(405) 235-1013

July 30-August 4

Evening Speaker: Rev. Gene Enderlein, Minneapolis, MN

Bible Teacher: Rev. Vince Will, Springfield, MO

Youth: BARNABAS Team from AFLBS

Big Sky Camp

Big Fork, Montana (406) 752-2481

August 25-27

Speaker: Rev. Michael Crowell, Lake Stevens, WA

Lutheran Family and Youth Camp

Lake Geneva, Wisconsin (815) 942-2699

July 30-August 3

Evening Speaker: Rev. Brian Pearson, Montgomery, IL

Bible Teachers: Rev. Bob Casperson, Geneva, IL

Rev. Jim Behrens, Whittier, CA

Youth: Tony Rogness, Colman, SD

Matt Davidson, Minooka, IL

Dave and Shira Christian, Yorkville, IL

Western North Dakota/Eastern Montana District Williston, North Dakota

June 25-29

Evening Speaker: Rev. Terry Olson, Dickinson, ND

Bible Teachers: District pastors

Youth Camps

Bethany Youth Camps

Bemidji, Minnesota

— Junior Camp - ages 9-12

June 21-25

Speakers: Mrs. Linda Mohagen, Towner, ND, and

District pastors

— Senior Camp

June 25-29

Evening Speaker: Rev. Dale Mellgren, McIntosh, MN

Bible Teacher: Rev. Lynn Kinneberg, Mentor, MN

Faith Haven

Battle Lake, Minnesota

Pre-teen camp

August 13-16

Pickeral Lake

Sisseton, South Dakota

June 26-July 2

Speaker: Rev. Ray Klug, Blackbuck, MN

Eastern North Dakota

Cooperstown, North Dakota

June 18-23

Speaker: Rev. James L. Johnson, Fosston, MN

Galilee Youth Camps

Lake Bronson, Minnesota

Youth Week (pre-teen thru 13)

June 21-25

Teen Week (teenagers, including 13)

June 25-30

Association Retreat Center Youth Camp

Osceola, Wisconsin

June 19-24

Speaker: Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, MN

The facts are — many parents are missing out on their children's childhoods. It's not just in homes of divorce that parents can be missing. There are so many ways we can miss "being there."

— *Getting Out of Your Kids & Into Their Hearts* by
Valerie Bell (Zondervan, 1995)

Wanted — youth to join us in Mexico.

On July 30 through August 13, 1995, Free Lutheran Youth expect to work with Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles in Mexico. Reservations are limited and of this writing, only 10 more positions are available. Adult chaperones are also needed. For more information contact Rev. Lloyd Quanbeck at (218) 897-5654 or Mr. Al Brazier at (218) 782-2456.

Give youth a break

YOUTH

Bible camp season is an important time of the year. Perhaps, there is nothing more important among pre-teen and teenagers than the work done by the Holy Spirit through the Bible camp.

Thousands of youth go to Bible camp annually. It is hoped that each of them will be confronted with the call to receive Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord. Next to the Sunday school and youth group, Bible camp ministry is extremely important to the evangelistic efforts of the local congregation.

We have our youth conventions. These important gatherings ought also be thought of as the "arm of the local congregation." The on-going work of the congregation should involve sending students to conventions. However attending a convention might be out of reach of some, and it is easier to pay for the camp experience. No student should lack the funds to go to national conventions, but certainly no student should lack the funds to attend Bible camp.

Give your youth a break. They need a break too! Attending school is not all that fun!

Camp is in one way an intense time where the Word of God is preached and taught in its truth and purity. Both the law and the gospel is to be preached by capable men of God. Many born again adults would say that they received their spiritual start at Bible camp. Statistics indicate that youth are most apt to receive Christ before they reach 17.

Our youth come to Bible camp with their problems and concerns. Many live in families filled with heartaches. One could make a long list of the many temptations

our youth face daily. The conditions become worse and worse and is not anything like what youth dealt with a few years ago.

The Bible tells us that our children and youth will become rebellious. Many teens do not know right from wrong. They do not have anything to live for and some try to end it all or resort to violence against others. A growing number escape through drugs and sex.

When Jesus comes into the life of a person, He begins to reshape and remake that person through Holy Spirit-led growth in the Word of God. We need well-trained counselors at all youth events. This means ones who are able to lead them to Jesus and to know what to do in follow up.

Counselors will be faced with problems they do not know how to handle and will need to refer these youth to others. Many need what is called *Bibliotherapy*. This is therapy which comes right out of God's Word. They need a friend who can help them get into the Bible, someone they can be responsible to.

The local congregation is God's feet and hands to do the will of the Lord. If a teen is in trouble, we need to help them at camp and afterwards. In some problems confidentiality may be too much of a risk and we should work with


young people to give voice to others through referrals! Counselors at Bible camp should refer problems to the pastor as he is the primary one responsible for the camper's spiritual life.

Pastors and youth directors can spend quality time with each young member of the congregation at Bible camp. Congregations can help their pastor if at all possible attend camp with the young people. Admittedly some men claim to not be youth oriented. However, camp is a great place to know your youth and minister to them, and even learn youth work.

The camp staff can encourage youth in a variety of ways. Number one is to encourage teens to receive and follow Jesus Christ in obedience. Then there is recreation, sports, talent nights, Bible discussions, choir and other special events. Creativity is a must. Older youth may need special activities such as canoe trips, special swimming events and more! The camp environment lends itself to ministering to the whole person.

Friends love to be together. They influence one another and if one person doesn't go, others will stay home too. It is important for parents to be supportive of every effort made for youth.

Many treasured friendships have developed at Bible camps and the fellowship often grows beyond the camp experience. Our prayer as parents and congregations ought to be that not only will our young people be Christians, but that they will marry Christians.

Stronger youth groups result, and perhaps some youth will be led to attend Bible School or to consider some kind of a Christian ministry. May the Lord and His Holy Spirit lead us as we work in promoting Bible camp. 

— by Rev. Dennis Gray
AFLC Youth Ministries Director



We (George and Helen Knapp) had agreed to speak at the 29th Annual Conference and the 25th anniversary of the Women's Missionary Federation in Brazil. We wanted to make our trip as worthwhile as possible, so we "went early and stayed late."

We began our trip by visiting family and friends, then to work.

Our stay at the ARCA near Curitiba included carpentry to finish a chalet for visitors, floor repair and finishing touches in a bedroom suite in the Paul Abel family's home. There were other jobs too, Helen sewed 140 small felt books for use in DVBS as "The Wordless Book." There was some cutting to do for crafts, ironing, stirring in a kettle now and then, and dishes to wash. Our three weeks there went too quickly, ending our time of enjoying the healthful climate and fabulous view from the Abels' home of the village of Bateias.

Soon it was time to catch a bus for Campo Mourão for the rest of our time in Brazil. There George spent most of the days fashioning built-in bunks in the men's dorm. First though, the factory-built bunks that were there had to be repaired, glued, and set up in the women's dorm.

It was high summer in Brazil during our visit and it was HOT! We weren't too used to that anymore, even though we previously had called this place home for 32 years.

A wall and a walk-in closet were built in the apartment where David and Sarah Nelson and their boys will begin their days as missionaries.

George had the pleasure of preaching several times in various churches. He enjoyed a real freedom of the spirit and use of the Portuguese language of Brazil.

Many shelves were fashioned to hold the English Library. These books had been in boxes, collecting dust, mold, and cockroaches since the old women's dorm had

A report on a short-term experience on the mission field in Brazil



been razed in 1991. No new books have been received for years. Maybe you'd like to help update this library with a donation?


We enjoyed working with Rev. James and Lorene Winters from Canada. Lorene was busy in the health clinic, watching over the Miriam Home children's general health. Jim did a fine job on things such as finish carpentry, cupboards and drawers.

We all gathered at Connely and Carolyn Dyrud's for breakfast and the evening meal. Connely saw to it we had three different fresh fruits each morning for good health. Carolyn brewed a "mean" pot of coffee (strong) for those who needed that wake-up call. In the evening the gals took turns turning out their favorite dishes. At noon we all gathered at the school dining hall for the basic meal of rice and beans, vegetables, meat or farm cheese.

Helen prepared three crafts for the four-day children's camp. Some 80 children attended including one of our grandsons. We stayed at camp those days and helped where needed. Helen also taught groups of ladies how to crochet rugs and piece quilts.

Our time in Brazil too quickly drew to a close so the finishing touches to the wall and walk-in closet were left in Jim's capable hands.

While we were there, there were eight of us short-termers. It was interesting to become acquainted with others of like-minds. There was not a shortage of work for any of us if we were able-bodied. A lot of painting was still needing to be done and so, as people returned home, there were still jobs left to do. These are waiting for you who are wondering what you can do as a short-termers. Carpentry projects are waiting for a handy-man, paint is waiting to be spread. A child in the Miriam Infant Home is ready for you to hold her. There is always some storage closet or corner waiting to be cleaned and straightened out too. So set your date, pack your bag with work clothes, and experience the satisfaction of being a short-termers on a mission field. You'll be blessed in ways you never dreamed of.

"Holding forth the Word of life: that we may rejoice in the day of Christ, that we have not run in vain, neither labored in vain" (Philippians 2:16 KJV). 

—by Rev. George & Helen Knapp
Willmar, Minnesota
(retired AFLC missionaries to Brazil)

Missionary healed

Barbara Sorensen is the daughter of Orville and Millie Sorensen of St. Peder's Lutheran in Nysted, Dannebrog, Nebraska. She has served since 1976 as a missionary nurse in Mali, West Africa with the Missionary Alliance.

Last December she was bitten by a deadly viper. After exhausting all medical remedies, the village gathered for prayer, and the Lord restored her by His power and for His glory.

Barbara wrote the following: "On December 22, I had a medical evacuation to San and on our

Missionaries begin language training

Rev. David and Sarah Nelson and family are living in a duplex that was created from retired Missionary John and Ruby Abel's home in Campo Mourão, next door to the Miriam Infant Home. Pray for the Nelsons as they begin language study and minister to the Brazilians. Their address is:

Caixa Postal 44,
87300-970 Campo Mourão,
Parana
Brazil

Missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel home on furlough

On April 25, Jonathan, Tamba, April and Tommy Abel returned to the U.S. for a 6-9 month furlough. Their home address is P.O. Box 97, Hitterdal, MN 56552; phone (218) 962-3458. Missionary David Abel is working also in the Vitoria area and is covering for them at Campo Grande. The churches in that area are also involved in a ministry to former

from deadly snake bite

return trip the Malians asked me to stop the car so they could harvest some fruit from a nearby tree. I stepped out of the car and was trying to find a shady spot and stepped on a pencil viper. The two fang prints were very obvious and the bleeding began. The pencil viper destroys the body's ability to clot so I began nose bleeding and internal bleeding. The first three days were the hardest — the discomfort and fear of it all."

At that point Barbara's coworkers in the clinic were fearful she would not survive. But they gathered for specific inter-

WORLD MISSIONS

Rev. Todd and Barb Schierkolk, Rachel and Megan left Evergreen Park, Illinois on May 18. Pastor Schierkolk held his farewell service at Ebenezer Lutheran Church on May 14. The following Sunday, the Schierkolks were commissioned at Amery Free Lutheran Church near Amery, Wisconsin after which they traveled to Texas where they begin language school. Pray for the Schierkolk family in their preparations for mission work in Mexico. Their new address is:

Rio Grande Bible Institute
4300 S. Business 281
Edinburg, TX 78539-9399

street kids. The Brazilian government cut off all financial aid, food, etc. for their children's homes which has put a large burden on the local congregations and the missionaries.

The Jonathan Abels plan to do deputation work in the Midwest this summer and travel through the West and Southwest early in the fall. Contact them at the Hitterdal, Minnesota address or through the World Missions office.

cession on December 29 at noon and at that specific time she noticeably and miraculously began healing. She wrote: "My heart just sang! All victory is ours in our weakness. He is all power — be weak — and let it always be His power!"

India workers sponsors needed

The World Missions Committee has announced the need to provide assistance to 30 workers for \$30 a month. Is this an area that you or your congregation, Sunday school or youth group could participate in and help meet a great need in missions? Contact the World Missions office about becoming a sponsor of one of our India national workers!

On May 27, 1995, **Rev. Tim Hinrichs** expects to fly to Warsaw, Poland, with his fiancée, Renata. From there they will travel to Biesko-Biala, Poland where Tim will meet his future in-laws. They are planning an October wedding in Poland. Pastor Hinrichs has already begun learning the Czech language with a tutor. He plans on living near the city of Ostrava in the Czech Republic where he expects to teach. Pray for Pastor Hinrichs and Renata as they begin their ministries and prepare for their marriage. Pastor Hinrichs can be contacted through the:

East European Missions
Network
10800 Lyndale Ave S. #120
Bloomington, MN 55420

STEER funds grow

The STEER program is increasingly providing funds for AFLC World Missions. We are thankful to all who participate and use this means of providing financial support for our mission. Last year a total of \$8,430.50 was received by the AFLC through the STEER program!

Donors, ranchers and farmers are needed to join the program. Donor's funds are the seed money which is never lost, but is reinvested over and over in livestock or seed.

For more information contact the World Missions office at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441 (612) 545-6472.

OPINION PAGE

I was blessed by the January 17, 1995 issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, and its featured articles on evangelism. I would like to add to Dr. Steven Lombardo's "Evangelism Bibliography," the name of a book that has encouraged me in its explanation of historic Lutheran evangelism. The title is **Go Make Disciples** by Dr. Rolf A. Syrdal.

Dr. Syrdal was a missionary to China, a college and seminary professor and director of world missions. When my wife and I went to Brazil in 1958, he was our Director of World Missions in the former Evangelical Lutheran Church. I found him to be one who corresponded promptly with his more than 300 missionaries and always encouraged his young missionaries to evangelize.

I quote briefly by permission to encourage others to read his book and as an affirmation of our pietistic Lutheran heritage.

"From the Bible we learn that man, being dead in trespasses, is unable to do anything to save himself. Salvation is initiated and carried out by the will and power of God. In fact, man's opposition to salvation must first be overcome. 'The man without the Spirit (natural man) does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned' (I Corinthians 2:14). 'No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him' (John 6:44). ...

"Paradoxically we also learn from the Bible that it is God's will that all people shall be saved. He has commissioned His Church to evangelize all nations. If this were impossible, God would not have given us this commission.

"For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, for

everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:12,13).

"There were (are) some theologians who stressed the first teaching at the expense of the other. ... Unregenerate man was spoken of as a stick or a stone — something inanimate that could have nothing to say about his relationship to God.

"There were others who stressed the second teaching at the expense of the first. ... Some went so far as to teach that each person had the innate ability to accept or reject God. He, therefore, could initiate his own salvation by simply deciding to accept it. This failed to recognize that the natural (unregenerate) person is at enmity with God...

"There is a passage in Scripture that defies both these extremes. God is to be found, but He is to be found in those times when God has spoken to man to awaken him to repentance — when man's heart has been made ready to listen.

"Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near ..." (Isaiah 55:6-8).

"Therefore, let our emphasis be on grace itself, where God's transcendent power and divine love meet together for our salvation — personified in Jesus, the Christ. Luther's explanation of the Third Article dealing with the Holy Spirit, is very significant.

"I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith. — Luther's Small Catechism

"The **Formula of Concord** deals at length with the differences of man's attitudes on the

relationship of grace to man and his salvation. ... it does not lay out an iron-clad doctrine that solves all questions, but points us to the Word of God that is to be proclaimed. Christ offers salvation through the Word and the Sacraments. A man may reject God, but is responsible for this act.

"But it is possible for a man to become God's child through repentance and faith. The Word that is proclaimed has power, through the work of the Holy Spirit. 'I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes' (Romans 1:16).

"... Nothing should dampen our zeal or weaken our sense of responsibility for ministering to everyone with the Gospel.

"God does not only make it possible for repentant sinners to receive grace; His love reaches out to all sinners inviting them to accept His grace. God's steadfast love remained with the people of the Old Testament times even when they left Him to serve idols.

"This glad tidings of God's grace has been given as a trust to the church to proclaim anew to each generation. The key to presenting it is the Word alone, and the sacraments empowered by the Word. The persuasive element in the presentation is the Holy Spirit that works upon the hearts of those who will listen to the Word. The key to receiving it is by 'faith alone.' Faith is man's response to the Gospel whereby he yields himself in full trust to Jesus as Savior and Lord. Born again of God's Spirit, he is a new creation who in turn is given the ministry of reconciliation."

— Reprinted from **Go Make Disciples**, by Rolf A. Syrdal, pages 51-58, 1977, Augsburg Publishing House. Used by permission of Augsburg Fortress.

— by Rev. John H. Abel
former AFLC evangelist and
missionary to Brazil

From our AFLC congregation in Oklahoma City

First Lutheran Church is seven blocks from where the explosion occurred that morning of April 19. A glass entry door shattered as the building shook. Sitting in my office, I had no idea what had just happened. The blast could be felt thirty miles away. It brought great devastation to our city and to our country.

A while after the explosion, I walked down Robinson within two blocks of the Federal Building. The rescue workers were moving frantically to help as many people as they could. Broken glass was everywhere. People who had been close to the blast but not physically harmed were stunned!

By Thursday morning, I had received three names of people who were injured or missing. One was a man who had been working across the street from the Federal Building. He died Friday afternoon. A volunteer nurse received a head injury while working close to the site. She died Sunday morning. A young woman, who had stopped at the Federal Credit Union to deposit a check was reported missing. Her husband was notified on Friday evening that she had been positively identified as one of the fatalities.

Robert E. Lee of the *Daily Oklahoman* said, "The shock of Wednesday gave way to Thursday's grief and the weekend's numbness."

In the midst of the crisis, the people of Oklahoma City have been turning to the Lord for help.

At a time like this Lamentations 3:22-25 is so appropriate: "The Lord's loving kindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. (They) are new every morning; Great is Thy

OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

R.A.F.L.C.

What is the "R" AFLC? Never heard of it, you may say. Stop and listen ... This is what I heard: "Let's remember to pray for R.A.F.L.C." Have you ever heard these or similar words spoken?

Oh, of course it's not really "R" but "**our**" AFLC; perhaps only pronounced with a mid-western accent. Yet, even though a new initial has not been added, this misunderstanding might serve to emphasize something very special about our fellowship.

The fact is that "**our**" AFLC is the most common way used to identify this association by its members. I hear it at worship services and conferences, in reports and discussions. The little word signifies ownership, and provides an important insight into AFLC attitudes. This denomination is not "their" (belonging to someone else, probably to those in leadership) or an impersonal "the" church, but it is "**our**" AFLC.

A recent study funded by the Lily Foundation shows a decline in church giving, especially to benevolence (ministry beyond the local parish). A second study highlighted the importance of good communica-

tions between church leaders and the membership as a key indicator to the level of their support. Both suggest a loss of the sense of ownership on the part of individual members concerning the national church body.

This is why it is especially encouraging to hear about "**our**" AFLC. Benevolence income continues to increase as committed congregations, as well as faithful friends, old and new, stand with us in prayer and support, sensing a spirit of ownership that survives in spite of our growth in numbers.

Yet one might suggest the addition of another initial: the "**H**" for **His** AFLC. For we firmly believe that, far above all of our sense of ownership, it is His Church to which we belong through faith in Jesus Christ. Our human organizations may falter and fail, but His divine organism will endure forever. Christ is Lord of the Church, and He promises that the gates of hell shall not overpower it (Matthew 16:18).

We thank the Lord for "**our**" AFLC, and that He has bestowed upon us the blessed privilege of building **His** Church through it!

— by Rev. Robert L. Lee

faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'Therefore I have hope in Him.' The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him." The footnote in my Bible says: "The author was so overwhelmed by the destruction of Jerusalem, the sin which produced it, and the suffering which resulted that he found it difficult to be diverted from his somber mood. Yet, in the

midst of the gloom, this passage sparkles as one of the most beautiful expressions of hope and trust in the Old Testament."

It has been gratifying to see the outpouring of help and support throughout Oklahoma City and beyond. The city and state have been untied through this disaster. I am so thankful for the leadership given by our Governor Keating and Mayor Norick. Both

OKLAHOMA CITY

Christian men have given the right kind of support needed at a time like this.

We have heard much about our need for God, faith and prayer. This is being heard from government officials and media personnel. On Sunday morning, a news crew came asking to tape our service. They couldn't figure out why people in Oklahoma City have been so friendly and good to them.

As the city is one in this disaster, I have also become aware of the oneness of people across the country. I have received calls from coast to coast, expressing care and concern, offering support and prayer for our church and city. I believe that we are seeing a wonderful opportunity for revival and

PEOPLE AND PLACES



renewal in Oklahoma City and throughout the country as people's hearts have been shaken.

For the last number of years, people have been praying for revival for Oklahoma City and that it would be a witness for the nation. I believe the time has come. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and

lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy" (John 16:20).

Thank you for your loving concern, support and prayers!

— by Rev. Gerald Peterson
First Lutheran Church
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Memorial Day Summer Prep Fest at the ARC

Join us during May 25-29, at our AFLC retreat center near Osceola, Wisconsin. We need volunteers and their families! Help the ARC staff prepare for the coming summer camps. Bring your work and play clothes and your appetites and expect a great time of fellowship. Call Eric Westlake at (715) 755-3131.

Galilee Bible Camp, Lake Bronson, Minnesota can now receive Lutheran Brotherhood matching funds through October 1 of 1995, '96 and '97. Any amount given over the annual average of \$6,680 will be matched from a special fund. For more information contact Curtis Thompson, RR 1 Box 323, Newfolden, MN 56738.

Mountain Home, Arkansas — Located in the heart of the Ozark Mountains, St. Matthew Lutheran Church meets in the Good Samaritan Village Chapel. For seven years the Lord has blessed the small congregation with a temporary pastor or lay

person. Once again the congregation is in need of someone to lead them in worship. Perhaps a retired pastor would like to augment his pension for a few hours of work each week. St. Matthew Lutheran appreciates the prayers and support of every AFLC congregation. Contact the church by calling William Nyland at (501) 425-9258.

Senior Seminarian Randy Nelson, has accepted the call from Faith Lutheran Church in El Campo, Texas.

Milford, Illinois — St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church honored Mrs. Bertha Koester, age 82, this past winter. Mrs. Koester is the widow of Rev. Herman J. Koester who served St. John's from 1941 until 1958. She served many years as church organist and choir director.

Rev. Charles Knapp, Karlstad, Minnesota has resigned as pastor of Heglund Lutheran Church. His name has been removed from the AFLC Clergy Roster at his own request.

Mr. Dean Franz, Dollar Bay, Michigan has accepted the call to be part-time lay pastor of Maranatha Free Lutheran Church in Chassell, Michigan.

Dr. Mary Lindquist, Grand Forks, North Dakota was honored on April 18, 1995 at the University of North Dakota. About 75 people gathered to commemorate her retirement as a professor of Special Education. She is noted for her pioneer work in graduate studies in special education in the state of North Dakota. Dr. Lindquist has served on the AFLC's Board of Publications and Parish Education.

Important Lessons

What do kids need to learn? That question is asked by parents and politicians, teachers and talk-show hosts, home schoolers and helpers in public and private schools throughout this land. One answer that is given in the Bible is often ignored and even at times scorned. Nevertheless it remains true that children and adults desperately need to learn humility.

Good self-esteem is seen by many to be a kid's greatest need. Some have attempted to meet that need with a great zeal. It has resulted in children's sports teams that give trophies to everyone who simply shows up, leaving some average 12-year-olds with as many awards as a decorated war veteran.

Vicki Lansky, in her book *101 Ways to Make Your Child Feel Special*, recommends that you "tell your child how nice he or she looks ... even if plaid pants are being worn with a striped shirt!" She also suggests blowing up your child's photo to poster size and hanging it in his room, just the thing if you want to raise a kid with an ego too big for any room to contain.

Psychologist Harold Stevenson of the University of Michigan found that American schoolchildren rank far ahead of students in Japan, Taiwan and China in self-confidence about their abilities in math. The same study found, however, that Americans were far behind in actual performance in math. We have a culture full of kids who feel good about themselves while they are failing. They have confidence in abilities they do not possess.

The problem does not just exist in the areas of psychology and education. It has crept into the Church. A *Newsweek* magazine writer stated that "Churches have discovered that 'low self-esteem' is less off-putting than 'sin.'" This is under a cartoon that shows a preacher telling people, "And what was Cain's problem? ... low self-esteem." Some would maybe desire to see the words of the hymn changed from "Amazing Grace ... that saved a wretch like me" to "that saved an unempowered, low self-esteem sufferer like me."

The Bible calls us sinners deserving of condemnation in hell. It does not say that only about those who perform abortions, those who engage in immoral sexual behavior or those who bombed the building in Oklahoma City. "There is no one righteous, not even one" (Romans 3:10, NIV). It says that about each of us. It says that about our youth. It says that about you and me. "For whoever keeps the whole law and stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:10, NIV).

Children need to be taught who they are apart from Christ. Then who we are in Christ becomes all the more incredible and wonderful. In Christ we are cleansed, righteous, children of God. Let us teach youth to be humble so that they will be amazed and grateful for what God has done. Let us also model humility for the youth around us and uphold it as a character trait of highest value. Let us encourage young people not to be aggressive self-promoters but gentle, humble servants. "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2, NIV). "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'" Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (1 Peter 5:5,6, NIV).

The warnings to the proud are clear, but, praise God, so are the blessings for the humble. "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom" (Proverbs 11:2, NIV). "Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor" (Proverbs 18:12, NIV). "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11, NIV).

Liking the Kids

"You have to love the kids." Those who work with youth are often given that important reminder. It is certainly true and must be followed. Kids need to be loved. They also need to be liked.

Kids are not just smaller adults. They are different and they need to be respected as such. Their uniqueness, which can be frustrating at times, is also something to cherish and enjoy.

Young people need adults who do not just put up with them out of some kind of obligation. They need people in their lives who enjoy being with them, who give them the clear message, "It's great spending time with you."

What message are we giving the young people we come in contact with? Do our actions and our words tell them, "we are putting up with you because we have to" or are they hearing, "You are important to me and I like being with you"?

Part of the wonder of the gospel is that God enjoys being with us. He does not put up with us because He has to. He does not have to love us, but He does. "The Lord delights in those who fear him" (Psalm 147:11, NIV). The great longing of God's heart is for us, for me, for you to be with Him forever (John 14:3).

Who is this Jesus?

Jesus has been portrayed in many ways: revolutionary, superstar, nut magician, fanatic, politician, legend, etc. But how we view Him is not the question. Reality is not determined by our opinions or desires. The "real" Jesus is revealed by God in His Word.

Eternal God

Jesus is both God and man. The humanity of Jesus began at a specific point. The deity of Jesus, however, existed before the union of God and man that became Jesus. The second person of the Triune God, (the Son), has always existed. From eternity it was His plan to save mankind. He was active in creation, as "all things were created through him" (Colossians 1:16). He was also active in the Old Testament, appearing as "the angel of the Lord."

True Man

From the moment of conception on, the Son became the God-man, Jesus. Not only God almighty, but also truly human; He is like us in every way, except without sin. He had to become human in order to do for us what we are unable to do for ourselves: live a sinless life, overcome temptation, live in perfect harmony with God, die in our place to pay the penalty of our sin, and rise in victory over sin, death and the devil. Now that He has ascended to heaven, He retains His human

BUILDING THE BASE

nature and will forever be the perfect mediator between God and man, because "He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses" (Hebrews 4:15). No matter what we are going through, Jesus understands, and is with us.

The Promised Messiah

"Christ" is not Jesus' last name. It is His title. The Greek word "Christ" and the Hebrew word "Messiah" both mean "anointed one." This means that Jesus is the one God chose before the creation of the world to be the Savior of the world; the one to whom the Old Testament points. Beginning with Genesis, hundreds of prophecies foretell His coming; and the Old Testament saints looked for Him.

The Sacrifice for Sin

The whole purpose of the eternal Son of God becoming a man — the promised Christ, is that He might offer Himself as the perfect, sinless sacrifice for our sins, "once and for all." We, being incapable of obeying God, and powerless to overcome the penalty for our sins, have only one hope: that someone would do it for us. Jesus is our substitute. His very name, "Jesus", means "God is our salvation." He is "the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29).

The King

On Palm Sunday the crowds

clamored around Jesus proclaiming that He was the promised heir to King David's throne. They were referring to the promise God made to David, that one of his descendants would rule over an "everlasting" kingdom. They were correct, Jesus was this promised King. But they did not understand that His kingdom would not be a physical, earthly kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom, made up of the souls of believers. At present we cannot see this "kingdom of God." But we will see it, when He returns in power and great glory. He will judge all people and rule over all creation; having "a name above every name" and "all things placed under His feet." Therefore we rightly call Him "Lord," and seek to obey Him as our Master and King.

Who is the real Jesus? According to the Word of God, He is: God — the eternal Son; truly human, sinless; the Savior, the perfect sacrifice for our sins; the teacher and prophet; Lord, Ruler, Master and King of everything; and our mediator and High Priest before God the Father.



— by Rev.
Don Voorhees
Dannebrog,
Nebraska