

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 10, 2000

## The maturation of missions

*(the emergence of personal and  
behavioral characteristics  
through growth processes)*

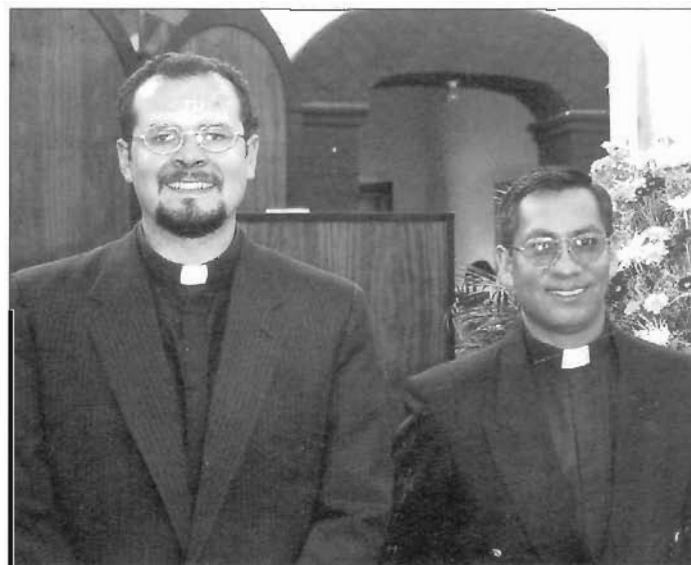
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East European missions  
enters phase two  
p. 12



Home mission congregation, Lutheran Church of Hope, Loveland, Colorado, held services on their building site September 3, 2000.



Ordination of Fernando Herrera and Ricardo Varela in Aguascalientes, Mexico, September 3, 2000.

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 10, 2000  
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## AN ENCOURAGING WORD

### Mistaken identity?

"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29).

What if, for one day, Jesus were to become you? He wakes up in your bed, walks in your shoes, assumes your schedule, deals with your pains and problems, does your work, and meets with the same people you do each day. Nothing changes except that Jesus lives your life with His heart. As Max Lucado writes: "His priorities govern your actions. His passions drive your decisions. His love directs your behavior."

Would people notice a change in you? Would your family and friends notice anything different? How about your boss? And the less fortunate, would they notice a change? Would you treat everyone the same as you have been? What about your stress level? Would you view life differently? Think about it. How would your life change if Jesus were to live your life for a day?

The picture that comes to mind is most likely what God wants for your life. The above verse says that God predestined us to become conformed to the image of His Son. The word "conformed," according to Webster's Dictionary, means "to bring into harmony or agreement." Our lives are to be harmonious with that of Christ. So when people look at you, they see Jesus.

How can this be? The Apostle Paul answers in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Christ lives in the one who accepts His sacrificial death for their sins. People should see Christ in the Christian.

Several years ago when shop-

ping at the Burnsville shopping mall in Minneapolis, a lady came up to me and started talking to me as if she knew me. I couldn't ever remember meeting her. When I politely asked her if I had met her before, she responded, "Oh, quit joking around. So, how is school going?" No matter how dumfounded I looked and how much I tried to explain that I wasn't who she thought I was, she was insistent that I was a friend she knew well. It was clearly, to me anyway, a case of mistaken identity.

Oh, that people would mistake us for Jesus or even be reminded of Him when they see us. Oh, that some would come up to us and say, "So that is what Jesus is all about. Thank you for letting me see Jesus in you. Can I have Jesus in me?"

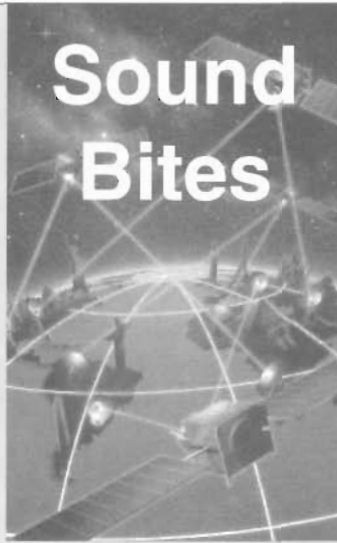
Remember, God desires for you to be conformed (in harmony) to the image of His Son. Let us not resist the Spirit of God, but let us follow the Spirit and die to self that Christ's life may be visible in us all.

Remember that picture of Jesus living your life. May many people be drawn to Christ because your life is so much like His. "He who has the Son has life" (1 John 5:12). Happy living!



— Pastor Tim Johnson  
Resurrection Free Lutheran  
Beltrami, Minnesota

## Sound Bites



**1** We are stirred and encouraged by the challenges we have heard and the fellowship we have shared with so many brothers and sisters in Christ. More than ever, we are resolved to make Christ known to all persons everywhere.

—from *The Amsterdam Declaration*, presented as a report of task groups gathered at Amsterdam 2000.

**4** In 1900 we had 27 churches for every 10,000 Americans. By 1950 there were only 17 churches for every 10,000 people. Now there are fewer than 11 churches per 10,000 Americans. Some 60 to 65 million people over 18 are unchurched — one third of the adult population.

—*Revival Report*

**2** God's great yearning is to overwhelm sinners with undeserved grace. This blessed embarrassment the sinner experiences when he, the transgressor against God, is given the largest measure of grace.  
—*Carl Rosenius*

**3** Servanthood means that all I have and all I am is placed at your disposal if it will bring you into the presence of God. Servanthood is not about how I add value to my life, but about how I add value to yours.  
—*Gordon MacDonald*

**5** In this global village of competing faiths and many world religions, it is important that our evangelism be marked both by faithfulness to the good news of Christ and humility in our delivery of it.  
—from *The Amsterdam Declaration*

**6** Ordinary people — by virtue of being Christian — have an unusual power to make an incredible difference in somebody else's life.

—*Larry Crabb*

# My Hispanic neighbor —

Growing up in an Iron Range community in northern Minnesota, I have always been aware of the ethnic differences that existed in my hometown. Polish, German, Croatian, Serbian, Italian, Finnish, French, Swede and Norwegian nationalities all lived and worked together in our area. We knew the differences of nationalistic backgrounds, holidays, religions, politics and, yes, appearances. Somehow we got along reasonably well. While some lived in micro-neighborhoods like Popular Street which was called Balkan Street, we accepted the fact that we were fellow citizens and shared fanatic loyalty to our great basketball teams.

All of that is different from what we are experiencing today. Now we are talking about recent immigration of those who have fled oppression in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia. There is the tension in the Arab-speaking world as well as Hispanics who have come to this country legally and illegally. Yes, their recent arrivals are changing the demographics of our society and our neighborhoods are changing. Yes, they are our neighbors.

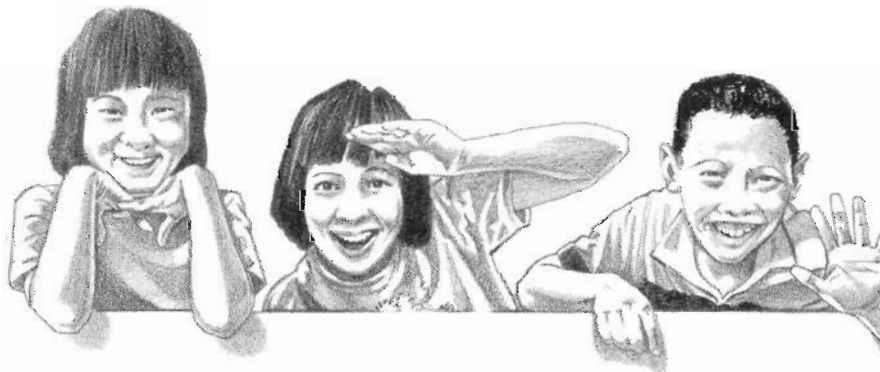
They show up at our job site and are our co-workers. They serve us in the stores, restaurants, motels and gas stations. In some cases we work for them. But, do we know them? Do we stay at a distance and avoid conversation? Is it fear and intimidation and do we really desire to know them? According to a brochure of the World Mission Prayer League, there are more Hispanics living in Los Angeles than in seven of the Latin American countries. In a small community in America's heartland, the population is said to be twenty percent minorities of Hispanics and Laotian.

Some years ago, while presenting missions in various churches, a member of one of the churches talked to me about a mission to the Hispanic community in their city. He wanted to know how they could secure a

missionary to reach these people and if I was interested since I spoke Spanish. After listening to him for a while, I asked him why they needed a missionary and why they didn't as a congregation invite their Hispanic neighbors to their church. He took me outside and showed a graffiti-filled wall between their Hispanic neighbors and the church. Then he asked me, "Do you think we should have that (the graffiti) here in our building?" There was more than a physical wall and graffiti between them and their Hispanic neighbors.

I do not know but suspect that they still have not reached their neighbors and are still living on this side of the wall socially, economically and spiritually. Yet, we are commanded by Jesus to disciple all the nations (ethos), in all the world. You may not be able to go across the ocean to win people for Jesus, but it is possible to walk across the street if you will do it!

We cannot begin as AFLC congregations to reach our Hispanic communities until we as individuals are willing to cross the street and become involved. It will take effort and will not be easy. But do it, for God loves your Hispanic neighbor.



In attempting to be God's person to your Hispanic neighbor let these suggestions be a help to you:

- ✿ Be a friend by getting to know them not intrusively but sincerely.
- ✿ Be a good neighbor understanding that they look at things differently and are living in a new land and for them a new culture.
- ✿ Think the best of them. Do as Thomas Hales said, "Err on the side of trusting a person, even though you may get stung."



# God loves him

Remember the prayer of the little girl, who said: "Dear God, please make bad people Christians, and Christian people nice."

✳ Beware of preconceived ideas about their culture and expectations of what they should be. Take time to read about their country and where they are from in that country. Don't be close-minded.

✳ Remember that they want to have friends and even though they might feel more comfortable with people from their own country and language group, it is often a privilege for them to have friends from their neighborhood. Let it be a privilege for you to have them as friends.

✳ Introduce them to others and help them broaden their contacts with others.

✳ Do as what has been done at Christ the King Lutheran in East Grand Forks, Minnesota: open your church building for other evangelical Christians to hold services in your facility or better yet, begin having services for Hispanics.

✳ Look for ways to build bridges to communicate with Hispanics in your community and take risks. If problems arise, deal with them. Fix them and go on, not giving up on your efforts.



Delegates to Amsterdam 2000 from Uganda.



Break time at the RAI conference center during Amsterdam 2000.

## Amsterdam 2000

—Pastor Craig Johnson  
Editor, The Lutheran Ambassador

**I**t was a big event. The *Amsterdam 2000* conference held July 29 to August 6, sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, brought together 10,732 participants. The 209 countries and territories they came from made it the most internationally representative gathering, secular or religious, in history. They took part in 900 plenary and teaching sessions conducted by some of the world's top Christian leaders, including: Chuck Colson, Dr. Bill Bright, Ravi Zacharias, Rev. Billy Kim, Dr. J. I. Packer, Rev. Luis Palau, Rev. John Stott, Dr. Stephen Olford, Franklin Graham and Anne Graham Lotz. Participants could hear the sessions, interpreted onsite into at least 25 languages, through the use of infrared technology, as well as AM and FM radio signals.

More than 130 seminars and 200 workshops were held to address the issues that affect evangelism in the 21st century. For each seminar there were 17 regional sessions led by presenters who not only translated and interpreted for the participants, but who also adapted each session to the culture of each specific region. At least two workshops for all 25 languages were offered during each session. All of this went on at the RAI Centre in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, an immense conference center that this writer found to be a place in which it was easy to get lost.

It was a diverse event. Seventy-five percent of the evangelists attending came from developing countries. They were men and

(continued on page 6)

*"So shall my word be which goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."*  
Isaiah 55:11

**T**he Bible school is dying. This was the thought that was continually on our minds as the school year progressed. The first reason for thinking like that was because we had only six students, half of the first year. Then it was the fact that there was strong division among the small student body. Then there was the confusion concerning the class schedule during the year. By the third trimester, the mid-morning chapel had been neglected and disappeared completely. And finally, there was barely any promotion of the school for future students. To sum it up, the school was dying and there was no one who was able to take it under their wing. We were praying about this all year and we had asked our supporters to pray for the school. What could be done?

The wake-up call came on July 14 when the Polish Lutheran Church's mission director called us into his office. Would we consider taking responsibility for most of the leadership of the Bible school? Although I was still involved in our congregation in

## Prayers for a

Czech a chill ran down my spine. I knew this was something from the Lord — a direct answer to our prayers for help.

As we talked with Greg about the details of the work of the Bible school we knew that neither one of us could handle it alone. For one thing, I don't speak or understand enough Polish to function in this position. Renata does not have the time or administrative skills to take this position. So we decided to be coordinators of the Bible school together. It's the Lord who will have to pull us through this since we don't feel completely capable.

For us it's really a breakthrough. The call to be involved in the school began many years ago as Renata was in Bible school in St. Paul. The time has come for us to really put our hands to the plough and push the work ahead. It's a major responsibility and will be lots of work but if something isn't



**Pastor Jim Rasmussen, AFLC director of evangelism with other delegates at Amsterdam 2000.**

women of numerous denominations who are sharing the gospel of Jesus in a wide variety of ways. Nanette da Silva Queiroz of Brazil is a missionary who spends her days traveling the Amazon River spreading the good news of Christ. Joseph Simons reaches out to street children and hurting people living in the projects in Cape Town, South Africa. Richard Nyakaana is involved in using music to proclaim Christ in Uganda, finding many open doors and much interest. Stephen Babi shares with young people in Tanzania. Another man shows the Jesus film in Israel. Others train pastors to do evangelism in Cuba.

It took Ade Beckley seven days to travel

to the conference from his home in war-torn Sierra Leone. "The journey has been worth it. It's very difficult to be an evangelist in my country," said Rev. Beckley, who was recently attacked and almost killed by rebel soldiers while preaching. Zambian evangelist Stuart Sichilong paid part of the expenses of his trip by selling his crop, the profits from which would have fed his family for a year. Upon hearing his story, participants responded with donations which paid for his crop.

In a reflection on the diversity of the event, AFLC Director of Evangelism Jim Rasmussen commented that he met and talked with church leaders from 44 countries.

It was an event full of optimism and hope. Billy Graham was unable to attend the conference because of poor health. He did address the closing session via satellite. "I am asking that you take from here the light that you found during these days," said Graham. "Hold that light high as you return to your home, and with the light of the thousands of other participants from around the world we can make a fire that will shine brightly, and will never be put out."

Chuck Colson shared that hope and confidence in the gospel as he described the present day as "an exciting time for evangelicals."

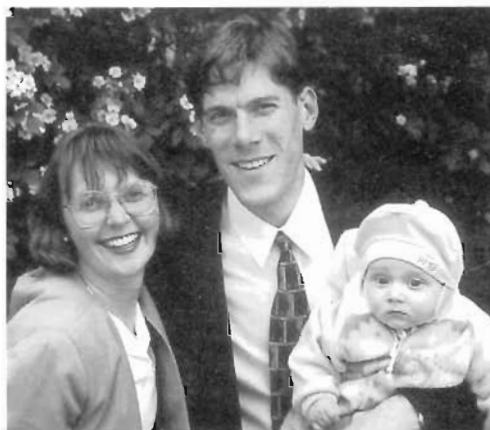
# dying school

done, the school will not last much longer. But is it needed? I'm convinced the Bible school is a key to renewing the spiritual life in the Lutheran church.

I was reminded of this great need to bring people back to the reality and truth of God's Word as I was talking to a young first year seminary student from Warsaw this summer. He challenged my belief that Moses wrote the Pentateuch after what he learned in seminary. "It just doesn't make sense," he thought. Young people don't know what the Bible teaches and are easily deceived. They don't realize that the Bible, Old and New Testament, can be applied to our lives today. It's not just history but about how to live! Yes, I'm convinced the Bible school needs to continue.

Now is an important time as the "vision" turns into day-to-day hard work and that means commitment. We seek your prayers for wisdom and insight for this work as well

as protection from the evil one whose ways are very crafty. There are many obstacles ahead and for that reason we must continue to be dependent upon the Lord's strength and wisdom and not our own.



—Pastor Tim Hinrichs  
AFLC missionary on loan to East European Missions Network  
Cesky Tesin, Czech Republic

He spoke of the great opportunities that exist if evangelicals are faithful to the call of God, bringing truth into the marketplace.

Bill Bright declared, "The best is before us. ... Let us come up with creative ideas to saturate the world with the gospel."

An expectation that God will do mighty things was also shared by Stephen Olford. He saw the value of the conference in the generating of a greater consciousness that God is still alive and on the throne; a heightened sense of community; and much practical training.

In spite of the bigness of the event, personal matters were dealt with. Philemon Choi from Hong Kong spoke on the importance of the quality of the evangelist's personal life with God. He called on the evangelists to, in this "age of speed," create space for intimacy with God.

Taking care to spend time with God, and also working at spending time with your family, were themes impressed upon Pastor Rasmussen at the conference. He was also struck by the unity that existed at the conference in the midst of the diversity. This came through most clearly for him at the closing communion service. He stated, "The communion service on Sunday evening was one of the top highlights. Imagine 209 nations represented under the body of Christ. Every color of people there; com-

pletely unified because of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

The event had unity because it was an event with one simple purpose: to prepare the participants to use new and more effective ways to present the gospel. They were taught, though, that the most effective means of reaching lost people is more small than big. It involves one person sharing Jesus with another. "Evangelism happens one at a time," said Chuck Colson.

The evangelists were reminded that no matter what way is used or in which language the gospel is communicated, the message remains Christ, crucified and risen again. "Whenever we get our focus off the Lord Jesus Christ we're in trouble," declared Bill Bright. The simplicity of the message and the importance of focusing on the cross of Christ were lessons that spoke strongly to Pastor Rasmussen.

The event provided a glimpse of some of the things God is doing in the world today. It was a time of being reminded that He is an awesome God who is doing great things all over the world. And yet, it was a reminder as well that the gospel is spread in a simple way throughout the world: one person lives out the truth and lets another person know the good news of Jesus and His love.



# Starting over

— *Pastor Gary Jorgenson*  
*Faith Lutheran*  
*Durant, Oklahoma*

In June of 1999, our family moved from Ottawa, Illinois to begin serving the new home mission congregation in Durant, Oklahoma. I have only served new congregations since my ordination in 1982. This is the third new mission congregation I have served. I have often been asked, "What's it like serving a home mission church?" In many ways it is no different than serving an established church. However, there are some unique opportunities when the pastor and congregation are starting over.

## Adjustment and Challenge

These are the first words that come to my mind as I think of starting over in a new congregation. For us last year, it meant selling our home and finding a new place to live. The most difficult thing about a move is having to say "goodbye" to people you've come to love so dearly.

Once in our new home, there is the challenge of adjusting to our new surroundings. As parents, we are especially concerned that our children will adjust successfully. We pray earnestly that they will find and make good Christian friends.

As a pastor, there is the adjustment and challenge of ending one ministry and beginning another. Familiar surroundings and expectations in a work well-known changes to be unfamiliar and having to minister to people yet to be known. Sometimes a move brings a culture quite different from anything previously encountered. Those cultural differences may mean that previously effective ways of doing things may now no

**In home missions**  
Durant, Oklahoma

longer work well, if at all. Learning to adapt is important. I am reminded early and often of my dependence upon the Lord alone.

Another challenge is balancing my vision of how the church should be with that of the charter members. A pastor naturally comes to a new congregation with some sort of vision or ideal for it. But members in my congregation also have an ideal in their minds about how the church should be. In most cases they have struggled long and hard with the decision to leave their former church. For some it may have been the only church in which they have held membership, but situations required a change. When such people band together to form a new church, they too, have an ideal in their mind about the life and ministry of the new fellowship. As pastor and parishioners pray together for the Lord's guidance, ask Him to

**In world missions**  
Lisben, Portugal



**Pastor David and Sarah Nelson and family.**

**W**e are using the last few months in Brazil to put some closure to this special time in our lives. We have enjoyed so many wonderful experiences and worked with so many interesting people. We are trying to visit several of the congregations in our state to say our goodbyes and express our gratitude.

Our target departure date for Lisbon, Portugal, is either the fourth or fifth of December of this year. That will give us a few weeks after



give them a mutual love and respect, and seek godly wisdom to conduct the new ministry according to biblical principles and not human opinions; then there is unity in spirit and work.

### **Excitement and Joy**

So far, I have shared of some of the challenges and adjustments to serving a new work, but there is also much excitement and some tremendous joys associated with the work as well. Any move has its difficulties, but I believe pastors and their families have it better than most other people who move. We have the privilege of a group of people waiting to welcome us with open arms; people who are genuinely excited about our arrival. They can't wait for us to "roll up our sleeves" and join them in the ministry to which God has led us all. Their joy and excitement is infectious.

Because there is so much work to do in a new congregation and fewer people to do it, I recognize early the importance of each individual, the commitment they make and the gifts they bring to the work. It is natural to

develop strong relationships with each other when working close together. The resulting strong "family" feeling in most new congregations is a real plus.

Evangelism is also a joyful exercise for many in a new congregation. The enthusiasm we feel for what the Lord is doing in our midst is something we don't want to keep to ourselves. We desire others to share in the joy we've found and the deep fellowship we enjoy, and the satisfaction we experience as we worship and serve together in the cause of the gospel. As the Lord works, lives change and new members are added into the fellowship. The joy and excitement multiplies.

My prayer is that the Lord will make me sensitive to adjustments that need to be made, confident of His sufficiency to help me meet each new challenge, continually excited about the adventure of serving Him, and joyful for all the blessings He showers upon me and my family as we minister together in His kingdom.



## **Persevering in Portugal**

*—Pastor Craig Johnson  
Editor, Lutheran Ambassador*

### **Report on the AFLC church in the land of the explorers**

**T**hey were a Lutheran congregation and a Lutheran pastor looking for some fellowship. They had obtained some information on the different Lutheran church bodies in the United States. As they read they came across a group called, "the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations." The information given about the group intrigued

them and they wanted to hear more. They wrote to the AFLC and received further information. Over time correspondence took place. Visitors came to Portugal such as the AFLC President, Robert Lee; missionary to Brazil, Connely Dyrud; and AFLC World Missions Director Eugene Enderlein. This led to, in the beginning of January 1999, the start of the AFLC work in Portugal through Our Savior's Lutheran Church of Lisbon.

During the first weekend of August 2000 I had the opportunity to visit Lisbon and worship with the AFLC congregation there. Lis-

(continued on page 10)

the graduation ceremonies here at the Bible school and seminary to wrap up the final goodbyes and packing. At the present time Dave is teaching two New Testament Greek classes and one class on I and II Corinthians. He is also teaching the confirmation class at the Central Church. Sarah is a Sunday school teacher and has weekly Bible clubs at our home for the children of the Miriam Infant Home. She also is home schooling our children. Together we are leading two separate couples groups. One consists

mainly of couples from the Central Church and the other of non-Christian couples from the community.

We recently discovered that we can go to Portugal even before the end of the three-month visa process. As Americans, we can visit Portugal for up to three months without a visa (just a passport). At the end of that time we should have been granted the work visa. If not, we would have to visit the nearest Portuguese Consulate (in Spain) and finish the paperwork. In Portugal, we will be involved with Our Savior's Lutheran

congregation in Lisbon. We expect to continue services in Portuguese and begin a second service in English.

Please pray for us that we will finish our time in Brazil well. May God use our friendships and outreaches to help people come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and be strengthened in that relationship. Please pray also as Pastors Enderlein and Artur Villares meet together with Dave in Lisbon to make plans for the future of the AFLC in Portugal and as they look for suitable housing for the Nelsons.



The AFLC congregation in Lisbon, Portugal. Pastor Artur Villares and his wife and daughter are in the center.



## PORTUGAL

bon is at the same time both very modern and very ancient. New construction is evident. Shopping malls with the latest designs and stores can easily be found. But the city also has monuments, buildings and neighborhoods that date back a number of centuries.

Portugal takes pride in its heritage as the empire that sent out explorers. Monuments exist to Vasco de Gama and others who went out on voyages of discovery. Exploration of religion, however, is not something many in the country engage in.

Pastor Artur Villares serves the congregation in Lisbon. He also teaches at a university in Porto, a city which is an approximately three hour drive away from Lisbon. He describes the Portuguese, and Western European, attitude toward religion being one of little interest. Not many "explorers" are found. "Religion is not a major issue. It is not talked about. It is seen as something practiced by the 'uneducated.'" According to Pastor Villares religious people are often viewed as jokes and fanatics.

Portugal is historically a Roman Catholic country, but the percentage who would be called devout Catholics is low. Generally freedom of religion is provided. Evangelical churches are allowed to organize, but as enterprises which must pay taxes. This is in contrast to the Catholic church which does not pay taxes in Portugal.

Meeting places for a congregation can be a challenge to come by in Lisbon. Our Savior's Lutheran is able to use a couple of small rooms that are located on the bottom floor of a building. A member of the congregation lives upstairs. The one room is used for their worship services while another room has a small kitchen and a place for sharing food and fellowship. The site is within Lisbon, not too far from the city's

downtown.

Because he lives so far away from Lisbon, Pastor Villares is limited in how often he can be with the congregation. This has limited how much the congregation does in meeting together and reaching out to the community. They are hoping that Missionary David Nelson and his family, currently in Brazil, will be able to join them in the near future. They believe this could help consolidate the congregation, provide more regular meeting times and give direction and encouragement in spreading the gospel in Lisbon. Pastor Villares hopes to eventually be involved in beginning a new work in the city of Porto.

The current situation is not easy. Feelings of isolation exist. It is a small congregation wanting to share the good news of Jesus in a big city that shows little interest in hearing the message. They face challenges, but by God's grace and trusting in His strength they persevere.

They appreciate prayer support from brothers and sisters in Christ who are part of other AFLC congregations throughout the world. Visits, letters and e-mail are also appreciated. (Pastor Artur Villares' e-mail address is [rdd22304@mail.telepac.pt](mailto:rdd22304@mail.telepac.pt).) Encouragement and communication received from others reminds the small congregation that they are part of a big family.

In Portugal, the land of explorers, many still come seeking to discover new things. Some come from other lands hoping to find better jobs and a new way of life. This has made Lisbon a very multi-cultural city. Tourists come to explore the beauty and culture of this historic place. Savior's Lutheran is praying, and asking others to pray with them, that many in Lisbon will discover the truth of the gospel and the beauty of a relationship with Jesus.



# The Law of Returns

## principles of planting and harvesting

*"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:7-9).*

**W**e are in the midst of harvest season. The abundant wheat crop has been combined and we are awaiting the harvest of the beans and corn. To no one's surprise, each field produced a crop according to what kind of seed had been planted. The fields that were cared for and cultivated produced magnificent crops, while those that were not attended to, suffered from weeds and poorer yields.

In the Galatians text we are reminded that God cannot be fooled. What we do now, really will affect us later in this life and more importantly, in the next life. Often we can fool those around us for awhile, perhaps even for a lifetime. We can pretend to live a certain way, while really saying and doing things differently in private. But eventually most people catch on because things show up down the line. However, God knows right now how things really are in our lives. He notices what we are sowing in our minds and what kind of lifestyles we are cultivating. It is often so easy to convince ourselves that a little bit of "wild oats" will not matter and that it will not mature into a crop that has to be dealt with. But it remains true that "A man reaps what he sows."

We have opportunity to do "spiritual sowing." Galatians presents two different options for sowing: to please our sinful nature or to please the Spirit. The first option results in destruction. James 1:14,

15 details the journey of this sowing. It starts with evil desire, then the desire sticks in the mind until we become enticed and infatuated with doing or having it. After the seed/desire is firmly planted, James says that "it conceives and gives birth to sin." The idea has become an action and now, if it still is unchecked, it develops into a lifestyle that leads to spiritual death.

Different sins have different levels of consequences in this life, but they all further open doors in our lives to more destructive sins and they give Satan greater footholds in our lives. Without repentance and confession, our hearts grow hard and we ignore our conscience and the Spirit until we will not hear God's voice. Without a miracle, we will utterly reject God and die in rebellion.

Thankfully, God miraculously rescued us by reaching down to this earth and dying on the cross for us in order to offer forgiveness and new life. Galatians encourages us to sow seeds according to this new life in God's Spirit. By investing ourselves, our time and our resources into what pleases God, we will develop and cultivate a lifestyle that enriches this life and evidences our inherited eternal life in Christ.



— Intern Pastor Steve Carlson  
Dalton Free Lutheran Parish  
Dalton, Minnesota  
taken from Parish News & Views

# Phase Two

## *in East European missions*

**A**t exactly 7:15 a.m. on September 6, I stopped at the old but beautifully refurbished parsonage of Faith Lutheran Church in south Minneapolis to pick up Chaplain Roland Tennison to take him to his first class at the Free Lutheran Seminary overlooking Medicine Lake.

A young pastor in the Estonian Lutheran Church and chaplain of the Estonian Armed Services, Roland and his wife Ayri and their two children had arrived the day before after the long flight from Estonia. He is beginning a two-year study program for a Masters of Theology degree which will better prepare him for his ministry as Chief of Chaplains of the Estonian Armed Services. I sat with him and the other students being welcomed with a stirring message by Dr. Francis Monseth on the power, inspiration and authority of Scripture based on II Timothy 3:14-17.

We went down to the Bible school and seminary cafeteria for a cup of coffee. I turned around and suddenly Maria Plotnikova and Irina Bubenshchikova greeted me with big hugs. They along with Andrie Kamov are the first Russian students to attend AFLBS. They came to the Lord through our Friendship Language Camp ministry in Petrozavodsk, Russia. We have known them for several years and have seen them change from atheism to belief and from belief to commitment to Jesus Christ as their only Savior and Lord. They were welcomed earlier today by AFLBS students who knew them from their participation in the language camp. Over the years, several Bible school students have taught in this camp and have been instrumental in leading others to Jesus.

These are a part of a growing family of East European students God has sent to the U.S. for concentrated study of Scripture and to grow in their relationship with Him. Upon returning to their home countries, they will serve in full-time ministry or as active committed lay people who love Jesus and will witness to Christ and be used to reach their home countries.

We at East European Missions Network

thank God for the Bible school and seminary who have enthusiastically reached out to embrace these students and to walk with them through the difficult times of cross-cultural adjustment they experience. This year there are about a dozen students at the AFLC Bible School and Seminary. There are about 10 more in other schools.

We are grateful for Pastor Tim and Renata Hinrichs who continue in their exciting evangelistic ministry in the Czech Republic and Poland. Pastor Tim and Renata, a Polish citizen, have been called to direct the new Bible school in Dziegielow, Poland. As part of the Center for Mission and Evangelism, the school is the fruit of fifty years of prayer. This is also the ministry that organizes the famous Dziegielow Tent Evangelism Crusade, the largest of its kind in all of eastern and central Europe. The crusade has hosted internationally

known evangelists such as Dr. Ulrich Parsany (the Billy Graham of Germany), Luis Palau and others. The Hinrichs taught a seminar on the "Calling of God."

Seldom have I seen a work develop as rapidly as one in Latvia. Pastor Martins and Gunta Irbes grew up in the American-Latvian community in the U.S. and Canada and speak fluent Latvian. This was a gift of God and by God's grace they are developing an important ministry in northern

Latvia. Many people are coming to the Lord and people from other areas are coming for counsel. Recently one of the daughters of their congregations married a young American-Latvian who is the director of the Seaman's Mission in Riga. I have been especially grateful to see the Irbes work in the mentally handicapped and elderly homes. During communist times, these people were completely shunted. Dressed in rags and hungry, they were an embarrassment to the regime that told the world that socialists don't have handicapped people. What a difference Jesus makes! They love the people and the people love them while others offer much spiritual opposition. Prayers for them and their fami-

**"These are part of a growing family of East-European students God has sent to the U.S. for concentrated study of Scripture"**



*—Pastor Don Richman  
Director, East European Missions Network  
Bloomington, MN*

lies are much appreciated.

In general the ministry in Eastern Europe is entering what I call phase two. The first phase, beginning in 1993, was organization and developing church structures that would be viable under the new freedoms. They needed to appoint new leaders who had not been compromised under the old Marxist system. Now they need to pray for and train workers. They need pastors and lay leaders who can give biblical and Christ-centered direction to the variety of ministries that are emerging. They also need to build. The colleges and Bible schools that EEMN helped develop are at a stage in their growth where they need buildings. We are praying for funding for them; especially for the Latvian Evangelical Christian Academy in Jurmala and the Tartu Academy of Theology in Estonia.

EEMN is organized around the conviction that God, who has called us through the Lord Jesus Christ, desires and invites the praise and worship of all the nations (ethos or peoples). Often we like to shape God in our own image. We like to envision Him as caring only for us, for our needs and for our comfort, treating Him like a "tribal deity." But He is a great and marvelous God, a God of grace and salvation for the nations. His passion is for the nations.

We are commanded to "declare His glory among the nations, and His marvelous works among the peoples" (Psalm 96:3). "From the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, the name of the Lord is to be praised" (Psalm 113:3). To praise Him they must know Him and be saved by Him. To know Him is to hear His call to declare His name, to invest ourselves in the great evangelistic task. Isaiah 49:6 says, "I will give you as a light to the nations that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." Jesus summed up the great mission theme with the simple but compelling words of the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

The East European Missions Network invites your prayer and, as He leads, your participation in bringing the Word of God, the gospel of Jesus and His love to bear upon the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. God has marvelously opened these doors to proclaim His love, His truth, and His eternal praise and glory.



## From the Abels in Campo Grande, Brazil



Pictured is Tamba Abel with some of the ladies who gathered for a tea at Community Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Campo Grande. Every Sunday afternoon Jonathan teaches 17 guitar players and four keyboard players how to play church songs.



Pictured is Missionary Jonathan Abel leading in devotions at the end of the March for Jesus. It was followed by a meeting and concert. Also on the stage were city leaders. The mayor of Campo Grande is pictured third from the right. Jonathan is now organizing the Jesus Film crusade in their area of the city.



Pictured is Tommy Abel riding on the car during the March for Jesus last August. An estimated 8,000 people participated. The Abel's daughter, April, completed her fourth surgery on her arm and the doctor thinks she is healing without the expected fifth surgery.



It seems we have worked ourselves out of a job. Our mission work in Mexico entered a new stage on September 3, 2000, with the ordination of Ricardo Varela and Fernando Herrera, both members of *Feunte del Agua de la Vida* (Spring of Living Water) church. It has been our prayer since the very first day that this fledgling congregation of new Christians in Aguascalientes would mature to the place where they could support their own pastor and conduct their own affairs. Rejoice with us and praise the Lord. He has been faithful.

Let me back up a few years and share with you just why this event means so much to us. Fifteen years ago, when we first began the work in Aguascalientes, the Lord gave us an inner vision of the church He wanted to plant in this city. One day, while looking for a house in which to live, we came upon an old, abandoned, half-ruined building. Looking in the window we saw a string of seven rooms opening onto a connecting patio, all of which were in a shambles with dirt, rubble, crumbling walls, and plenty of vermin and their "calling card." The other side of the patio was occupied by a witch doctor.

As we looked through the window and saw this mess with our physical eyes, our spiritual eyes saw something else — a church. We clearly saw those rooms filled with Sunday school children and that patio filled with worshippers praising the Lord on a Sunday morning. Debbie and I looked at each other with tears in our eyes. We knew this was where God would plant the first Lutheran church in Aguascalientes.

We rented the building that day and immediately began the physical work of cleaning and repairing it, and the spiritual work of filling it with new believers. The following fifteen years of "diligent occupying"

is a story all its own which we'll reserve for another time. But yes, God has been faithful, and Spring of Living Water is now a free and living Lutheran congregation with a trained and qualified Mexican pastor of its own. It has even begun to produce its own missionaries!

#### **Meet the two men and their families**

Ricardo has earned two degrees at the Mexican Lutheran Bible Institute; one in Christian education, and the other in pastoral theology. His wife Adriana also earned a

# New pastors for Mexico

#### **Meet the two men and their families**

degree in youth work, and shoulders the burden of ministry together with her husband while taking care of their two little girls, Jimena and Marlene.

Fernando and his wife, Monse, both earned degrees in missions at the same Bible institute. They traveled to Brazil to gain experience in cross-cultural ministry and language learning while serving a part of their internship under the AFLC missionaries there. After their return to Mexico, Fernando continued studying pastoral theology courses by extension. They have two boys, Fernandito and Alexandre.

Both Ricardo and Fernando, along with their wives are already busy in full-time ministry. Ricardo is serving as pastor of this, his home



Fifteen years later, this is the patio once filled with rubble that is now the church home for Spring of Living Water congregation.



The ordination of Rev. Fernando Herrera and Rev. Ricardo Varela (seated). (L. to R.) Rev. Todd Schierkolk, Rev. Dan Giles, Rev. Robert Lee, Rev. Eugene Enderlein, Rev. Samuel Flores, Rev. Milton Flores, Rev. Guadalupe Calderon, and Rev. Mario Garcia.

church in Aguascalientes. Fernando teaches music at a Christian school in the same city while he works on raising the support that is needed to send him to the foreign field.

The ordination on September 3, of Ricardo and Fernando was the climax of a cooperative effort that has involved missionaries from AFLC churches, not only in Mexico but even in other countries or working under other missions. The Mexican Lutheran Bible Institute is directed by World Mission Prayer League missionary Jan Tollefson, from Vang, North Dakota, whose home church is now AFLC. Missionaries Dan Giles and Todd Schierkolk teach courses either by extension or in residence at the Bible school. It was through contact with AFLC Brazil missionary, Pastor Paul Abel, who came to Mexico on a Partners In Mission Outreach trip while on furlough, that Fernando and Monse decided to serve part of their internship in Brazil. While in Brazil, besides evangelism, preaching, and teaching under the direction of Pastor Connely Dyrud and the Brazilian pastors, they took advanced courses in New Testament Greek at the AFLC Brazil seminary taught in Portuguese by Pastor David Nelson.

We really are just one big, happy family!

For the ordination Sunday, we were blessed to have many visitors with us. AFLC President Robert Lee, World Missions Director Gene Enderlein, and World Missions Committee Chairman Vernon Russum joined us that Sunday. Pastor Samuel Flores from Leon and Pastor Milton Flores from Celaya also shared the day with us, as did several friends from the Lutheran Bible Institute in Mazatlan. WMPL missionaries from Puebla, Darwin and MaryAnn Jackson, joined us. Their

home congregation is Elim Lutheran in Lake Stevens, Washington. Sharing this day with so many of our friends and coworkers made it even more special. Pastors Lee and Enderlein did a great job of reading the Scriptures in Spanish.

The spiritual battles we all experienced during the weeks leading up to the ordinations were extraordinarily difficult, but that just reassured us that this was indeed an important event in the kingdom of God. We appreciate so much your prayers and support through the years that have made this day possible.

Please continue to pray for the church in Aguascalientes, for Pastors Ricardo and Fernando and their families, and for the Giles and Schierkolk missionary families as we begin a new work in the city of Jerez, Zacatecas. We know that God will again be faithful to His purpose. May we be found faithful as well.



— Missionary Dan Giles  
Apartado Postal 535

Jerez, Zacatecas, Mexico

e-mail: [giles@jereznet.com.mx](mailto:giles@jereznet.com.mx)

[www.members.truepath.com/aflcmexico](http://www.members.truepath.com/aflcmexico)



Pastors Giles and Herrera.

# The changed AMECAM

The AFLC-Brazil ministry  
to street teens

**T**he city of Campo Mourão was operating a work farm called AMECAM for troubled teens. They hired a full-time staff of just about every kind of profession one could think of. There were teachers to help the teens adjust, instructors for art and music, coaches and technicians to teach agriculture, woodwork, silk-screen and poultry. The staff was completed with a cook, farm manager and a custodian. In spite of the professional staff, the situation daily grew worse. Fights broke out, stealing, attempted rape and smoking were normal occurrences. Drug use was high and the police patrolled the area. The city's mayor was called on to do something or else AMECAM would have to close.

He called me. The mayor had been acquainted with our ministry through the years with the Miriam Infant Home. I asked for some time to think about his request to take on this responsibility.

I shared the request with Missionary Connely Joel Dyrud and we began to think and pray. I already knew in my heart that this would be one more excellent way to share the Lord with these troubled teens.

When Missionary Dyrud and I toured the work farm, he asked me if I really thought that we should take on this challenging work. I felt a little like the prophet Elisha. While walking around the farm a group of boys walked behind us and in jeering words yelled: "Hallelujah brother, glory to God! Amen." That very moment I thought to myself, "You may be ridiculing the Lord now, but in just two months, you

will be standing in line, singing and thanking Him for your meals."

The first item of business we did as administrators of AMECAM was to let go of all but two of the enormous staff. We kept the cook and Suray, who at the time was the supervisor, but now promoted to general co-coordinator. Students from the Bible school and seminary were scheduled to work with the youth. Rather than taking two months to see the change in the boys who taunted us, in just two weeks there was a complete change in attitude.

Suray describes what happened. "When the team from the seminary and Bible school of the AFLC took over AMECAM, some drastic changes took place. First it was changed from the camplike atmos-



**Suray Dorta de Lima, co-coordinator of AMECAM with her husband Edson and sons Anderson and Alison. AMECAM's purpose is to help youth from dysfunctional homes and those in high-risk situations by offering guidance for their physical, educational, psychological and spiritual development.**

phere to the implanting of Christian teaching in both the schooling and in the work place. With the implantation of Christian morals and the reward system, the students began to shape up and have now been able to go on field trips both educational and fun. They also have been able to participate in our Bible camp activities. We no longer have to search the kids as they come and go. The violence and smoking have all but vanished,



**Break time for the youth. Soccer and volleyball are also popular recreational activities.**

as has the presence of drugs and the police who patrolled the area.”

This change results from the introduction of absolute truth. Romans 1:16 says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.” The gospel is transforming and saving these young lives, not only from the misery of their physical and material existence, but also from their spiritual hopelessness. The team from the Bible school and seminary work together and they share the same vision of work and growth for AMECAM. They are not interested in themselves, but have a love for this work and become involved in their lives. The impact on their spiritual life is important for the development of integrity, social skills and other good character qualities as they prepare to return to society. When Jesus is working in hearts, lives change. Second Corinthians 5:17 is demonstrated: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.”

Suray schedules the daily work activities for about 80 currently in the program and helps tutor the teens as needed. She says, “The work that has begun through the Free Lutheran mission continues to run smoothly. The only hardship or difficulty is financial. We continue to pray that this work will go forward with open doors so that we will be able to help many more teens find Christ and bring some dignity into their lives.” Because of your contributions, our Student Work Fund on campus helps us support this ministry. Because of this, we are able to continue to send our student teams to AMECAM.

I pray that in these few words, you have been able to learn a little bit more about one more area of ministry of the AFLC in Brazil. Pray for us. Pray for the youth. May the Lord continue to change the lives of many more teens to the glory of our Lord.



**—Pastor Oseias Camara  
AFLC Schools Administrator  
Campo Mourão, Brazil**



**The main building on the AMECAM property which houses the office, craft rooms, classrooms and cafeteria.**



**The bus is provided by the city of Campo Mourão and takes the teens out to the farm each day from their homes.**



**The large garden keeps the youth busy and provides for the kitchen, the Bible school and seminary cafeteria, plus the youth can take vegetables home for their families.**



## Pastor Paul and Becky Abel on furlough in Osceola, Wisconsin, until December

As a family we've been traveling this summer visiting with longtime friends and making special new friends as well. We enjoy sharing about our 15-year ministry in Brazil and have realized again the ongoing nature of the task to which God has called us. At times we feel overwhelmed by the working of God through us in bringing His message to Brazilians and we praise Him for using ordinary people like us. We look back and see the many blessings and results of allowing the Lord to form our convictions and to lead us forward in ministry. We also realize our dependence on the prayers of those faithful saints who have remembered us throughout our lives.

We are spending a little more

time in the mission home now that fall has arrived. Our deputation programs include every weekend and most Wednesdays, plus a nine-day trip each month to areas further from home. Our children are already homesick and ready to return to Brazil. We have purchased our tickets and expect to arrive in Brazil on Christmas Eve.

Paul continues to experience some health problems and unusual tiredness. Pray for him, that God would provide the right kind of help. We also appreciate your prayers for us as we try to decide what would be the best schooling alternative for our boys as we return to Brazil. We also give thanks to God for the dedication of our lay leaders in Brazil and ask for your prayers for them.

## Parish education wants your mission story

Are you a member of an AFLC congregation who has served as a missionary on a foreign mission field? Wouldn't it be wonderful for others to hear about the work God has done through His people around the world? AFLC Parish Education invites you to submit typed, handwritten or tape-recorded short stories about your personal experiences and God's work on the mission field. The board of parish education would like to compile several of these stories in a book that could be used for family devotions or opening chapel time in Sunday school. Contact parish education at 1-763-545-5631 by December 1, 2000 to let us know whether or not you would be interested in sharing your experiences.

**Update:** Thanks to many who have contributed toward the printing of the Romans adult Bible study. A total of \$2,965 has been received as of September 7. Approximately \$2,435 additional is needed.

AFLC Parish Education  
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Minneapolis, MN 55441

## AFLC India opens school

St. Paul's Lutheran School in Chirala, India is open and has 180 students enrolled. The school is located on the property owned by the AFLC India. The orphanage and the national offices are also on that property. Twenty of the students are from the orphanage. St. Paul's Lutheran School, a private and Christian institution serves students from grades one through seven.



**Unwrap  
some new**

## Advent and Christmas resources

Advent resources and Christmas programs are available from AFLC Parish Education. Descriptions of these resources have been sent to all AFLC Sunday school superintendents and can be sent to other individuals upon request. Materials include a variety of Christmas programs for all ages, Advent devotional readings and activities for families, Advent calendars, and a collection of Christmas carols for groups.

## Flood assistance to North Dakota now sent to India

People in Grand Forks, North Dakota will never forget the 1997 flood and the generous outpouring of help from the AFLC family. Trinity Lutheran received about \$30,000 which repaired their physical plant and the largest portion of the sum was given out to parishioners who were heavily hurt by the flood. About \$5,000 of that fund remained unused.

At a recent deacon board meeting, Pastor Bruce Dalager shared the information sent out by the AFLC World Missions Department on the serious floods in the state of Andhra Pradesh in southern India. The president of the AFLC India had reported that the August floods affected all villages in which the AFLCI works. Many homes were destroyed and eight villages were submerged in the flood waters. The missions committee had already authorized the immediate assistance of \$7,000.

According to Pastor Dalager: "When I told this to the board, they said, 'We know what it's like. Let's help as much as we can.'" One member shared that they were wondering what to do with the unused money in the flood fund as they wanted it to be helpful in a disaster-related situation. When this came along it was unanimously agreed to send a \$5,000 check to AFLC World Missions for the India flood relief.

*Celebrate Jesus at Christmas*  
by Kimberly Ingalls Reese

Seasonal devotions for Advent through Epiphany bring the family together to contemplate and celebrate the birth of Jesus. You and your family can discuss, interact and focus on Jesus through Scripture readings, familiar songs and hymns, devotional thoughts, the lighting of the Advent wreath, and building a nativity scene. Special family projects and service ideas are included. The cost is \$8.



# Lessons from my grandchildren

— *Lola Lindell*  
*Triumph Lutheran*  
*Ferndale, Washington*

**W**hen God brings children into homes, parents begin the most important work of their lives.

Each stage of development is a new adventure into the unknown. Likely most parents, when thinking back on an earlier stage, have caught themselves thinking, "I wish I would have known then what I know now." One of the joys of being a grandparent is getting, in a way, a second chance at being a parent.

I have so many precious memories with my grandchildren and the number of memories grows each time we are together. One day my oldest granddaughter remarked that sometimes their house is messy. I answered, "You should see my house. I left it in a mess." She looked at me and asked, "But Grandma, how can your house get messy: there's only two people living there and we have six?" Another time I was asked, "Grandma, how come your hands are so wrinkled and bony? My hands aren't like that. Why do you have extra skin on your elbows? When I pinch the skin together, it doesn't go down."

When we spend the night at our son's home, grandma sleeps with all four grandchildren, usually on the floor. Each has a book for me to read and then we say our prayers. One

night an insect bite had caused a swollen red ear for a little grandson. I didn't think about praying for his ear until after we finished our prayers. I mentioned we should pray for him and before he said, "Yes," his hands were folded in prayer. His faith was immediate — a good lesson for this grandma.

Many times a grandparent is the only connection to the Lord. Be a "prayer warrior." Warrior means: one engaged or experienced in battle. This truly is a

"To ward off the chill of winter in our souls, we are going to have to bank and stoke the fires of our memories with many cords of experiences. None makes the heart warmer or glow deeper than being God's woman as a grandmother."

— *Joyce Landorf*

## Book Review

*Grandparenting, The Agony and the Ecstasy*, Jay Kesler, Servant Publications, 1993.

Growing older does have its rewards. However, age can also bring fears and anxiety. One cause may come from worry about one's usefulness as an older person. There is the fear of being "put on the shelf" in a youth-oriented society. I just finished reading this book that speaks on that subject and I was encouraged.

It assured me that my "increasing age" and my place as a grandparent was extremely important. Mr. Kesler writes that grandparents "can be the conduit through which expressions of faith can come to young people." He adds, "Today's society, as we see it, is becoming more and more corrupt in every

description of a grandparent.

When I am no longer here on earth, what will my grandchildren remember about their grandma? Will it be that she was a good cook, her house was clean and she was always busy? Or will it be that she talked about Jesus, she was loving, she had time to play with us and she not only talked to us but she listened?

Grandchildren absorb everything we say and do. Deuteronomy 4:9 offers wise counsel, "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, ... but make them known to your sons and your grandsons."



way. But human nature has not changed and God's Word has not changed. The experiences the Lord has brought us through, what we've learned through them, as we share these stories with our grandchildren they will know we believe in an unchanging God who is capable and faithful to meet every need."

Read this book and receive ideas on how to share your spiritual values with your grandchildren. Other topics include: how and when to intervene in a crisis; how to provide emotional support if parents divorce; and how to build relationships across the miles. Simply stated, it's a must read book for grandparents.

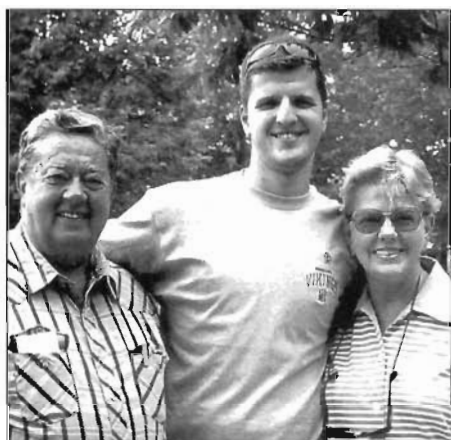
— *Faith Nelson*  
*National WMF President*

*Family Celebrations at Christmas*  
 by Ann Hibbard

Help center your family on Christ during the month of December with inspiring and creative family devotions for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. Devotions for two years include brief introduction and meditation, Scripture reading (plus further Scripture study for adults), discussion questions, prayer, hymn, and an activity of making symbols to put on an Advent tree. Also instructions for creating an Advent tree banner, a Jesse tree, an Advent wreath, and symbol patterns. The cost is \$8.

## Ministry Training Institute begins

Four students began the inaugural year of MTI on the AFLBS campus on September 6, 2000. Missionary Todd Schierkolk, serving as interim director before returning to Mexico in January, reports the four students are: Tom Lumpio, Eden Prairie, Minnesota; Alex Yambrick, Siren, Wisconsin; Carla Mattson, Greenbush, Minnesota; and Lidia Herrera, Aguascalientes, Mexico.



Pastor and Mrs. Jack Aamodt, Bloomington, Minnesota, are the American "parents" of Elias Wehmuth, Brazil. He is part of the largest representation ever of international students at AFLBS. Eight nations are represented with Latvia having the largest representation — seven students. Four Norwegians and three Russians are part of the twenty-four students from around the world, bringing with them an urgent desire to study and grow in the Lord and His Word. Japan is represented for the first time at AFLBS with two students. Canada and Eastern Europe complete the list of home citizenship.

Eric Rasmussen, the head of food service at AFLBS, prepared the first official meal of the fall semester. Helping him were his two full-time assistants: Schawonne Richardson (left) and Katrin Winkelman, both recent AFLBS graduates. International students also work in the cafeteria as part of their work-study program.



AFLBS welcomed the second largest junior class (84) on September 2, 2000. Sixty-two seniors joined them on September 5, and classes began on the following day. Guest teachers for the Bible school's fall semester are Pastors Jim Haga and Jim Johnson, both from the metropolitan area.



Pictured is seminarian Dana Coyle with his wife Heather. Dana is the new men's residence head at AFLBS. The men's dorm is full with some rooms occupied by three students. The MTI students live off campus.



## New Addresses

**Pastor Jim Ritter**, serving Living Water Christian Church in Parker, Colorado, is living at 5655 S. Wenatchee St., Aurora, CO 80015; phone (h) 720-870-6262 and (o) 303-840-6830.

**Pastor Alan Arneson**, serving Faith Lutheran in Ottawa, Illinois, is living at 1407 Navajo Dr., Ottawa, IL 61350; phone (h) 815-431-9130 and (o) 815-434-7071.

**Pastor Mark Homp**, serving Good Shepherd Lutheran in Ponca City, Oklahoma, is living at 164 Fern Dr., Ponca City, OK 74604.

**Pastor Fred Faughn**, resigned as pastor of St. John's Lutheran of Lovi, Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania, and is serving Living Water and Body of Christ Lutheran Parish in Tucson, Arizona. His address is 4020 S. Snapdragon St., Tucson, AZ 85730.

**Pastor John Mundfrom**, serving Spencer Creek Lutheran in Eugene, Oregon, is living at 86286 Pine Grove Rd., Eugene, OR 97402; phone 541-687-8643.

**Pastor Steve Mundfrom**, serving Calvary Free Lutheran in Arlington, South Dakota, is living at 304 Hopkins Dr., Arlington, SD 57212; phone (h) 605-983-9976 and (o) 605-983-5254.



**Brenda Stilley**, the new women's residence head, took time out from helping girls move in to their dorm rooms and joined the parents at the Saturday luncheon on September 2. Brenda is the former youth worker at Ruthfred Lutheran in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania.

## New Illinois congregation joins AFLC

Redeemer Lutheran Church of Ashton, Illinois is the newest congregation to join the AFLC. Located about 26 miles west of DeKalb, Ashton is a farming community. They gather for worship on Sundays and Thursday evenings for Bible study. The young congregation had been served by Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt of Grace Lutheran in DeKalb until he moved to Onalaska, Wisconsin.

**Weslaco, Texas — Faith** Lutheran, 300 S. Border St., invites winter Texans to join them in worship on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Sunday school. Pastor Louis Balderach reports that last February, the communion service was attended by people from 56 congregations, 15 states and two Canadian provinces. Bill Brandt leads the adult Bible class which currently is studying the book of Exodus. Join Christine Warren and the choir which sings at services from December through March. Welcome to Weslaco, where it has not frozen in eleven years.

## Seminary classes underway

Eight full-time juniors began classes at the Free Lutheran Seminary on September 6, 2000. They were joined by five middlers and two seniors. A large number of part-time students bring the total to 25 students taking seminary classes. There are five interns serving congregations this year.

## Seminary Receives Matching Funds

The Free Lutheran Seminary recently received \$3,200 from Lutheran Brotherhood, a fraternal benefit society, through the society's Member Matching Gift program. This amount matches 34 gifts from Lutheran Brotherhood members made during the second quarter of 2000. Since the beginning of the program in 1979, the seminary has received \$142,220.

Mark Sagerstrom, a layman from Grace preached at both congregations until Pastor Jan Horne arrived from Fairbury, Nebraska on October 8, to begin his interim ministry.

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Paid and/or requested circulation:  
Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541:  
Avg. copies each issue during past year: 3720  
Copies 9-26-00 issue: 3706

Through counter sales:  
Avg. copies each issue during past year: 100  
Copies 9-26-00 issue: 100  
Total paid and/or requested circulation:  
Avg. copies each issue during past year: 3,820  
Copies 9-26-00 issue: 3806

Free distribution by mail:  
Avg. copies each issue during past year: 50  
Copies 9-26-00 issue: 50

Total distribution:  
Avg. copies each issue during past year: 3,870  
Copies 9-26-00 issue: 3856

Copies not distributed:  
Avg. copies each issue during past year: 50  
Copies 9-26-00 issue: 50

Total:  
Avg. copies each issue during past year: 3920  
Copies 9-26-00 issue: 3906  
Percent paid and/or requested circulation, average and 9-26-00 issue: 99%

/s/ Ellis L. Bloomfield, Printer

## PEOPLE & PLACES

**Peter Joel Westlake**, the seven-month-old son of Eric and Wendy Westlake passed away on September 7, 2000, after a brief illness. Funeral services were held at The Association Retreat Center on September 11, with Pastor David Johnson officiating. A note on the memorial service program said, "We praise God for the time He gave us to enjoy the wonder of Peter's smiling face and joyful personality. God is good! All the time." He is survived by his parents and siblings: Matthew, Laura and Nicole.



**Camarillo, California** — Pictured is Pastor Rodger and Helene Olson of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Camarillo. Pastor Olson served as interim pastor during the summer months and has now accepted the call to pastor Good Shepherd.

**Synnove Stenberg Mathre**, 84, passed away on August 24, 2000. Married to Pastor Anders Mathre, they served congregations in Canada, Washington State, and California. In their retirement Anders served a time as interim pastor of Atonement Free Lutheran before his death in 1988. As long as she was physically able, Synnove played the organ at Atonement and encouraged Scripture memorization. She sent the church bulletin with a personal note to those who missed the Sunday services. In spite of declining health,

Synnove was quick to smile, always optimistic and expecting her miracle — to be able to rise up and walk.

**Kalispell, Montana** — Stillwater Free Lutheran dedicated their new addition on September 10, 2000. During the afternoon dedication service, Paul Kneeland was installed as youth pastor. He had been working with the congregation as their youth director. Several former pastors attended the activities of the day, including: Pastors Gary Skramstad, John Rieth and Jeff Swanson.

**Fall River, Massachusetts** — St. Paul's Lutheran Church has disbanded after the recent death of their pastor, Gerard Blais. Organized in 1975 as an independent congregation, the group had been a member of the AFLC since 1976.

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences (8 months) — January 1 - August 31, 2000

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$252,865.00	\$33,402.93	187,835.01	74
Seminary . . . . .	118,291.00	7,267.11	65,090.11	55
Bible School . . . . .	164,270.00	10,703.30	98,648.94	60
Home Missions . . . . .	262,125.00	16,885.75	155,083.60	59
World Missions . . . . .	239,968.00	10,967.17	96,637.54	40
Capital Investment . . . . .	15,226.00	1,629.12	7,479.06	49
Parish Education . . . . .	69,480.00	3,158.05	44,078.26	63
Church Extension . . . . .	25,285.00	620.16	14,453.58	57
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,147,510.00</b>	<b>84,633.59</b>	<b>669,306.10</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>TOTALS 1999 . . . . .</b>	<b>1,013,386.00</b>	<b>61,735.89</b>	<b>629,773.24</b>	<b>62</b>

**Goal 67%**

Evangelism Department August receipts were \$5,224.44.

### AFLC Memorials

**July - August 2000**

**Department given to**  
*In Memory of*

#### Youth Ministries

*Al Bartsch*  
*Mabel Haugen*  
**Evangelism**  
*Peter Geb*  
*Vera Hjermstad*  
*Sarah Woimanen*  
*Ivan Schlenk*

#### Vision 2004

*Gordon Grandstrand*  
*Ivan Schlenk*  
*James Olson*  
*Vera Hjermstad*  
*Mary Anne Prell*  
*Al Bartsch*

#### Home Missions

*Emily Parker*  
*Jordan Walker*  
*Rev./Mrs. Herbert Franz*  
*Mr./Mrs. Lloyd Lee*  
*Mr./Mrs. Carol James*  
*Megan Berg*

*Paul Samuelson*  
*Don Oscarson*  
*Linda Sarkela*  
*Robert Hunter*

#### World Missions

*Erling Brekke*  
*Vera Hjermstad*  
*Paul Samuelson*  
*Jordan Walker*  
*Rev. Bushana Rao Dasari*

#### AFLTS

*Mr./Mrs. Lloyd Lee*  
*Mr./Mrs. Carol James*  
*Curt Dahl*  
*Rev. Rudolph Berntson*  
*Vera Hjermstad*  
*Rev. Bushana Rao Dasari*

#### AFLBS

*Brody McGregor*  
*James Olson*  
*Ivan Schlenk*  
*Tilda Melby*  
*Bill Grover*  
*Harold Johnson*  
*Joanne Erickson*

#### Legacies

*Anna Duncan*  
*to Capital Investment*



## Noticing the ones around us

I had a great time while at Amsterdam 2000, the international conference for evangelists sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association — except for the trolley ride back to my hotel the last night I was there.

We emptied out of the conference center and filled up the trolley that was waiting out front. As we moved along into the heart of the city, people started singing praise songs. The enthusiasm and excitement the day had generated was evident. What didn't seem too evident to some was the situation of a few of those who had not been at the conference.

The conductor was trying to make announcements about the trolley's next stop. Once when we were going nowhere for a couple of minutes, he tried to explain the reason for the delay. He could barely make himself heard over the trolley's public address system. Some were trying hard to hear the announcements, but they couldn't because of the singing.

I assume the intentions of the ones doing the singing were good. They had been encouraged during the conference and they wanted to share in song the joy of knowing Jesus. What they were doing, though, was irritating some of the people they were trying to reach. The people weren't hearing joyful songs, but instead the music was for them little more than loud noise that was preventing them from getting done what they needed to do. The outreach and mission efforts of the Christians on the trolley might have been more effective if there had been a little greater sensitivity to the needs of the other riders.

We, at times, when trying to share the good news of Jesus, instead of communicating the message clearly, can come across as just being noisy. This happens when we fail to "be quick to listen, slow to speak" (James 1:19, NIV). It happens when all we care about is letting them know what we know, and we fail to take time to listen to what they need. Sincere listening and sensitivity to the needs of others is a crucial part of effective mission work.

The singing was pretty much in tune, but still not everything was harmonious within the trolley. Some of the ones who had been at the conference weren't singing in the manner a few others thought they should be. Some made it clear they thought others "weren't showing much life." They wanted to share "the joy of the Lord," so they tried to get everyone singing loudly and with great enthusiasm.

Some seemed to view the singing as inappropriate

and bordering on irreverent. They weren't too big on the clapping that was going on, and when one guy started jumping up and down a little that was really too much for them.

While all these disagreements were going on among the Christians, we arrived at a couple of stops where some people tried to get on the trolley. There was no space right inside the doors. We tried to get folks to move into the middle to create some space, but people weren't paying attention. Either they couldn't hear, or they were busy singing, or they were busy being bothered by someone else not doing things the way they thought they should. Some people had to stay outside and wait for another trolley because they couldn't get in.

Christians too often act that way, not just on a trolley but in life. We live out our Christian life one way, and then we look over and see someone else who is doing things differently. Maybe we think they're not

lively enough. They ought to be more enthusiastic. Or maybe we think they're too enthusiastic. They ought to settle down. We become so occupied being critical of the others who are inside, that we fail to notice those who are outside, needing to get in, open to coming in if space was made available and an invitation was extended.

The disciples discovered Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. They noticed she wasn't of what they considered the right gender or ethnic background. Jesus told them, "Open your

eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (John 4:35, NIV).

His desire for us is to not be so busy being bothered by the little things that we fail to notice the lost and dying around us; some of whom will come to Jesus if they hear the gospel clearly and lovingly presented.

One theme a number of speakers at the conference touched on was how this is an exciting time to be a Christian, sharing the gospel of Christ. In many parts of the world much openness is found. People are searching and many are responding. They are wanting to "get in." It's harvest time!

May we not get distracted by bickering with others who are inside so that we miss the great opportunities around us for serving the Lord and sharing Jesus. Let us be sensitive to the needs of those who are outside. Let us notice them, make room and invite them in to a relationship with Jesus.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

**"What they were doing, though, was irritating some of the people they were trying to reach."**



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**THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR**

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

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Periodicals

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## **THE ARC PAGE**

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### **The Association Retreat Center has a new program coordinator**

Let me introduce myself. I am the wife of Youth Ministries Director, Pastor Kevin Olson and the mother of three young children. We live in a southern suburb of Minneapolis called Savage and are active at Faith Lutheran in Shakopee, Minnesota.

Eric Westlake, director of the ARC asked me to be the AFLC Program Coordinator for the retreat center because of the increased workload of the secretary, Joleen Dietsche. Our hope is that by having a designated AFLC Program Coordinator, we can be of better service to the AFLC people and congregations.

If there are any areas where we can help you and your church ministries, please let us know. We are here to offer you help in reaching souls for Jesus Christ and encouraging strength and renewal.

**Please direct any communication about AFLC camps and retreats to me. All registrations will be processed through my office at my home. I am looking forward to being of service to all in our AFLC family.**

Pamela Olson  
12754 Independence Ave.  
Savage, MN 55378  
1-888-748-3969  
e-mail: arc@aflc.org

## **Providing shelter for families since 1979.**

**The Association  
Retreat Center  
Osceola, Wisconsin**



### **Fall family retreat October 27-29 at the ARC**

Pastor Jerry Moan of the AFLC schools will be the speaker. The weekend includes a special program by "The Blind Magician," using illusion to share the gospel message and demonstrating the need to keep our eyes on things we cannot see. Families are encour-

aged to dress as a Bible character or theme for a costume party. Lots of recreation and family fun make it a great weekend. We begin Friday evening at 6 p.m. and conclude after the Sunday morning worship. Cost is \$150 per family.