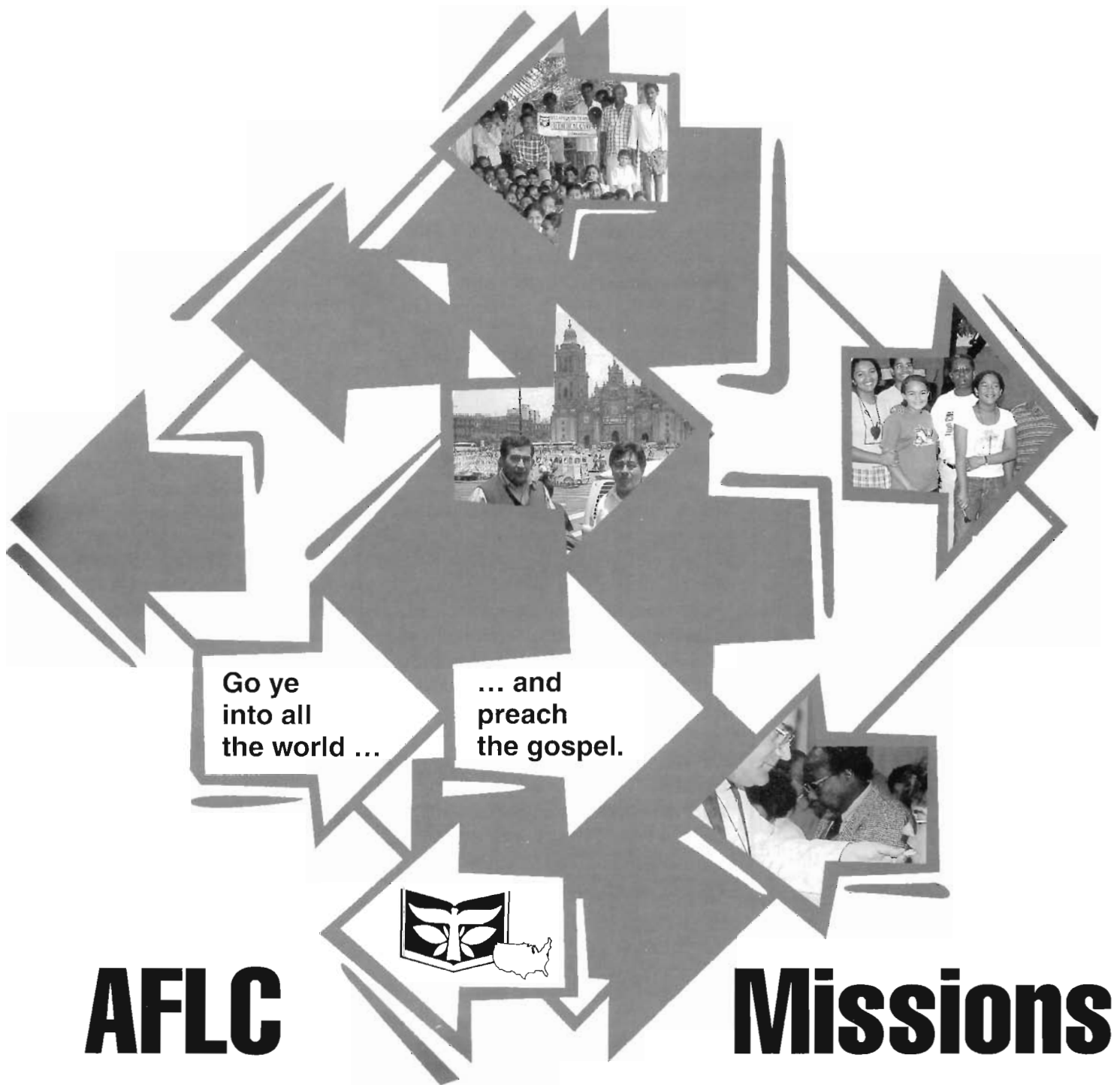


The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

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AFLC

Missions

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Intercessors

Interceding is a tremendous responsibility and an awesome privilege. It is a sensitive and obedient spirit that knows when the Spirit of God is prompting one to pray. What a joy it is to be told "I am praying for you today." I remember receiving that message by phone from a friend one day. He said there wasn't any other reason for his call, except to tell me he was praying. He didn't know what my specific needs were, but the Spirit of God did, and it was the Spirit that had prompted that friend to pray. For me the issues of that day had been especially difficult and heavy. What an encouragement to know that the Spirit of God was aware of my need, and that He had laid it on the heart of a friend to pray.

Not only do we pray for one another, but in Romans 8:26-27, we are told that the Spirit is interceding for us. Later on in the chapter, we are reminded that Jesus is at the right hand of God interceding for us. We know that Jesus and the Holy Spirit intercede for us according to the will of God. How wonderful to know that in the darkest and most difficult situations we have them praying for us.

But what about the person that does not have a close friend that knows Jesus as Savior and Lord, a friend that is praying for the blessing of God to come into his life? Lost souls need someone praying for them. As we pray for a lost soul the Spirit of God begins to break up the hard and stony soil of his heart. It is like plowing. He begins preparing the heart for the seed of His Word.

Perhaps there is someone that needs you as an intercessor right now. No, not perhaps, there is someone. Maybe you don't even know his or her name. Perhaps it is a neighbor or someone you meet regularly in the course of the work day, or someone whose path has crossed yours in travel or recreation, someone that needs Jesus. How many like that, outside your circle of family and friends, do you have on your prayer list and pray for regularly? If you don't have such on your prayer list, I encourage you today to seek God's direction and the Spirit's prompting for a person or two to add to your prayer responsibility list.

The song writer has written:

*Lord lay some soul upon my heart,
And love that soul through me;
And may I humbly do my part
To win that soul for Thee.*

May this be our prayer each day as we intercede for those that have need for His presence in their lives. Jeremiah 33:3 promises, "Call unto me, and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which you have not known."



— **Pastor Elden Nelson**
Maranatha Lutheran
Willmar, Minnesota

sound bites

Following Christ is not just a little compartment of my whole

1 **life, and as long as that compartment called piety or “spirituality” is in line, I’m doing a good job; following Christ affects every part of my life, including my mind, my intellect.**

— J. P. Moreland

The main obstacle to church growth is not lack of example, lack of knowledge, or lack of

4 **resources. The main problem is spiritual. Our members need commitment to outreach, commitment to holiness, commitment to learning the Bible, i.e., they need to be committed to the purpose of the church.**

— Elmer Towns

6

The primary qualification for a missionary is not love for souls, as we so often hear, but love for Christ.

— Vance Havner

2

I am convinced that an important way to respond to the growing opposition we are seeing worldwide to conversion-oriented evangelism is radical servanthood for rich and poor Christians all over the world.

— Ajith Fernando

Anything that God has ever done, He can do now. Anything that God has done anywhere else, He can do here. Anything that God has done for anyone else, He can do for you.

— A. W. Tozer

3

About 34,000 children die every day of hunger and preventable disease; almost one person out of four in our world — 1.3 billion people — lives in grinding poverty, struggling to survive on a dollar a day.

5

— World Bank

The goals and roles of Missions



— *Missionary Jonathan Abel
Campo Grande, Brazil*

The author with his congregation's praise team.

How should we do the ministry God has entrusted to us? This is a difficult question. There is no specific answer as situations vary. It is tough to say, "This is the way to do it!" As I look at our ministry in Campo Grande these past three years, I could say God has blessed and yet if I compare it to other ministries, I might sense some failure, as well.

FIRST

Always be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This is not waiting for some "voice in a cloud" giving instructions, but it comes through the study of God's Word. It is there we discover the heart of God. It is doing what He has commanded, going where He leads, and changing directions if He so indicates. The way I am planting a church is not the way I would have done it, but God clearly put things in front of me so that I simply had to go in this direction. I have no regrets.

SECOND

God commands us in Matthew 28:19 to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." The easy part is the baptizing. The hard part is the teaching to be followers of Christ.

First, I must baptize them, for in doing

this I have the power of the Holy Spirit to make them into true disciples. Then, I must live in such a way that I can say to them as the Apostle Paul did, "be ye imitators of me as I am of Christ." To make disciples, I must be a disciple. I pray for discernment myself and then for wisdom in teaching others how to discern between a Christian culture and their culture and the many winds of doctrine promoted in our days.

In all of my discipleship training, I pray for an attitude and heart of love. That is not always easy when others do not hold my point of view and I can become dogmatic and self-righteous. Christ emphatically teaches that love is the foundation for building anything. It certainly is the foundation for making disciples.

THIRD

If I imitated some churches in Brazil, my congregation would likely grow faster, but to do this I would have to make many little compromises in my beliefs. For example, large churches are quickly emerging in Brazil with a good praise group and an evangelist to come for a series of crusades. I could easily have a praise group come as there are many in this area looking for a platform on which to perform. However, I am not looking for performers from other churches who will come and soon take over the leadership and possibly create a conflict of interests. Evangelists are available but I have difficulty in finding one who will stick to the pure gospel message. By God's grace, I must be true to myself, our church, and our doctrinal point of view, though the work may seemingly progress slower.



Pastoral Assistant Valdecir Lima Santos and his family.

FOURTH

Our congregation, Comunidade Evangelica Luterana Livre, is small but I try to put everyone to work as much as possible, because if they are active they tend to grow spiritually. We use our meager resources as wisely as possible on advertising, Christian literature, helping kids go to Bible camps and meeting social needs of food, medicine and occasionally housing. We use every dime and more for the furthering of the gospel.

FIFTH

I am always trying to work myself out of a job without fear of ending up with nothing to do. A missionary is a person with an apostolic call. This means that he is a person of vision, seeing life from God's perspective. In the business of making disciples from God's perspective, there is no end to the work. About four years ago my father, Missionary John Abel said, "If God gave me 50 more years, I would have things to do to fill all those years." That's vision! Pastor Don Richman and Pastor Orville Heippler have shared similar comments with me. That's having the perspective of God.

We are in the church planting ministry and I am the pastor. Sometimes a missionary makes a terrible pastor because he is often gone, including time away for furlough. Therefore, my prayer is to have someone in my place who can better shepherd the flock. We are not starting new ministries without having someone to oversee them. If this strategy works, I believe we will have longer lasting results. I also can travel without the fear that all will come apart in my absence.

We are working on the constitution and ministry goals of our congregation here in Campo Grande. In Brazil, the document to legalize the church needs to include every possible ministry the church may want to do



Two vacation Bible school programs were conducted recently, one in Campo Grande and one in Cidade Morena. Over 120 children were involved.

so that the doors will be open if needed. As I was thinking of this, I wrote down ten institutions that the congregation would like to start, not counting the dozens of ministries within each institution. The harvest is bountiful but the laborers and resources are few. We pray for people to join us in ministry so that we might fulfill the Great Commission.

SIXTH

How important it is to believe in and trust the people who I delegate the ministry to. I can advise, encourage, lead, and even correct, but I must not dominate them. When they are allowed to do the ministry in their way, they do it with joy. Together, with God's help, we press on in the work He has given us.



The roof is on at the Campo Grande church. The congregation continues to meet on the ground level until the upstairs is finished. The construction is on pause until more funds come in for the project.



Pastoral assistant Luis Carlos Oliveria Amaral and his family,

When the missionary kid becomes a young adult

— Ingrid Giles
Aguascalientes,
Mexico

TThere are many stories of the “problems” facing the missionary kid (MK) who leaves home to go to college in a different country — for example, the United States. The most obvious one is the physical distance from family. There aren’t the weekend trips home and the telephone visits are shorter and fewer. If there are visits at Christmas time and summer, one feels fortunate.

However, the problems that are not so obvious might be the more difficult ones. There are cultural adjustments that the returning MK has to make when leaving home. Even if the missionary family did not completely adopt the host culture, the chances are they did not completely retain the “home” culture either. In other words, the MK does not always know what to expect from Americans. When they say something, what does it mean? Will others be offended if I am very direct and say exactly what I mean? Will they be offended if I don’t? Will they even understand me if I am direct? Why do they act the way they do?

Very early in life the missionary kid learns to adapt. One begins to think and

therefore act more like an American. Just when one was reconciled anew to the fact that there are few people in the world with quite the same culture, there is the realization that now one is becoming like everyone else. For once you don’t stand out!

That conformity brings new questions. Identity is challenged. Now you wonder if you’ll be able to function in your old culture! Will it all come back next time you visit your family, or will you be a rude and confused foreigner?

I have been living in the United States for two years now, and I think I have gone through both of those stages. I have now come to the point where I know exactly who I am — I’m me. And no, I am not exactly like anyone else. I think and act enough like an American to get along just fine (although I still have to ask my friends for cues sometimes), and I even like this culture. I still think like a Mexican in some areas, and I like that, too. I count myself blessed to have been immersed in two different cultures. It is that experience which will help me to understand other cultures and people throughout the rest of my life. I wouldn’t give up that experience for anything!



Danny Giles and his fiancée, Marcela, in front of the Giles’ apartment.



(The author graduated from AFLBS last spring and is working in the Minneapolis area before going on to more school. Her parents are Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles.)

Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles on their kitchen patio.



Mission trip to Obregon, Mexico, scheduled

On January 7-20, 2000, Partners in Mission Outreach will be working with Pastor Gabriel Mercado and Triumph Lutheran Church in the village of Agraristas. Estimated cost is \$575 per person for food, transportation and lodging, with about \$100 extra for personal spending money. The bus will depart from northern Minnesota and connections may be made along the way. For more information contact Al Brazier at (218) 782-2456 or e-mail at aflcpimo@means.net.

News from Aguascalientes, Mexico

Spring of Living Water Church has two men completing their training for full-time service. Fernando and Monse Herrera received their Licenciado degrees in Theology of Missions from the World Mission Prayer League Bible School in Mazatlan on September 5, 1999. They plan to continue their work with the congregation in Aguascalientes for this next year while Fernando completes his studies. He wrote his thesis on Ethnomusicology — a method for analyzing the music of an ethnic group in order to write music that will speak to the hearts of the people in communicating the gospel. Monse wrote hers on the biblical role of women in the church. They are eager to reach the foreign mission field!

Ricardo Varela has completed four years of classroom study and two years of internship and is ready to serve his Lord. His actual ordination is scheduled for next fall when Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk will be back from their furlough. Pastor Todd and Ricardo have worked closely together, and it is important to Ricardo to have Pastor Todd with him at his ordination. Missionary Giles wrote, "It's rewarding after fourteen years of labor to see a mature, free and living Lutheran congregation now ready to pay it's first seminary-trained, Mexican, Lutheran pastor! God has been so faithful."

Spring of Living Water began an intensive evangelistic campaign to reach the community around the

church. During September teams of two or three were assigned streets and spent two nights a week walking and praying for everyone on that street. After that, each team traveled the same streets hanging bags of specially chosen evangelistic material on each door or gate. In October they began actually knocking on doors and presenting the gospel verbally and inviting people to church. The church is showing a video every Saturday night during October. Pray for this campaign that God would prepare the hearts and minds of every person who lives in their target area to receive the Lord!



Ricardo and Adriana Varela family.



Fernando and Monse Herrera family.

Missionary Dan Giles, Pastor Raul Hernandez, and Missionary Todd Schierkolk. Pastor Hernandez serves in Irapuato. The other three national pastors are Rev. Samuel Flores, Leon; Rev. Milton Flores, Celaya; and Pastor Gabriel Mercado in Agraristas de Obregon.

Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk and family safely evacuated their mini-van before it became engulfed in flames while enroute to visit family in Longview, Washington, for the Labor Day weekend. Luis Valdez and his son of Medicine Lake Lutheran in Plymouth, Minnesota, delivered a mini-van from the AFLC home office for the Schierkolks to use during their furlough. Contact the Schierkolks via e-mail at aguadevida@earthlink.net.



Pictured is the new roof being installed on Spring of Living Water Lutheran Church.



Portugal: Building a free Lutheran church

The free Lutheran church work in Portugal is happening in an organized way since the official opening of the Saviors' Lutheran Congregation, in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, this past

January 3. In a rented place, with the support of the AFLC World Missions Committee, we have since then been trying to structure and nurture a stabilized group of brothers and sisters. We want to know how many actually want to become Free Lutherans, so that we can next make the necessary arrangements to give our congregation a full daily and evangelical life.

For now we are having fortnightly services, on Sunday afternoons. Before the services we are having biblical studies with Luther's *Small Catechism*.

God is very present in our midst, and looking backwards we only can praise Him for how good He has been to us. Let me partake with you this experience: two months ago, our sister Natália, went to a music store to ask for prices of organs. The store's manager said a few prices, totally impossible for our finances. He decided to attend a service to meet me

and talk to me on the subject. At the end of the service he looked at me and said: "Pastor, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to offer you an organ." A few days later he was delivering it! Praise the Lord!

There are two things we feel necessary. First of all, we need your continuing support while we are growing, so that we can maintain and open even more work in Portugal. In this support we want to refer also to our isolation. I'm the only Portuguese Lutheran pastor here, and for now we have only one congregation. So everything you can do to brake this isolation is welcome, as there are, for instance, the e-mails and letters I've already received from several pastors, missionaries and lay brothers, from the USA, Brazil and Mexico.

The second need we have is to have a



Faith that moves mountains

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask in prayer."

— Matthew 21:21-22

Campo Mourão, Brazil —

Washing mountains of diapers and children's clothes has been an overwhelming job for the Miriam Infant Home. During the rainy season, it was a nightmare. Two years ago Missionary Sonja Dahl turned the problem into an international project. The WMF in the U.S. raised funds to build a laundry room and the AFLC-Canada provided money to buy an industrial washer and dryer. The Lord continued to touch hearts to participate in this international project by faith.



full ministry in the Lisbon congregation. So, solutions for that are also welcome.

Our hearts and prayers are with you as we ask also your continuing prayers for us. The Lord be praised!



Email of the Lutheran Church of Portugal: ilport@hotmail.com

My address: Rev. Artur Villares, Rua D. Pedro V, 193-3º Esq., 4400 Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal



Pictured is Sonja Dahl with four of the twenty-some children at the home. Sonja is currently studying at Winona State University Nursing Program for her Registered Nurse degree. Her address is: 908 Parks Avenue, #162, Winona, MN 55987; phone is (507) 454-0592.



Pictured at the dedication of the property on which the laundry room is to be built are, (L. to R.): Pastor Oseias Camara, AFLC-Brazil president, Missionary Connely Dyrud, World Missions Director Eugene Enderlein, and Eda Slomp of the Slomp Land Company which donated the land for the addition.



The city of Campo Mourão donated use of their earth-moving equipment to prepare the land for the laundry room. It is hoped the project will be completed by the end of this year.

People with a purpose

— Becky Abel
Santa Felicidade, Brazil

(This article is a tribute to a couple, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary, whose purposeful living has impacted not only my life, but countless others, for eternity.)

It was February 1976. I had taken a special interest in a new student on campus — a missionary kid from Brazil. His love for the Lord and interest in studying the Bible and witnessing to others caught my attention. He wanted to be a missionary in Brazil, just like his dad. Six months earlier I had dedicated my life to missionary service and I was eager to find out more about real missionary life. So, I went to meet the family, home on furlough, living in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, in a little trailer house.

What did I find? People with a purpose! A couple who began each day reading God's Word and sharing scriptural truths and moments of prayer with their family. A couple whose love for the lost wasn't a "job" but a lifestyle. A couple who dedicated themselves to raising their children to love God and serve Him. A couple with a passion for knowing God and making Him known to others. A couple who had dedicated their lives to spreading the Gospel in a foreign country, Brazil.

John and Ruby Abel were pioneer missionaries. They went to Brazil in 1952 with two young sons. After a year of language training they set out on an adventure that was to last a lifetime. God had called them to a church-planting ministry in the interior of the state of Paraná where virgin jungle was being cut down to make a city. They let nothing deter

(continued on next page)

PURPOSE

them in their desire to know God and make Him known; not sickness, nor lack of finances, nor hardships in daily living, nor persecution. In their first 10 years in Brazil with the World Mission Prayer League and the American Lutheran Church they shared the gospel wherever they went and started churches and schools and a Bible camp. When this work was turned over to the liberal German Lutheran Church in Brazil, John and Ruby sought God's will for their future ministry.

Home on furlough in the U.S., John had the privilege of meeting a group of Lutherans who shared his same faith, convictions and vision. The AFLC had just been formed in 1962 and with much prayer and faith this association of churches called the Abel family as their first missionaries. Thus, in 1964 John and Ruby and their seven children started on a new adventure in Campo Mourão, Paraná, which today is the Free Lutheran headquarters in Brazil.

Propelled by energy and unction from the Holy Spirit, John and Ruby began evangelizing in this new city. Soon the first church was built and a school was started. Other preaching points were opened and plans for a Bible school and seminary grew. A farm was transformed into a Bible camp where young people were challenged to accept Christ and prepare for the ministry. Isn't it amazing what God can do when one couple puts their life in His hands to accomplish His purposes?

Pastor and Mrs. Alvin Grothe soon joined them until her illness forced their return home. In 1969 the Free Lutheran church sent two more missionary families (George and Helen Knapp and Connely and Carolyn Dyrud) to help develop the work.

Today the AFLC has a beautiful Bible school and seminary campus, an orphanage, two Bible camps and thirteen churches. The possibilities for ministry are endless, but often God's work suffers for lack of people with a purpose. We need more missionaries with a vision like that of



Pastor John and Ruby Abel

John and Ruby. We need more people to pray and financially support the work of missions. Ruby always taught her children how important it is to love Jesus and to be a missionary or to support a missionary. As a result, three of their sons — David, Jonathan and Paul — all returned to Brazil as missionaries.

I often feel overwhelmed by the privilege of being a part of what God has been doing in transforming a pagan nation to love and serve the risen Savior. Fifty years ago Brazil was one of the largest mission fields in the world. Today Brazil is becoming one of the largest missionary-sending nations of the world.

Twenty years ago I married that missionary kid who wanted to be

“just like his dad.” Paul caught the vision. His love for sharing Jesus with the lost has enabled us to be a part of God's work in beginning three churches and a Bible camp in Curitiba.

Although John and Ruby are now retired AFLC missionaries they have by no means retired from God's work. Their love for Jesus and zeal for lost souls continues to direct their daily lives. They spend part of each year in the U.S. sharing about missions and the other part in Brazil, encouraging the missionaries and the national pastors and holding evangelistic campaigns and Bible camps.

I couldn't have had better examples of self-giving love and service than these two faithful servants who are now celebrating fifty years of married life and service to the Almighty God. May the Lord bless them and continue to use their lives to make Christ known among the nations.



Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel and family.



Pictured above is the church in Sao Braz. Their Sunday school classes began on August 15 with five classes being team taught. Pastor Abel is teaching a profession of faith class with hopes of receiving new members before the end of the year. The congregation is praying for a full-time pastor to lead them.

Pastors in Mexico gather for prayer

—Pastor Richard Gunderson
Puebla, Mexico

On a beautiful sunny afternoon the first part of August they began to arrive from the north, the west and the immediate areas of Mexico to

a place called La Meson del Pozo Viejo (The Hostel of the Old Well). The reason? To as Lutheran pastors from various groups, spend time together in a concert of prayer. Two days were set aside to pray for each other, the church, the country of Mexico and world evangelization.

Almost two years ago we had the privilege of participating in a concert of prayer at the Bethany Fellowship camp located in Matehuala. At that time we heard of the vision of a Bible school student from Aguascalientes attending the Mazatlan Bible school. He and his wife felt they were called to be missionaries and we joined them in prayer. It led to others sharing about the possibility of reaching into Cuba and to the indigenous groups in the mountains of Durango and



Missionary Dick Gunderson visits with Mexican pastors.

the field workers in Ceuta, Sinaloa.

Now we had the chance to hear reports from that student, Fernando Herrera who with his wife Monse graduates from the Bible school in September, after spending part of the year in Brazil doing their internship serving at the Bible school in Campo Mourao. We heard about God's provision in difficult times and the testing for which they thank God as all of it has drawn them closer to Him. They are learning to depend upon the Lord in all things.

We heard from Pastor Juan Valenzuela and his wife Georgina how they have been permitted to minister to the various indigenous

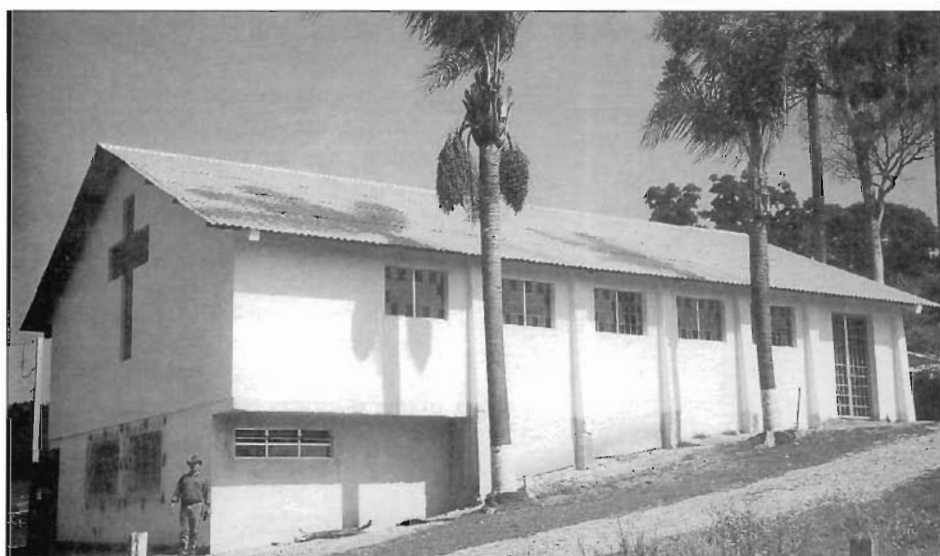
people groups that come to work and live in Ceuta. God has given to them the blessed privilege to pray with and teach these folks.

God is answering prayer and while we are small in number, the Lord is showing us His way to reach others. This concert of prayer was a time of praise and thanksgiving for what we see happening.

It was with great joy that we had with us for the first time, pastors from the Leon, Irapuato, Celaya and Puebla congregations. Our fellowship has enriched our lives and we left the Meson and its beautiful surroundings with a special bond and commitment to pray for one another. What was established during those two short days continues to have its affect upon each one of us personally as we pray for each other and for our churches.

There is no doubt in my mind that the pastors and workers in the Lutheran church, like every other fellowship of churches, are under an insidious attack from Satan and the forces of darkness. We prayed for revival realizing that it has to start with us. Yes, we are in need of Holy Spirit-worked repentance and empowerment. Yes, our churches are in need of the same.

As we came from the north and the west so we returned but not the same. We went forth once again in the power and strength of the Lord, renewed in our call and purpose.



Pictured is the new Bateias church with Missionary Paul Abel standing in front. The congregation hopes to dedicate their new church before the end of the year. Joel assists Pastor Abel with the preaching and leading Bible studies. The congregation has begun two preaching points, conducting services once a month in remote areas.



India church reorganizes and purchases property

—Pastor Eugene Enderlein
AFLC World Missions Director

This year I visited a number of our mission ministries. It has been a rich and challenging blessing to see firsthand what the Lord is doing through our AFLC in Brazil, Mexico, India and Portugal.

In January I traveled to India with Missionary Sonja Dahl, Dr. Fran Monseth, six Bible School students and Pastor Doug Wagley. The team made a lasting impression on the people among whom we worked and ministered for two weeks. Since that time the leadership of our church in India has requested repeatedly that another such group would come and stay longer.

There are a number of recent events that are a result of that visit last January. Prior to my going to India, AFLC World Missions received a generous gift from an anonymous donor outside the AFLC. On behalf of our world mission ministry we are thankful to the



Boys from the Chusanyae Village where the team shared the gospel last January. The leader of the village has invited the team back.

Lord for moving the heart of this individual to give his gift designated for capital investments in India.

After the other team members left, I remained for a number weeks to search for property suitable for our work and assist with the reorganization of our sister church body in India.

Our AFLC work is carried on in the state of Andhra Pradesh. AP state is located in the southeast of India where the first Lutheran missionaries came in the early 1700s. Also it was in this immediate area that the first Lutheran missionaries from the United States arrived 150 years ago. Our own work in the area began in the late 1970s as we assisted with the formation of the Bible Faith Lutheran Church. Today

there are some thirty gospel workers involved in this ministry.

The Christian population of India is only two percent of a population that just recently reached one billion people. Vast numbers of people are found everywhere you look. The sobering fact is that the majority of people are unsaved, without Jesus Christ and headed for a Christless eternity.

During the years that we have worked with the Bible Faith Lutheran Church—India, the ministry has been carried on from a private home in the city of Guntur. Funds, when available, have been used to assist with the purchase of property and construction of churches in the villages where congregations have grown. The need for facilities to serve the organization has been great. In January, one part of the ministry for the team was to conduct training meetings and instructional classes for the gospel workers. These meetings had to be held in rented facilities.

As we began the search for suitable property, it was agreed that we would look in an area more central to our ministry. Our search was centered in the same area where the gospel training sessions were held — the city of Chiralla. This city is unique in that the majority of people are Christian, the fruit of years of gospel work in the area.

Two separate pieces of property have been purchased. A substantial



AFLC-India headquarters building.

house of 10 rooms (six down and four up), will amply serve the church, providing a place for meetings, classes, formation of a new congregation as well as providing guest rooms for those that would come and assist in the ministry. Two and a half acres located near the home were also purchased. This will be available for future development of a church, medical clinic for the medical ministry and a possible school as well as children's home or widow's home. In addition, we now have a vehicle to provide transportation for workers and to assist in the work.

Many of you remember the past and the heartache associated with the work in India when one Indian leader led a portion of the work away from the AFLC. This work continues nearby with a similar name. It was good to move the center of our ministry away from the Guntur area to prevent confusion in

the minds of the people in the area and to provide firmer ties to AFLC-USA. The ministry in India has been reorganized and reregistered with the Indian Government. By the decision of the people in the work in India, they have chosen to identify their work by the name of "Association Of Free Lutheran Congregations—India"

In the reorganization of the work, one provision provided for is that all property will be in the name of a property committee, with representation on the committee from AFLC-USA. Our recommendation was a committee of five with two from AFLC-USA. When the reorganization papers were filed by the India church leadership, the property committee numbered three with the positions being filled by the president of the Indian church, the president of the AFLC-USA and the world missions director of the

AFLC-USA. The recent property purchased has all been registered in the name of the AFLC. Preexisting property will gradually be reregistered as funds are available for the registration tax.

Our ministry in India is one that stands before an open door, although forces are at work throughout the country to close that door to the Church of Jesus Christ. Pray that the door allowing the gospel to be shared will remain open. Pray for the needs of our workers in India. Only one third of our workers are receiving designated support. It costs only \$30.00 a month to provide the support for one gospel worker. Would you, or a number of the members from your congregation, Sunday school class, confirmation class or Women's Missionary Federation prayerfully consider this pressing need?



D. Luther Sastry preaching at the dedication service of the Horeb Children Home.



The gospel workers and some of the congregation at the dedication service of the Horeb Children Home.

Single and serving

"God who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful"

(I Corinthians 1:9).



— Missionary
Annetta Dale
West Lisbon Lutheran
Newark, Illinois

October 20, 1999 marks the thirtieth anniversary of when I left my home and family in Newark, Illinois, to begin the work that I believe God has called me to at the Christian Hospital in Tank, Pakistan. It was a day packed with emotion but one in which I knew I was a part of God's plan for me. As I boarded the plane and waved goodbye to my family and friends the realization suddenly hit me that I would not be seeing them again for at least four years. This thought was almost overwhelming. In fact I felt sorry for the person sitting next to me on the plane that day as I went through one packet of tissues after another. What had brought me to this place?

As I look back over the years since that day, I am filled with praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for all He has done for me and given me. I had the wonderful privilege of being brought up in Christian home with two brothers and two sisters where our parents not only taught us that our salvation is in Jesus Christ but also lived their lives according to their faith. It was, as a child, in my home congregation of West Lisbon (continued on next page)

Crossing the line for Christ



— **Dr. Timothy Hurley**
*Good Shepherd
Lutheran
Ponca City, Oklahoma*

As a society we have become more homogenized. Our schools are integrated. When we hear someone speaking another language, we give it little thought. Even “mixed-marriages” no longer carry the social stigma once attached to them. While there remain cultural differences among North Americans, as a society we are usually able to interact in schools, the work place and recreationally (sports is a prime example of successful cultural blending). Mexican and Chinese restaurants are scarcely thought of as serving “foreign” cuisine anymore.

While there has been this cross-cultural blending, a common observation of many commentators is that Sunday morning is the least integrated part of American life. We still refer

to churches as “Black Baptist” or “Norwegian Lutheran” or “Mexican Pentecostal.” What a strange experience for me, as the pastor of a Spanish language church in Central California to be referred to as the “Mexican pastor” (I’m ethnically Irish and Texan).

Usually the labels that we apply as Christians to those of other cultures have no intended malice. But intended or not there are consequences. The first is that by assigning a label to an ethnic or other cultural group we may be assigning the responsibility for the evangelization and discipleship to someone else.

For example, the assumption that because someone is Italian, and therefore they are Catholic, therefore they would not be interested in “our” church has several flaws. The first flaw in this type of thinking

SINGLE AND SERVING

Lutheran that I first was introduced to missions and missionary speakers. I remember on one occasion being fascinated by the pictures and stories and wondering if maybe some day God would call me to be a missionary.

Some years later God did call me. He lead me into nursing and then a post-graduate course in anesthesia; from there, to the World Mission Prayer League and the Christian Hospital in Tank, Pakistan. Tank is a small city of about 40,000 people situated in the Northwest Frontier province.

The people with whom we work and minister are the rugged, fierce, warring Pathan tribes. The majority of the people in Pakistan are Muslims, followers of Islam. Their religion is a very important part of their lives and is often followed zealously to the point of “Jehad” or Holy War against anyone who opposes them. The culture is extremely male-oriented. The men in the family control everything. Women have very little to say about what happens to them.

I have often been asked, “What is it like to be a single woman working in a very strong Islamic society?” It indeed has its challenges. In a country where your identity is usually based on who your husband is, a single woman who lives without the supervision of her father and brothers is almost an unknown entity. However, in our work and ministry I have never felt that my singleness has been a detriment. Because of what we are doing, we have been given a place of

honor in spite of our singleness. Men treat us with respect and often women are almost envious that we have not had to marry and raise large families.

Another question asked is: “How do you feel about being a single woman on the mission field?” My answer is that it is probably easier to be a single woman in the setting that I am in than it would be in the USA. In Tank, I live with two to three other single women who share not only the house in which we live but the ministry that we are involved in. We are not only sisters in the Lord but through the years we have become like real sisters. We share our concerns, our frustrations and our heartaches. We also enjoy fun and fellowship. We have been blessed by having wonderful families in our mission. We love and enjoy them and their “kids.” We are “aunties” to all and then when we get old enough we are almost like a grandma. One little girl said to me one day, “You’re the same age as my grandma.” Our families at home are, of course, very important to us, however, it is an added blessing to also have a mission family.

Yes, life in another country is unique and has its challenges but I have found that God who calls is indeed faithful. He has supplied our every need. He gives grace and strength as we seek to serve Him and bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to those with whom we work. My prayer is that our ministry will not be in vain but will be fruitful for His honor and glory.



is to assume any active faith system. Many people are raised in non-religious homes regardless of the historical cultural-religious background of their ancestors. Secondly, we err when we assume that if there is religious activity, there is a living faith in Jesus. This is a danger whether the religious identification is Roman Catholic, Baptist or Lutheran. A potentially more serious flaw in this way of thinking is to assume that there is someone "more qualified" because of ethnicity, language or other cultural reasons.

The Great Commission sends us as believers across those lines. The Apostle Paul was an educated Pharisee whom God sent to be a missionary among the Greeks and the pagans. Peter was a fisherman with little education and with many cultural and religious biases, whom Jesus sent out among the Gentiles. As we consider how we can reach out to those who have different cultures than ourselves, hear once again the words of Jesus, found in Acts 1:8 just before His Ascension:

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."



The first thing we should remember is that our call to cross so-called cultural barriers with the gospel is divine in its origin. Jesus has called us to be witnesses. Second, we must be aware that as we are divinely called to this purpose, we are also divinely empowered. Our source of strength is not human effort or intelligence but the infilling Spirit of God. We should next be aware that this call is cross-cultural in its nature. We are called to be witnesses to our neighbors, those who are like us. We are also called to be witnesses to those who are different culturally. There was no culture more despised by the Jews than that of Samaria, yet Jesus commanded the disciples to be witnesses there as well. We are also called to cross cultural lines around the world. I am delighted to hear just how different India is from the upper Midwest, our cultural center. Pastor Robert Lee and Pastor Eugene Enderlein tell of the culture shocks they have received

as they have gone to India to visit the AFLC work there. For example, in India you must never touch anyone with your left hand, as it is considered unclean.

The glorious news is this: Jesus is faithful. Many have come to Jesus as God has used those who have been willing to cross cultural lines with the gospel in India. Fourteen years ago I received the invitation to come and preach at a small bilingual, Baptist congregation. There was one problem: I didn't speak Spanish (not even "Quiero Taco Bell"). I had taken Spanish in high school but had refused to study. My parents were former missionaries to Mexico, but I had refused to learn from them.

Still I felt God calling me to step out in faith and accept the invitation to preach, and possibly to become the pastor of Iglesia Bautista de Avenida Ward (Ward Avenue Baptist Church in Patterson, California). All week long I practiced my sermon which I had written out in English and painstakingly translated into "attempted Spanish" with the aid of a verb book and a dictionary. Every day I recited this message over and over until I knew it practically misused word-for-word. The night before we were to drive from the seminary in the San Francisco Bay area across the Altamont Pass and down into the Central Valley, I began to panic. "What if the words fail me or even worse, what if the words I share are wrong and I say something stupid?"

I began to pray. "Dear Lord if you want to give me the gift of tongues, I am now ready to receive it ... but please make it Spanish and please make it now!" No lightning bolt experience happened, but a miracle did occur. God took the words I spoke and gave understanding of His Word to the people. Over the course of the next seven years many people heard about Jesus but they looked and sounded nothing like me. I did, in fact, often say "stupid" things. For example, let it suffice to say that the word for sin in Spanish is "pecado" and the word for fish is "pescado."

My Spanish is still flawed but every time I have the opportunity to share Jesus, He provides all the words I need. I have every confidence that He will do the same in any setting that He places me. Look around you, are there those to whom God would have you share the wonderful good news of Jesus?



Growing a home mission work

— Ruth Temple and Eleanor Schulz
Faith Lutheran
Durant, Oklahoma

Faith Lutheran Church in Durant, Oklahoma didn't exist until the summer of 1998. In fact the Lutheran Church does not even come near to having numerous and large congregations in the South where Baptist churches dominate the landscape. So how did the AFLC end up with a home mission congregation in this southern Oklahoma community of about 14,000 people?

"Faith is the assurance (the substance) of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Appropriately "Faith" is the name selected for our young congregation that grew out of faith and prayer.

We were well grounded in God's Word from our days of Bible instruction, so we both knew that some things were being taught by the church we attended which were not biblical — namely abortion and ordination of homosexuals. The Bible states these are both against God's will, and therefore sin. So we determined to withdraw our membership from that church. But then where would we go? We are both in our 80s.

We prayed together and separately.

Finally, the next step became clear — travel the approximately 125 miles to worship at the AFLC church in Wichita Falls, Texas where Pastor Paul Nash was then serving. This initial visit led us to another and still another, until we both felt God was showing us where and what was ahead.

In the weeks following, there were several telephone and personal conversations regarding the possibility of forming an AFLC group here in Durant. However, that seemed like a huge leap ahead. How would it be done? We prayed, then prayed some more; day by day, week by week until the foggy veil was lifted bit by bit.

About this time a man in the church we had left received a news item regarding that

church's teachings and he was disturbed. He made copies of that article and passed it out to the church members. Then he called us and told what he had done. Above all, he expressed his desire to leave and form another congregation. Time after time he phoned us to that end. We admonished him to wait awhile longer. At the same time we were talking with Pastor Nash, for we were determined to follow his advice. Finally, after talking with more people, it seemed to be the right time to start a new congregation.

About fifty of us met with Pastor Robert Lee and Pastor Paul Nash, now the AFLC Home Missions Director, in a basement meeting room in downtown Durant one Sunday evening in May of 1998. In June we began holding regular worship services.

Later we rented the Seventh Day Adventist Church so we could meet on Sunday mornings. We also have a prayer and Bible study time each Tuesday evening.

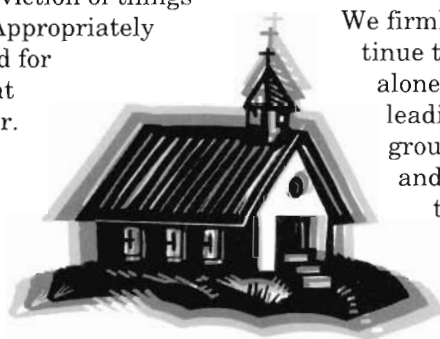
Each member is mentioned in prayer.

We firmly believe God is and will continue to honor this effort. To Him alone be all praise and glory for leading us to the AFLC. This group of congregations teaches and follows the Bible as it is written, without adding man-made ideas. It is only through the Word that faith is created. Now we number close to sixty in membership and about 30 in

Sunday school. Because we use the Word and prayer, we expect to grow in numbers as well as spiritually.

Before Pastor Gary Jorgenson arrived last spring to serve us, we were faithfully served by Pastor Jerry Peterson of Oklahoma City and Pastor Roy Johnson, who then was serving in Wichita Falls. They alternated Sundays and we owe so much to both these men whom the Lord used to counsel us and ground us in God's Word. We are grateful to them and to all who at a distance have and continue to pray for this new congregation.

On September 13, 1999 our congregation closed on the purchase of a five-acre lot just north of the city. After paying \$35,000 for the property we have about \$25,000 left for the building fund. We're excited to see the building go up as the Lord opens the way. May God grant that Faith Lutheran will grow in our community and win disciples for Jesus.



Home Missions Update

New Hope Lutheran, Snohomish, Washington — Pastor Ted and Dee Berkas are living at 426 Ave. C, Snohomish, WA 98290; phone 360-862-8707. Pastor Berhas is serving as the interim pastor in this community of the greater Seattle-Tacoma area.

Calvary Lutheran, Gilbert, Arizona — Jeremy Nelson, a 1998 AFLBS graduate, is a lay helper with the Sunday school and youth in this greater Phoenix area congregation. The steering committee is actively seeking to fill their pastoral vacancy. For information regarding service time and location, call Vint Bruflat at 480-855-3612.

Maranatha Lutheran, Spring Lake Park, Minnesota — Pastor Wayne Hanson, Gilbert, Arizona, has accepted the call to serve this northern Minneapolis/St. Paul area congregation. He begins his new ministry on October 30.

Have you ever seen an angel?

I was at the AFLC annual conference last June and I sat in a hotel room praying for a way to reach my mother back in Pittsburgh who had become ill. My brothers and sisters in Christ were in the lobby inquiring about a way to get me to Minneapolis, which was three and a half hours away, to catch a flight home.

An angel said, "I'm a pilot and I will fly her." Actually, he and two other pilots flew me. Their names are Lavon Bohling, Pastor Michael Crowell, and his son Jeremy.

How often can one stand in a hotel lobby needing a pilot and have three appear? Could there be a better lesson on trusting God in all things?

God supplied my need from the Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters, better known as FLAPS. This is a non-profit corporation within the AFLC dedicated to reaching lost souls for Jesus through aviation services.

God has touched my heart through the faithfulness of these angels from FLAPS.

— **JoAnn Haberland**
*taken from the August, 1999 issue of
the Ruthfred Lutheran Church
Newsletter
Bethel Park, Pennsylvania*

OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

The quiet church

There's a large insurance corporation that advertises itself as "the quiet company." Apparently this means that few have ever heard of it, and now their public relations department is trying to use this as an advantage. Quiet is good, their ads suggest, getting the job done without a lot of fanfare.

I thought about the AFLC. "Where have you been?" people will ask, or "Why have we never heard of you?" Sometimes my response, with a smile is that we like to keep a low profile. Yet the unfortunate fact remains that these questions are not easy to answer, as our association is almost unknown even in most Lutheran circles of North America, and many concerned believers are unaware that there is an evangelical, conservative alternative like us.

I thought of some of our congregations, too. One couple told me that they lived for a couple of years in a small town (less than 5,000 population) with an AFLC church and never knew that it was there! A visiting missionary said of another church that the outward appearance of its building suggested that the congregation had one foot in the grave and another on a banana peel. There are also some churches that do not bother to put up a sign, because "everybody" knows who and where they are.

Help us, please, as we seek to tell the story of the AFLC to a growing audience. Take a hard look at the witness of your church, including the appearance of your facilities (and even the sign out front or one the corner a few blocks away). Make use of every opportunity through the media. Get to know your neighbors.

It's possible to be too quiet when there are people who need the Lord, and when there are pastors and congregations looking for a new church family.

— **Pastor Robert L. Lee**



Five days after leaving Washington state, Lavon Bohling, Deshler, Nebraska and Pastor Tom Olson of Naknek, Alaska, landed their Cessna 150 in Naknek on September 18. The first two days of flying were spectacular. Pastor Olson said, "I had to pinch myself to see if I was awake or dreaming. The scenery was indescribable!" Later the weather kept them grounded, making the trip longer than expected. "We're thankful for those who prayed for our safety through dangerous mountain canyons, and unexpected turbulence," Pastor Olson added.

The next day he flew himself and a Sunday school teacher to services in South Naknek. Previously he would have hired an air taxi, costing the mission about \$800 a month. Now Pastor Olson expects the plane will cost about \$100 for monthly fuel and will allow him to go on visitation anytime the weather permits. Already, without solicitation, about \$7,000 has been received for a hanger and the mission is praying whether or not to quickly go ahead with plans to build it this fall.

Walking the talk

— **Pastor Kevin Olson**
AFLC Youth
Ministries Director

Dale finished his lesson with the question, “How could you tell your friends about Jesus?” A glazed stare and silence was the response. He posed the question another way, “Do your friends need Jesus? How can you help them?” Again, no response.

Dale closed the class in a general prayer, but the real prayer on his heart was for his students. “How can this faith that they profess become real and living in their lives?”

Dale’s struggle with this question is common: “How can we take what we believe and apply it to our everyday lives?”

Jesus faced this same challenge as He trained His twelve future leaders. The technique He used is so simple that we often miss it in our study and teaching of the Bible. In Matthew 4:19 Jesus marks the beginning of His ministry by calling Peter, Andrew, James and John. His first sentence to them is, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

It is easy to notice that we should follow Jesus from that Scripture, but do we miss what following is all about? To follow the teacher the student is to spend time with the teacher, to watch the teacher, to do what the teacher does, and, yes, listen to the teacher. So often our instruction is with words alone, but Jesus said, “Come, follow me.” It is the following process that teaches the student how to apply faith to real life. Verbal instruction is certainly

important, but if that is where it ends, the instruction is not complete. The student will not go where the teacher has not been.

The disciples had many experiences ahead of them as they began this process of following their teacher. Times of doubt, fear, helplessness, hunger, confrontation, confusion and quarreling would come. That sounds much like our everyday life. The disciples were taught to bring all of their problems to Jesus, who would bring about confidence, faith, strength, provision, truth, clarity and humility.

It started small!

A youth group in Burleson, Texas, started the international movement called “See You At The Pole.” During a Saturday youth rally the students felt convicted to pray for their friends, so they went to their school flagpole in the middle of the night and began the first “See You At The Pole.”

A youth group in Holland, Michigan, started the W. W. J. D. (What Would Jesus Do?) movement when they were studying a book by Charles Sheldon titled “In His Steps.” They wanted to bring Christ into their day to day lives.

Joe Ochs, 16, from Hastings, Minnesota, went to a local secular radio station and asked if they would be willing to host a Christian Teen Radio show on Sunday afternoons. The radio station agreed and put him in charge.

The schools in Wichita, Kansas, were changed when one young girl felt God’s call on her life to start a Bible study at her high school. She encouraged students at other schools to do the same, and within a few years there was a school Bible study at every high school in Wichita.

Christi Wegh, from Dickinson, North Dakota, saw the glaze in the eyes of her students; a look of, “I’ve heard all of this before, what are we going to do about it?” Ten of them set aside three days to follow their teacher. Starting at the church, they prepared by spending time in worship and prayer. Next they cleaned the church, sharpened pencils, delivered extra Sunday school materials to the ministry on the reservation, visited several shut-ins from the church, volunteered at a local nursing home, helped at the food pantry, passed out tracts at a ministry called the House of Manna, and shared Jesus with a little boy who prayed to receive Christ. After three intense days of ministry the whole group had grown closer to Jesus and they had brought Him into their everyday lives.



So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

— Colossians 1:10



Anticipation

— Mary Christenson
Calvary Free Lutheran
Fergus Falls, Minnesota

There's a perky little tree in our yard. It is not a tall tree, nor does it spread its branches wide. Yet it draws attention throughout the year. Why? Because of the promise of its fruit.

In the spring it is fragrant with blossoms. Throughout summer the roots and deep green foliage work steadily, providing the nourishment necessary for the developing fruit.

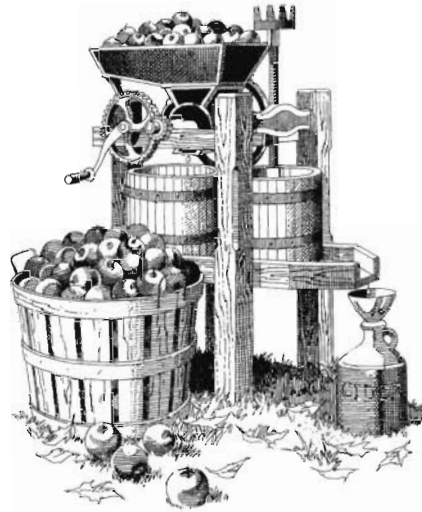
Despite the adversities of nature, the tree remains constant as its fruit quietly grows and matures. What often seems like hindrances actually aids the production of fruit. The winds, rain, and insects pollinate. Old or weak branches incapable of bearing healthy fruit are pruned away during stormy periods. These times of stress allow the tree to become sturdy and capable of bearing the heavy fruit.

Our tree has a distinctive characteristic. It leans slightly toward the east. Sometime earlier something caused it to lean. Yet, it remains sturdy as its branches bend low, even touching the ground,

heavy with fruit.

The anticipation of its fruit is heightened as late summer arrives. "How much longer do we have to wait before we can enjoy the fruit?" we ask.

That's anticipation.



As a body of believers we anticipate our hope. Hope, the expectation of future good, is the promise God has given to each of us who remain steadfast in faith.

This year's Women's Missionary Federation study, "Our Hope is in Christ," ends this next month. Throughout the study of this book we've seen the portrayal of Christ, the very Cornerstone of our faith (I Peter 2:4, 6). We were reminded of His submission to physical suffering, His sacrificial death for us, and the promise of His presence within us.

With this promise we realize

that we are not self-sustained; we are God-sustained. He provides His Word as the nourishment we need for growth as demonstrated by the fruit we exhibit in our service for Him. This growth is evidenced by our character and attitude and the strength from the pruning, stresses and joys of our life.

Now we anticipate the final passages of this book where we receive instruction for the flock. As individual members of the flock are characterized, each of us must decide into which category we fall. The distinctive individuality of believers is interesting. Assess yourself. Where do you fit within the church body? Are you fulfilling your role? Are you an encouragement not only to yourself but also to others? Understanding your role and that of others enables the whole church to be a better servant for Him.

As with the forces of nature working continually against our fruit tree, so too, the Christian faces anxieties and evil forces. This study alerts us to recognize our cagey adversary and to be prepared. This adversary is watching for the vulnerable spot, the unguarded door. But we are not alone in the battle. The care and concern of our Lord is shown in His faithful care for His flock (I Peter 5:10; Ephesians).

Like the anticipation of the delicious fruit of the tree, we can learn from November's study: "The Fulfillment." Look forward with joy and great anticipation to the richness of life in Him and the hope set before us.



Women's Missionary Federation In Memoriams

Thelma Riggengholt, Watertown, SD
Carl Flaten, Ray, ND
Josephine Tarabetz, Platte, SD
Anton Ewalt, Grenville, SD
Esther Hemingson, Breckenridge, MN
Esther Swenson, Clinton, MN
Marie Peterson, Clinton, MN
Esther Johnson, Clinton, MN
Lee Womach, Eagle Butte, SD
Ted Heyen, Jr., Salol, MN
Rosie Johnson, Wallace, SD
Emma Sakariason, Wallace, SD
Rev. Ernest Langness, Ishpeming, MI
Marqueriete Priebe, Pukwana, SD
Robert Vander Heiden, Pukwana, SD
Anna Sorem, Mayville, ND
Ethel Nyberg, Stanley, ND
Amanda Anderson, Stanley, ND
Darlene Miller, Binford, ND
Clara Mahlen, Webster, SD
James Nygaard, Webster, SD
Mrs. Lola Borg, Valley City, ND
Myron Smedshammer, California

17th Lutherans For Life National Convention scheduled

On November 5-7, 1999 Lutherans For Life will hold their convention at the Holiday Inn University Park, in West Des Moines, Iowa. The weekend will feature speakers, workshops, numerous exhibits and other special events including worship and Bible study. For more information call the LFL office at 1-800-364-LIFE.

AFLC pastor releases music CD and cassette

Pastor Ken Thoreson, Argyle, Minnesota, has released his first CD and cassette recording titled, *Like a Shepherd*. For more information or to order, contact: Parables in Chalk and Music, P.O. Box 261, Argyle, MN 56713.

El Cajon, California — Rancho San Diego Lutheran recently received a generous anonymous donation to their building fund in the form of a mutual fund. The young congregation continues to rent their worship facilities. Their website, www.freelutheran.org, provides links to other pages, a map to their church and their mission statement.

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/s/ Ellis L. Bloomfield, Printer

Wilderness Bible Camp, Lake Park, Minnesota, had their new altar and cross dedicated by AFLC president, Robert Lee, during the last summer's camp. During the Labor Day weekend retreat, over 50 people attended some of the sessions.



Beresford, South Dakota — Skrefsrud Lutheran celebrated their 90th Anniversary on Sunday, September 19, 1999. The congregation recently joined the AFLC and is served by Pastor Tom Gilman. Pastor Gilman also serves Redeemer Free Lutheran in Canton, South Dakota.

Kelani O'Neil, Posen, Michigan is combining mission work with meeting her Spanish teaching requirement for graduation from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. She is spending two months this fall working with World Mission Prayer League missionaries, Jeff and Kathy Dahl in Mexico.

Parish Education Update

"Quest for Holiness" by Adolf Koberle was recently reprinted by a Lutheran layman and is available from AFLC Parish Education in hard or softcover. This classic on sanctification shows how far self-salvation and moralism have spread in the teachings of the Christian Church and warns against the secularizing of the gospel. The author unfolds the essential character of the gospel: "This coming of God to us is a purely miraculous gift of divine love and this love, which has been disclosed in its fullness in the delivery of Jesus to death on the Cross, is the only basis for peace with God and for our fellowship with God and our neighbor."

Lutheran Bible Translators recently donated the 12-volume video set *Passports* to the Parish Education department. Each volume introduces viewers to the history and customs of a different

country and tells about the current LBT translation projects in that country. It includes a colorful pamphlet and written guide with themes and topics for discussion for elementary age through adults. It can open eyes to translation work around the world during Sunday school, youth meetings or family night gatherings.

Also available from the lending library or for purchase, are numerous resources for encouraging missions. We have feature-length videos and brief segments with study guides, visual stories for children and short story collections. We'd love to send you our complete list of resources! Call us at 612-545-5631 or e-mail at parished@aflc.org.



Is it time to add missions to your Sunday school curriculum?

Greenbush, Minnesota — Bethlehem Lutheran of rural Greenbush voted to close their church. Their last service was on October 10, 1999. Organized in 1905 as a member of the Hauge Synod, the congregation had been a member of the AFLC since 1963. The congregation had been served by Lay Pastor Irwin Schmitke, who continues to serve Immanuel Lutheran of rural Holt, Minnesota.

Rugby, North Dakota — Hope Lutheran Church voted to close on September 6, 1999. The ten-year-old congregation most recently had shared their pastor with Lebanon and North Prairie Lutheran in nearby Leeds.

Isanti, Minnesota — Redeemer Lutheran Church voted to close this fall. The congregation was started in 1992 in nearby Cambridge. Pastor Jim Haga had been serving the congregation along with Victory in Christ Lutheran in Maplewood, Minnesota.

Park River and Edinburg, North Dakota — Victory and Grace Lutheran Parish installed their new pastor on October 3, 1999. AFLC President Robert Lee officiated at the installation service for Pastor Mark Antal. The new address for the Antals is Box 599, Park River, ND 58270; phone (701) 284-6886.



Deshler, Nebraska — Abiding Word Lutheran dedicated their new worship facility on August 15, 1999. The twelve-year-old congregation had been renting a storefront building until the recent completion of their building. Pastor Raymond Klug of Blackduck, Minnesota, the congregation's first pastor, gave the morning message. Following the worship service, current pastor Jerome Nikunen led a cornerstone laying ceremony. The afternoon dedication service was led by AFLC President Robert Lee. The church is located at 1502 First Street in Deshler.

Oceanside, California — Community Lutheran Church recently received a gift in the form of stocks from a man in Wisconsin. Thirty-five years ago Pastor and Mrs. Orville Hiepler, now the pastor of Community Lutheran, befriended this former Army officer. The congregation also just sold a two-acre building lot given to the church with

the money going to the building fund. The church council has reminded the congregation that by giving items like this, there is no income tax or capital gains tax to be paid. Plus, one can report the full amount for tax deduction. This type of giving can allow the taxpayer to save money in order to give more to the Lord and His Church.



Bemidji, Minnesota — Bethany Bible Camp hosted the August 31 prayer summit for AFLC pastors in the region. Pictured are some of the pastors attending.

Evangelism Commission receives grant

Aid Association for Lutherans has given the AFLC Evangelism Commission \$5,000 for an evangelism training video. This tool will be given to each AFLC congregation to assist in the training, equipping and mobilizing of the laity in local evangelistic campaigns.

AFLC Evangelist Jim Rasmussen concludes a busy fall schedule of special meetings with meetings in Dalton, Minnesota, October 24-29. He has recently been in Beulah, North Dakota, and Shevlin and Rollag, Minnesota.

Estate planning is not just for the rich. Planning your estate is important no matter what the size. There are some basic provisions that are the same for all estate plans. There are, however, some more sophisticated planning options for the larger estates. This article addresses the basic estate planning provisions.

The primary reason for estate planning is to make sure your assets are transferred to your selected beneficiaries. Your beneficiaries may include children, relatives, friends and charities to name a few. To ensure your desires are carried out you need to have those distribution arrangements in writing. This can be accomplished either with a will or trust. Whichever documents you uti-

lize, make sure your estate is transferred in the most efficient and cost effective manner for your situation.

Establishing a written plan for guardianship for your minor children is another important responsibility. If you do not select a person to be a guardian for your children, the court will have to do that for you. It is difficult for most parents to choose a guardian because of their feelings that nobody can raise their child like they can. Prayerfully consider picking the best of the choices available knowing that you can make changes in the future. It is better to have someone you select than leaving it to the courts to decide. You can select someone you trust, who shares your Christian values and is capable of raising your children.

Providing a plan for managing the distribution to your beneficiaries can be a critical planning consideration if you have minor children, children that have difficulties with managing money, or children with alcohol and drug problems to name a few possibilities. Spouses that may want help with managing the estate is another planning consideration. Assets can be held in trusts until certain ages, to be managed and to control distributions.

Making a charitable bequest is

one of the more popular reasons for estate planning. Most Christians have a strong desire to leave a portion of their estate to the Lord's work. A percentage of the estate works the best because the gift will increase as the Lord blesses you. Many Christians consider giving a gift of at least ten percent of their estate to tithe on their increase. Proverbs 3:9 says to honor the Lord with your substance (income) and your increase (asset growth). Not until you sell an asset will you realize the gain. Many people do not honor the Lord with their gain. At death the asset is sold, the gain recognized and distributed to beneficiaries.

Life insurance is another large asset that will be collected at the time of death. This offering can be given to the Lord's work through your church, a ministry of the church, missions or the AFLC Foundation. A gift to the foundation will provide a perpetual gift to the mission of the AFLC. In this way your giving continues long after your death.

There are many planning options when it comes to estate planning. If you would like to discuss your planning options please give me a call.

— **Mark D. Johnson,**
CFP 1-800-950-2109

AFLC Memorials

department given to...

in memory of

Home Missions

Lillian Markuson

Dick Canning

Mack Soward

Rachel Fixen

Bert Borgendale

Kathryn Kahavec

Vision 2004

Lillian Markuson

Anna Sorem

Inga Iverson

World Missions

Alma Moe

Knute and Gerda Knutson

Kathryn Kahavec

General Fund

Inger Ohnstad

AFLBS

Randy Strand

Anna Sorem

Edith Arnstad

Rev. John Strand

Marvin Jorstad

Eilert Hawkinson

Myrna Hawkinson

Carol Berg

Hjalmer Anderson

Erling Hoseth

AFLTS

Alma Moe

Rev. Valdemar Anderson

Mary Elizabeth Staub

Robert E. Staub

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (8 months) – January 1 August 31, 1999

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$234,385.00	\$16,031.97	167,461.59	71
Seminary	110,296.00	15,591.75	80,993.08	73
Bible School	147,674.00	7,829.00	100,679.64	68
Home Missions.	238,152.00	10,272.06	135,356.95	57
World Missions.	190,909.00	7,720.51	87,817.17	46
Capital Investment . .	14,065.00	388.49	4,242.94	30
Parish Education . . .	56,854.00	3,417.90	41,617.05	73
Church Extension . . .	21,051.00	484.21	11,604.82	55
TOTALS	\$1,013,386.00	61,735.89	629,773.24	62
TOTALS 1997	1,278,758.00	79,894.94	758,899.27	59
Goal 67%				

AFLC Evangelism Department received \$8,341.61.

Give it a try

We began the adventure of trying to plant a new congregation in a suburb of Portland, Oregon two years ago. We've done a lot of praying, knocked on quite a few doors, did some advertising, attempted to get involved in the community, did a lot of inviting and tried in a number of ways to let people know about Jesus and our congregation and create interest among people to come and visit us. But it hasn't worked out the way we envisioned. We haven't had visitors coming to "check us out." The interest in the community has been pretty low. The dream of seeing a new congregation in this area does not seem to be coming true in the time and way we had hoped.

But we tried.

I knew going in that many attempts to plant congregations do not work out for various reasons. But we thought this attempt would work. God was leading. This seemed to be His plan and timing. We were looking forward to what He was going to do.

Maybe He had a different plan.

I still believe He wanted us to give this a try. I think we have been in His will the past two years, but maybe His will was not for a congregation to be planted here. God's plan all along may have been for us to spend a couple years growing as a small group, together in the Lord, touching a few lives and then go other places to serve Him. If we have been faithful to His plan than this has been a successful and significant time, even if it has not gone according to our plan.

We didn't reach a lot of lives, but we did touch a few. We saw some kids come to know Jesus. It could be that one day some of those kids will be doing special things for the Lord and they'll look back and say, "It all started that summer at a vacation Bible school put on by Willamette Free Lutheran Church"

It was good to give it a try. In Luke 10 we read of Jesus sending out 72 of his followers. He makes clear in His instructions to them that they will be welcomed in some towns, but not in others. That is to be expected. It is not to be looked upon as a sign of failure.

In the book of Acts we read of the early Christians meeting a wide range of responses as they went out to share the good news of Jesus. They came upon some open doors and some that

were closed. Sometimes they were cheered and other times jeered.

As we engage in mission work, whether it is in our own country or in another, at times things will seem to go well. Other times, by our definition, it may look like failure. Our attempts may work, or they may not.

Babe Ruth is remembered for hitting 714 home runs while playing major league baseball. He also struck out 1,330 times. He said, "Never let the fear of striking out keep you from swinging."

At times, in service of the Lord, the cause of our not hitting a home run may be that we have been so afraid of striking out we haven't even swung the bat. We need to try. We need to take risks. Maybe you should attempt that idea for a mission outreach, even though it hasn't been done before. If God is leading and it is in accord with His Word, than give that venture at sharing the good news in a unique way a try.

After serving in churches for many years, a speaker observed that some of the things he tried failed and some worked, but everything he didn't try because he was afraid it might fail didn't work.

President Theodore Roosevelt said: "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose

face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again; because there is not effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumphs of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

In mission work for the Lord, sometimes we will know victory; other times we will experience what seems to be defeat. Nevertheless, let us go into the arena, instead of trying to find a place that is risk-free. Let us go forward in faith not fear, knowing that Jesus is with us always (cf. Matthew 28:19, 20, NIV).

— *Pastor Craig Johnson*

**"Maybe He
had a
different
plan."**

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Periodicals

Jesus Christ, the beginning and the end!

The mission of the Association
Retreat Center continues into the
new century.

Catch our final retreat of 1999

October 22-24, 1999 is the date for the Fall Family Retreat, our final event of the 1999 season. If you liked the August Family Camp, you'll be sure to enjoy this mini-camp. Registration will begin at 5 p.m. and continue through Sunday evening. The weekend begins with a time of praise and worship followed by our usual eat & meet. The schedule includes Pastor David Johnson of Amery, Wisconsin as the speaker for the adults. We have a special surprise for our annual Bible Character Costume Party to be held on Saturday night. Kids of ALL ages may come dressed as their favorite Bible character, famous Christian or even a whole story from the Bible. Use your imagination! As always, there will be games, a hayride, and plenty of candy. Be sure to pack your toothbrush! The cost for a family is \$150. There is still time to register. Just call Jolene at 1-800-294-2877 or e-mail us at thearc@cornernet.com.



The 2000 ARC schedule

January 17-18 — Home Mis-
sions Pastors' Retreat
January 18-20 — AFLC Pastors'
Conference
February 4-6 — SIDEbySIDE
(Sr. High Retreat)
February 18-20 — Junior Sno
Daze
March 3-4 — Men's Retreat
March 24-26 — Couple's Retreat

April 28-30 — Women's Retreat
(note the date change)
June 13-18 — AFLC Annual
Conference
June 25-30 — Junior Camp
July 17-22 — Youth Leadership
Conference
July 29-August 5 — Family
Camp
October 6-8 — Classic's Retreat
October 27-29 — Family Retreat