

# The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

October 13, 1998

# GO

## into all the world



AFLC Missions in motion

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 13, 1998  
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## AN ENCOURAGING WORD

### Great plans

"I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" Jeremiah 29:11.

**G**od speaks to the believer and encourages us regards the future. He reminds us that He has great plans for us. When the Lord spoke to the children of Israel they were facing an extended period of God's discipline as they were being taken captive to Babylon. Yet God encouraged them that they would have a hope and a future. Many times God works this way in the lives of those who trust Him.

Joseph of the Old Testament is a primary example of this. In a dream, God promised Joseph a great future. God's plan was to exalt Joseph above everyone in his family. But Joseph experienced great trials before it came to pass.

Joseph's brothers heard him talk about his dream and were jealous. They were so upset, they cooked up a plan to put him to death. But the opportunity arose to sell him as a slave, so they took the opportunity and made some money in their bargain. Did Joseph's situation nullify the promise of God? Absolutely not! The Lord was with Joseph and prospered him in spite of his slavery.

While Joseph was a slave in Egypt, his master's wife falsely accused him of acting indecently toward her. When Joseph's master heard about it, Joseph was thrown in prison. In spite of these hardships, God's plans for him were still in place. The Lord's promises always come true.

Through a miraculous turn of

events Joseph was promoted from prison to the second-in-command in all of Egypt. Under his leadership, Egypt became the breadbasket of the known world. To avoid starvation, Joseph's brothers came to Egypt and humbled themselves, bowing before him. The Lord saved their lives through the food Joseph supplied in the midst of famine. What an example of the Lord's provision and fulfillment of His promise!

Because of Jesus' life, sacrifice, and resurrection, God has promised the believer a good future. He has promised to take care of our needs, and to walk with us during the trials of this life. Most importantly, the Lord has informed us of His plans of hope for our future in eternity. Does that mean we will not experience problems and hardships in this life? No; at times it may seem to us we get an overdose of them.

Are you going through a hard time today? God has promised that He has good plans for your future. Take courage from Joseph's experience. Trust in God. He will never break His promise to you.



— **Pastor Del Palmer**  
**Faith Lutheran**  
**Shakopee, Minnesota**

## sound bites

**Once and for all, we must put out of our minds that the pur-**

**1** **pose of life here is to enjoy ourselves, to have a good time, to be happy, to make money, and to live in ease and comfort. That is not what life is all about.**

— Peter Marshall

The church planter starts with a blueprint in mind, knowing what a church looks like because he or she

**4** **was raised in one. But God's people are to expand not by producing replicas of a structure, but by bringing unbelievers to faith and then meeting their needs. As the new believers proceed through life together, the appropriate forms are agreed upon and emerge to facilitate biblical functions.**

— Jim Petersen

**6**

**Paul had a tremendous passion to see the saints mature, but he had equal passion to get the gospel out to those who hadn't heard it.**

— Bob Thune

**2**

The natural tendency is to adopt the club mentality. We've had to go through that. People were meeting just their own needs, acting like sponges. That's why our membership commitment requires people to be involved in outreach.

— Wayne Gordon

**In 1800, perhaps one percent of Protestant Christians lived in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. By 1900, this number had grown to ten percent. Today, at least 67 per-**

**3** **cent of all active Protestant Christians live in countries once considered foreign mission fields. ... From a Christian standpoint, the modern missionary movement has turned the world upside down.**

— Paul E. Pierson

It has been said that we ought not to force our way, but to wait for the openings, and leadings of Providence; but it might with equal propriety be answered in this case, neither ought we to neglect embracing those openings in Providence which daily present themselves to us

**5**

— William Carey



— *Pastor Stephen Mundfrom*  
AFLC Home Missions  
Committee Secretary  
Sebekka, Minnesota

**"And thus I aspired to  
preach the gospel, not  
where Christ was already  
named, that I might not  
build on another man's  
foundation."**

— Romans 15:20

# The best way to reach the lost: planting new churches

In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul expressed his desire to see the gospel spread, not just from new converts joining the existing churches, but through new churches in new geographic areas where there had previously been no gospel witness. When God's Spirit leads the church it has a vision and mission to reach beyond its current scope of ministry to work on the edges and frontiers of the gospel's advance. This is the imperative of missions, both in America and around the world.

Leaders who are familiar with evangelism and church planting agree that new churches are the best way to spread the gospel to the lost. A new church may have more motivation to reach the lost (it wants to grow), often has more sensitivity to the needs of the lost, and should be free from the weight of tradition that keeps many churches from responding effectively to those who cry for help.

One statistic highlights the need for planting new churches. In this century the number of churches in America has less than doubled (from 212,320 to about 350,000), while at the same time our population has tripled. Put another way, there was one church in America for every 470 people in 1900, today there are as many as 850 people for every church! Even if this statistic tells only part of the story, we are not winning, but losing the battle for souls!

The AFLC has been largely a regional church, in that most of our congregations are located in the Upper Midwest. The last decades have seen some new areas of work, especially in the South. Home missions continues to look for new areas where we can take the gospel, and where we can build new churches.

When you live most or all of your life in those areas where our church body is better represented, it is easy to assume that

most people in our country have access to faithful Lutheran churches. This is not the case. In many regions in America there are few churches that hold to our Lutheran heritage with faithfulness. Some families have difficulty finding a church where they can have their children baptized and also taught the inerrant truth of God's Word as they grow up. They have not found churches nearby that are congregational in form, that call for personal faith and holiness, and have pastors who are trained to be servants of the congregation.

A good example of this is our newest work in suburban Phoenix, Arizona. The Mormons already have plots of land and buildings (not "churches") going up in the newest areas of development, while evangelical churches proclaiming God's truth are just thinking of beginning.

Our preliminary contacts in the area show that people are open to the kind of congregations we hope to establish. Lord willing, this congregation will begin worshipping in November in an elementary school in Gilbert, a southern suburb of Phoenix.

## Great things happen

The situation was grim. The government was dealing with some political unrest and problems. The wicked ruler began to persecute the believers. He put to death an early church leader and found favor with a majority of his people. In an effort to further increase his popularity he arrested another prominent believer during one of their most important church celebrations: the Passover.

Check out Acts 12. The first four verses tell us about how Herod was mistreating the believers. In verse two, we find that

# in new areas

Another example is in Loveland, Colorado where our home mission church has seen support from individuals in the community and has made significant progress.

When we look over the landscape of America, the great need for the gospel is in the large cities and metropolitan areas. The terrible effects of Satan's work are so visible in the broken lives and homes. Our home mission work needs to be directed into these areas. But these are exactly the areas where the living expenses for pastors and building prices for development are the highest.

We have been unable to move into some larger cities for lack of resources. At the same time it is very true that in the cities, the down-to-earth basics of our simple worship and uncomplicated

message are so needed.

This leads to the real reason why home missions is a vital ministry for our church: people are open and are responding to God. Our goal has been to find the new churches of America. Our congregations are doing great work, reaching out and responding to the needs of the world we are in. God is blessing with souls brought into the Kingdom.

This is our message. God is at work. He has a heart for the lost. He "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). Let's find out where God is at work and join Him!



— **Pastor Paul Nash**  
**AFLC Home Missions Director**



## when God's people pray

by killing  
James (John's brother)  
with a sword, he was winning the confidence of the Jews. Verse three tells us that Peter is next on his list and is arrested and jailed. This was no small production as four squads of soldiers were involved in his arrest and jailing.

What was this small group of Christians going to do? They did the most practical and the wisest thing of all. They went to prayer. The Bible tells us that this group went **fervently** to prayer.

What happened when God's people got serious in their prayer time? What happens when God's people come to the end of their rope and realize that **only** God can intervene? In this situation and in others throughout the centuries, we see God hearing the cries of His people.

An angel escort delivered

Peter from a double set of chains, instructed him to put on his coat, quietly led him past several sets of guards to a city gate that opened by itself and then left him on a city street! That's an incredible God! Peter came to himself and understood he had been delivered from a wicked ruler and all that the Jewish people were expecting.

It was not God's plan for Peter to be killed at this time. Could God's plan have included teaching a young church how to pray?

I'm wondering if perhaps God isn't using some of the events we see happening around us in our churches and country to again teach us how to pray. Perhaps we have become complacent, mechanical or ritualistic in our prayer life and service to God. James chapter one, reminds us that trials often come to bring us back to our knees.

Will you, as our AFLC people, join in praying for our nation, for our churches, our pastors and

especially our home mission pastors and congregations? Our home mission pastors are facing some incredible needs, difficult situations and intense spiritual warfare. I wish you could sit with me and listen to their phone calls and get a glimpse of what some are facing. The proclamation of God's Word is bringing a reaction from the world as it did in the days of Peter.

On behalf of all involved with home missions, we plead for your continued prayer support for these young churches and their pastors. Get serious with God and fervently intervene for us in home missions, for our communities and for our country. The need for living congregations where the Word of God is proclaimed has never been greater.

Thank you for your prayer support and financial support. Let us encourage one another to keep on keeping on, to persevere and to fervently pray. God hears the cries of His people!





**A** home mission pastor is human! He is a man called by God and by the church to be an instrument of blessing.

Expectations of the pastor are high and we have a low tolerance for failure. We look to the pastor as the shepherd of the flock (and rightly so), but in recent years we've borrowed from the business world the expectation of the pastor as the CEO (Chief Executive Officer). With this comes the demand for sharp administrative skills, creative techniques for growth, and dynamic powers of leadership. We expect the pastor to preach sermons with good content so that God's people are edified and the unbelievers are called to repentance. He is to be equally skilled in relating to youth as well as to the growing number of senior citizens. Of course it helps if he is musical (or perhaps someone in his family has these gifts), and he can lead the congregational singing.

**When crisis strikes, the pastor is called upon to bring wisdom, comfort and encouragement to the situation. He listens to expressions of guilt, sorrow, bitterness, criticism — and sometimes to the degree that his own soul is emptied of wisdom and peace.**

People expect him to be a leader in the community and a role model of whom they can be proud. He is to be wise, congenial, humble, gifted and patient.

# Does he

How then does the home mission pastor survive under these qualifications, or any pastor or human being for that matter? Not too well.

He is human like the rest of us. He is limited as are the rest of us. He has inner struggles and grows weary and discouraged like the rest of us. He is also tempted to react negatively to criticism like the rest of us. His problem is accentuated with the spotlight on him and therefore he is the most vulnerable person in the congregation. His own expectations are also to be dealt with, along with those from the community and congregation.

We expect help from our pastor so we also need to help him and create an atmosphere of encouragement where he is serving. A few years ago I listened to a speaker who was of a different race than the audience. He said, "I came here today as a complete stranger, but as I mingled with this group I felt a welcome spirit of friendship. And when you are with friends, you are never afraid."

Home mission pastors are often afraid of failure. They have little or no staff except themselves and their family. They are expected to build a congregation. (Not an easy task when you consider the competition from well established and multistaffed mega

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## ❖ What's new in home missions

◆ **Pitt Meadows, British Columbia** — Since the end of May, a Bible study group has met in a home on Wednesday evenings to study the Book of Acts. Pastor Steve Olinger of nearby Ferndale, Washington is the leader.

◆ **Durant, Oklahoma** — A new AFLC mission congregation, Faith Lutheran has begun meeting in Durant, a community near the Texas border. The ministry grew from an evening Bible study, and began to meet as a worshipping congregation this summer. They are presently renting worship facilities in a Seventh Day Adventist church. As yet the group has no pastor. Pastor Roy

Johnson of Wichita Falls and Pastor Jerry Peterson of Oklahoma City have been graciously permitted by their congregations to help out in Durant for the interim. The Barnabas youth team also spent a week with them this summer.

The Durant work is not included in the AFLC Home Missions 1998 budget. For this reason, the home missions committee is seeking gifts designated for this work. Contributions may be sent to the AFLC Home Missions Department, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441. Indicate Durant, Oklahoma on the memo line. All such gifts will be reserved for support of this new ministry.

◆ **Loveland, Colorado** — Lutheran Church of Hope recently purchased five prime acres for \$250,000. They now begin a lengthy process of getting the land annexed to the city at a cost of \$35,000 after which they can apply for a building permit for a fee of \$50,000. Please pray that the city will be cooperative in the annexation process. Pastor Larry Haagenon said, "We thank the Lord for a real unity in the congregation and anticipation as we begin this next step." The congregation's first series of special meetings was held September 6-11, with Pastor Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, North Dakota, preaching at the nightly services.

# need encouragement?

churches.) Home mission pastors need to feel they are among friends who love them, respect them, and accept them.

Yes, their human weaknesses are there. But magnify their good traits and shield their defects in prayer, patience, and love. In his heart, the pastor is aware of his limitations and that is why it is so refreshing to be loved and encouraged. A person works better in such an atmosphere. Even those with limited gifts can be very useful and successful church planters with the love and assistance of their flock.

As we all on occasion feel the need to express ourselves and unburden our hearts, so also does your pastor. But he has a problem. He is a man of God. He really never gets discouraged, does he?

Look at Elijah after the victory on Mt. Carmel and John the Baptist when he sat in prison. Both were consumed with discouragement and this incapacitated them. If possible, the board of deacons could be a place where open, honest and confidential dialogue could take place. A friendly, compassionate, and patient deacon board can provide invaluable guidance and support to the pastor. As a congregation, you can let your pastor know by words and deeds that you appreciate him. You never know when an

expression of love and appreciation may come just at the time when the pastor is at a low ebb.

The home missions committee of the AFLC also is committed to a ministry of encouragement, and it has taken steps to implement this vision. They see the need for home mission pastors to have a resource where they can openly discuss their problems, articulate their frustrations, and expose their inner struggles in a non-judgmental atmosphere of love, complete acceptance, respect and confidentiality. In other words, such workers will not be laid aside (thought less of) when they have been honest with themselves in the presence of a person offering pastoral care.

This ministry is now being offered through the home missions department with the prayer that God will use these efforts to encourage our friends who are valiantly serving our Lord in the front trenches. Can we count on you to intercede for this ministry? We thank God and we thank you for giving yourself to fervent prayer.



*(Pastor Strom is available for pastoral care and can be reached at Rt. 4 Box 206, Fergus Falls, MN 56537 and by calling 218-739-5844.)*

— **Pastor**  
**Everald H. Strom**  
**Fergus Falls,**  
**Minnesota**

## ◆ Beaverton, Oregon —

Willamette Free Lutheran, a congregation that began October 1997, began renting what had previously been a craft store this past summer. Having the building throughout the

week enabled them to begin a mid-week family night program on Wednesday evenings this fall.

On October 2 to 4 the youth of the Pacific Northwest District gathered in Beaverton for a weekend of

evangelism training and application. Gospels of John, invitations to the congregation and free light bulbs were distributed door-to-door in the area.

The congregation is served by Pastor Craig Johnson.



Last summer's Majesty team from AFLBS led vacation Bible school in Beaverton.

◆ **Gilbert, Arizona —** East Valley Phoenix fellowship continues the process of organizing as an AFLC congregation. Worship is scheduled to begin the first Sunday of November, 1998, with Pastor Walter Johnson serving as interim pastor. A local elementary school has been reserved as a meeting place from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Sundays. Services will be advertised in the local newspaper beginning in mid-October. "The Lord opened doors as  
(continued on page 8)



An aerial view view of South Naknek, Alaska.

# Going north

A unique place with common needs

**T**he bears in the church parking lot were an indication that this was not like some other spots where congregations meet. The four brown bears were checking out the contents of a dumpster.

They were not interested in Wednesday evening Bible study, and we weren't interested in having them join us.

In June 1998, Pastor Tom Olson, his wife Sharon and their children Josiah, Hannah and Rebecca, moved from the Cumberland, Wisconsin area where he had been serving two AFLC congregations for nine years to the unique mission field of Naknek, Alaska. Life in Alaska isn't quite the same as life in "the lower 48."

The difference begins with how you get to Naknek. You can't drive there. You fly.

First you fly into Anchorage. Tom was returning to Alaska from travels in the lower 48. He and I met in Anchorage on September 1. Before flying out the next day, we went

## ARIZONA

we see His hand leading us," said Eldwyn Van Bruggen of Valley City, North Dakota and Mesa, Arizona. He added, "We have a legacy given to us for \$35,000 and we are urging congregation members to match this, which will give us funding to go for two years. We also have memorial gifts in memory of Luther Monson, a copy machine and an organ have been donated which I'll haul down at the end of October." After October 25, the Van Bruggens can be reached at (602) 854-0617.

Directions to the school are as follows: take Val Vista Drive south of I-60 to Guadalupe Ave.; turn east and go about a quarter mile to Key Biscayne; turn south three blocks to Sonoma Branch Elementary School, 601 N. Key Biscayne.

A Friday evening Bible study is meeting at the home of Adeline Monson in Apache Junction. This is a continuation of the study begun last year and is led by Eld-

wyn Van Bruggen. Vint and Leah Bruflat of Chandler, Arizona have also been coordinating the new mission. Everyone is welcome to make this Gilbert mission congregation their church home while

staying in the Valley of the Sun. Please pray and invite a friend and tell your acquaintances to contact Vint as soon as they arrive. Call (602) 855-3612; fax (602) 917-7868; e-mail vlbru@dancris.com.

## Volunteers sought for evangelism blitz

All AFLC servants and workers are invited to gather in Gilbert, Arizona beginning November 4, 1998 to join the AFLC Home Missions and Evangelism Committees for a time of community outreach and evangelism in the northeast Gilbert/southeast Mesa communities.

This blitz will culminate in special meetings scheduled for November 8-11, featuring Pastor Allen Monson of Lakeville, Minnesota as the speaker and a praise team of AFLC pastors to

lead music. For more information contact the church office at (602) 855-3612 or fax (602) 917-7868.

Some housing is available. Airline tickets from Minneapolis to Phoenix have been reserved for November 4 departure and November 12 return at a cost of around \$250 per person. For more information on airline travel, call the home missions office at (612) 545-5631. Those who can drive to Gilbert and are already living in the area, are also welcome.



grocery shopping. Naknek has a store, but prices are high and variety is low. When in Anchorage you take advantage of the great selection, and you get as much on the plane as you can. With things like baking supplies and fresh fruit tucked in throughout our luggage and boxes of groceries becoming check-in baggage, we headed to Naknek.

Commercial flights go to the town of King Salmon; a place with many visitors during hunting and fishing season, and about 375 year-around residents. From there you drive the 15 miles to Naknek.

The base of the Naknek economy is commercial fishing and processing. The area bustles in the summer as thousands come to fish for salmon and work in the canneries. A recent visitor's guide estimates the population that remains in Naknek throughout the year is 565.

The situation on the other side of the river in South Naknek is somewhat similar, although it is more of a traditional rural community with a predominantly native population. No road to another community exists in South Naknek.

The outreach in the area is part of the work of the Lutheran Mission Societies. Pastor Olson serves as an AFLC pastor, on loan to the mission.

The mission also operates the KAKN radio station. The station's format is primarily Christian music. It also strives to be a "hometown station," broadcasting local and world news, weather updates and the local high school basketball play-by-play.

Some biblical teaching and preaching programs are part of the station's ministry. It is anticipated that Tom will be involved in these programs as a part of his ministry in the near future.

The ministry is in a unique place, but it has many similarities to the work that goes on in congregations elsewhere. Bears may be in the parking lot outside, but on Wednesday nights it is Bible study and prayer going on inside. On Sunday mornings Sunday school and worship services take place in Naknek. On Sunday afternoon it's Sunday school and worship service in South Naknek. Then it is back to Naknek for a Sunday evening service. The mode of transportation between the two places is a plane instead of a car, but it remains Christ who is proclaimed and Christ who is worshiped.

The people live in a place different in many ways from the crowded suburb where I live, but their chief needs are the same. They need to repent of sin and know Jesus. They need to hear of Jesus' death and resur-

rection. They need to be grounded in the Word of God.

Please pray for Tom, Sharon and their children and the congregations they serve. God has given and will continue to give them many special opportunities to share His love and truth. Challenges await as well.

In particular, pray with the mission as they sense a need for someone to live among the people of South Naknek and serve, what is in some ways, an unreached people. No other evangelical work exists in the community.

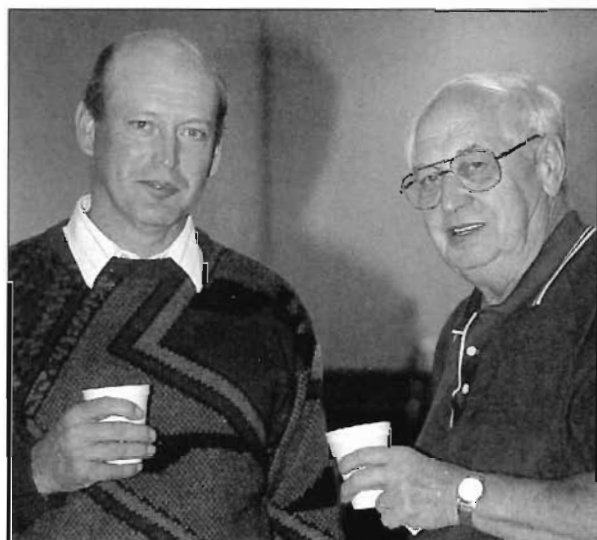
Pray for Tom as he continues to gain experience flying what is to him a new plane in a new setting.

Alaska stands out as one of the greatest examples on earth of the majesty of God's creation. As I saw the mountains, the glaciers, the sea, the wildlife and the vast tundra, I was reminded again of God's bigness and my smallness. I was also struck by how incredible it is that the Creator God is deeply interested in the people of a little, remote place like Naknek and South Naknek, wanting them to hear His Word. It is just as incredible that He is interested in people like you and me and the places where we live. And yet, praise God, He is.

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ... O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8:3-5,9, NIV).



**Pastor Tom and Sharon Olson and family.**



**Lay pastor Henry Mohagen, Towner, North Dakota, and world missions committee chairman Vernon Russum of Grafton, North Dakota visited at the All-Boards workshop September 22 at the ARC. Pastor Mohagen and his wife, Linda, spent the month of August in Naknek, Alaska.**



**— Pastor Craig Johnson  
Willamette Free Lutheran  
Beaverton, Oregon**



# What I have been

— *Pastor Tim Hinrichs*  
*Cesky Tesin, Czech Republic*



The newly opened Bible school in Dziegelow, Poland. Missionary Tim Hinrichs teaches Old Testament at the school.

## ***From another first-term missionary family ...***

"For me, prayer is the preparation for the battle. For Jesus, prayer was the battle itself."  
*— Haddon Robinson*

There was a great sense of satisfaction for me as I turned over the work here in downtown Aguascalientes. As I have been filling in this past year for Dan Giles, God has been opening my eyes to many things about the culture in Mexico and how people here respond to the good news, whether positively or not. I've also been able to get a better understanding of congregational life among Mexican Christians.

The next stage for us could very likely be focusing on one particular suburb, Las Cumbres, with the hope of starting a new congregation there.

We continue to pray for you, our supporters. We have prayer cards with you or your congregation, many with pictures! ... I am becoming more and more convinced that your prayers as well as ours are very much the battle itself and not just sideline refreshment.

— *Todd, Barb, Rachel, Megan, and Kirstie Schierkolk*  
*Aguascalientes, Mexico*

**H**ave you ever been to a Norwegian church in which German and Polish is preached? It sounds impossible but high in the mountains of southwest Poland is the wooden church known as Wang which was transported from Norway over a century ago. Today, it is used by the local Polish Lutheran congregation for their worship services. Every summer tourists from all over Europe come to see this beautiful church.

The Polish Lutheran Church organizes an evangelistic outreach each year during the tourist season. Last summer I was invited to be a part of this and spoke every afternoon at the tent located next to the church. I was excited. It would be a golden opportunity to be a part of a powerful evangelistic ministry.

That week in August arrived and there were about 30 youth from other parts of Poland to work with the hospitals, parks and, of course, at the church. I'll never forget how nervous I became as I waited for this. I had all my messages ready and was set to reach the lost for Christ!

Monday at 4 p.m. we began with praise and worship. After twenty minutes, I walked out on the stage only to see a few souls in the audience, most of whom were on our team. I was discouraged. We called upon the Lord for answers and help.

On Tuesday, 4 o'clock arrived and even fewer showed up. I was depressed.

It was a humbling time of searching for direction from the Lord. That night He gave us a new strategy. The rest of the week, we went to where the people were.

Wednesday morning found us with our amplifier, mikes, and puppet stage right next to the front door of the church where long lines of people waited for the tour. It was frightening. I began street preaching and the Lord blessed it greatly. Our youth went into the crowd with religious surveys and began sharing one with those people wanting to see the cross of Jesus who died for them. Many children gathered around

# learning

the puppet theater. Hundreds of seeds were planted!

Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight." Sometimes that means we throw away hours of preparation and expectations. He simply wants "Here I am, send me." He will lead us in the best path.

What often happens is that we decide to accomplish our plans certain that these are the Lord's plans. I love the word "tyrdohlavý." In Czech "trydo" means hard and "hlava" means head. So often I am hard-headed. I dictate to the Lord what I will accomplish for Him. Nothing will change my resolve. I am a missionary so that means I'm going to save souls and I will do it in a way that makes sense to me. The moment I do that, I can prepare for things to fall apart as a result of leaning on my own understanding.

During these past three years in the Czech Republic and Poland, I've learned that lesson over and over again. At times my expectations were way ahead of the Lord and His plans and the result is agonizing. I need to be open to the Holy Spirit's leading, and never throw away an idea because it is scary or unreasonable. I have also been taught to never put my own expectations on the outcome of the ministry God has placed me in.

The Lord does not want me to look for a harvest or a great revival, but plant seeds of the gospel, cultivate souls, water them and be ready when they are ripe. That means faithfulness — nothing more and nothing less. Mission work is different than what I had expected. It's rarely "bringing in the sheaves." More often it's a daily grind of being faithful in small and seemingly insignificant things. That's where the "rubber hits the road." We want to see big things happen, but the Lord's call is simply to be faithful every day in each open door of service that He lays before us. It's not easy and not always fun. But it is the Lord's calling for every believer.



# Answering the call

**M**My name is Fernando Herrera. My wife Monse and I are members of Spring of Living Water church in Aguascalientes, Mexico. We have just finished three years of study at the Mexican Lutheran Bible Institute in Mazatlán. The Bible Institute offers five different areas of specialty, and we chose that of missionary work.

In May 1996 in the Pauline Epistles class, we were studying about spiritual gifts. Monse and I began to wonder what would be the ministry to which God was calling us. We knew God had a specific ministry for us, but didn't know what it would be.

In July of that year we met Missionary Paul Abel from Brazil, when he and his family came to Aguascalientes on a Partners in Mission bus tour. We talked about our call into missions and he suggested we think about doing our Bible school internship year in Brazil. After corresponding with him and the other missionaries in Brazil, we met Pastor Gene Enderlein, the director of world missions of the AFLC. I asked him if the AFLC would approve our going to Brazil for our internship. When he said he thought it could be done, we spent still another year in prayer.

During this time, the Lord laid these verses on our hearts:

"... every one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!'" (Romans 10:13-15).

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of his judgement is come: and worship Him that made and heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of waters'" (Revelation 14:6-7).

(continued on next page)

## MISSIONARY FROM MEXICO

The missionaries in Brazil wrote to tell us that we would be able to live at the Free Lutheran Bible School in Campo Mourão, Brazil, and that we would need about \$400 American dollars per month to cover our living expenses. After presenting this need to the Lutheran churches here in Mexico, they (and one Independent Bible Church here in Aguascalientes) felt led of the Lord and pledged to support us in that amount. This is very important, as it shows that our Mexican Lutheran Church has reached the point in its spiritual growth where we are ready and able to send missionaries for the first time in history.

While in Brazil we expect to learn as much as we can of the Portuguese language. We will work in the Miriam Infant Home at Campo Mourão and study New Testament Greek (in Portuguese!) with Connely Dyrud. We hope to be able to do evangelism in Paraguay and Argentina, and get to know the churches of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations of Brazil.

At the same time, we will be writing our master's theses in order to finish the requirements for our theological degrees from the Mexican Lutheran Bible Institute. Monse is writing her thesis on the role of women on the mission field; mine will be on the evangelistic use of music in world missions (ethnomusicology).

What will we do after this internship year?

We plan to come back to Aguascalientes to work with Pastor Giles in our church here, and I will be ordained into the ministry of the Free Lutheran Church in Mexico. But that isn't the end of the story.

The world of today is completely full of crises and conflict. Our enemy, though already defeated, still fights and struggles to drag as many people as he can with him to hell. Two-thirds of the population of the world has never heard the gospel. They don't know that the Lord Jesus died for them on the cross and calls them to eternal life. The greatest number of these people are located in the area of the planet known as the 10/40 Window, which includes North Africa, Southern Europe and the Orient. Statistics show that there are 12,000 tribes as yet unreached for Christ.

The Lord has laid one of these on our hearts: the Berber people, who are scattered in the North African countries of Morocco, Algiers, Mauritania, and Tunis. Our vision is to work in Morocco, beginning in the cities

**Puebla, Mexico** — We're on the road again! We are thankful for the opportunity to teach six classes in four locations. The subjects include: Lutheran Doctrine, Pastoral Theology, and Acts. All are taught as extension seminary courses. I also teach a class on Sunday mornings in one of the churches entitled "Building Up One Another."

closest to Spain — Ceuta and Melilla, looking for contacts with the Berber people as a way of entering into the central part of the country, learning their language, customs and music. By this means we hope to reach them for Christ.

Morocco is a Moslem country, completely closed to the Gospel. We know that the only way to get into Morocco is through some kind of secular work. I have worked for some time as a professional cellist and music teacher. We may be able to gain entry by teaching music or by playing in an orchestra. We have been praying about this and have gotten an answer through an uncle of mine who is an elder in a Christian church here in Mexico, and knows three missionaries already working in Morocco — two Americans and one Canadian, whom we hope to meet.

There are some difficulties, being the first Lutheran missionaries from Mexico. Our churches struggle with the "grasshopper complex" that plagued the spies sent by Moses to the Promised Land. Our churches are small and poor, and we have always been a mission field, not a mission resource. We tend to see the problems as larger than our resources, instead of looking to the Lord who has promised to be with us wherever He sends us and to supply every need. We and our churches need your prayers.

We thank the Lord for the support so many of you have already shown us and for sending the missionaries who are still serving in Mexico. Without them, our church would not be here, and we would not have known Jesus. We hope that some day a church in Morocco will say the same thing about us.



— Fernando Herrera  
Aguascalientes, Mexico

We do face challenges. Heavy rains makes it difficult to get to a couple locations on a regular basis. Without consistency, students can lose the discipline and interest. Another concern is that we are scheduled to return to the States for "home assignment." We plan to go north in December for three months. We will try to divide our time into three parts — rest, study and speak-

ing in the churches. In January I hope to study at the AFLC seminary short course and be available to speak on the weekends and during the month of February.

Thank you for your prayer support as we travel and serve the Lord here in the state of Puebla.

— *Missionary Dick Gunderson  
on loan from the AFLC to the  
World Missionary Prayer League*

## Why send missionaries from Mexico?

— *Missionary Dan Giles  
Aguascalientes, Mexico*

W

Why send missionaries from countries traditionally considered missionary targets?

In the first place, the goal of missionary work is to bring the national church in the

"target" country to the point of maturity. Maturity means, among other things, that they are self-supporting, self-governing and self-perpetuating. It means they are sending and not just receiving missionaries. The fact that the Mexican church is now sending out missionaries means that it's working! Our work here is not done, but the churches we serve on the field have reached a new point of maturity, as we have hoped and prayed would happen.

In the second place, Americans are not able to go to certain places in the world. A large portion of the Moslem world defines the United States as the "great Satan." It isn't healthy to travel to many Moslem countries. Mexicans, however, don't have this "stigma." They basically don't have any enemies in the world, and they are able to go to such places without exposing themselves to such dangers. They can get visas to some countries where Americans can't.

Because of the fact that the Spanish Moslems (Moors) ruled Spain for 700 years, the Spanish language contains many Arabic loanwords and linguistic similarities to Arabic. We hope this will make it easier for Mexican missionaries to learn Arabic.

Fernando and Monse aren't going to Brazil as missionaries; rather, this is part of their training. As students majoring in missionary work at the Mexican Lutheran Bible School in Mazatlán (run by the World Mission Prayer League), they are required to get a year's experience in ministry in a language other than

their own (Spanish), and in a culture other than their own (Mexican). Portuguese is different enough from Spanish and the Brazilian culture is different enough from Mexican that they think a year's internship in Brazil, struggling with the language and cultural differences would be beneficial. Also, since their goal is ultimately to work in a Moslem country, some knowledge of Portuguese might actually be helpful for the future, since some of the Moslem countries of Northwestern Africa are former Portuguese colonies and still use Portuguese as a lingua franca.

The churches here in Mexico, in spite of the fact that they are poor and small and struggle to meet their own expenses, pay their own pastors, and build their own buildings, have taken up the burden of the support for Fernando and Monse. They are so thrilled to be sending out a missionary couple — the first Mexican Lutheran missionaries — for the first time in history! They do, though, at this point, need help with the airfare. The cost of this can be steep. It must be purchased before visas will be issued.

Helping with Fernando and Monse's airfare has been approved as a project by the AFLC World Missions Committee. Congregations and individuals who are interested and able to help may contact the AFLC World Missions Department, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441; phone 612-545-5631.

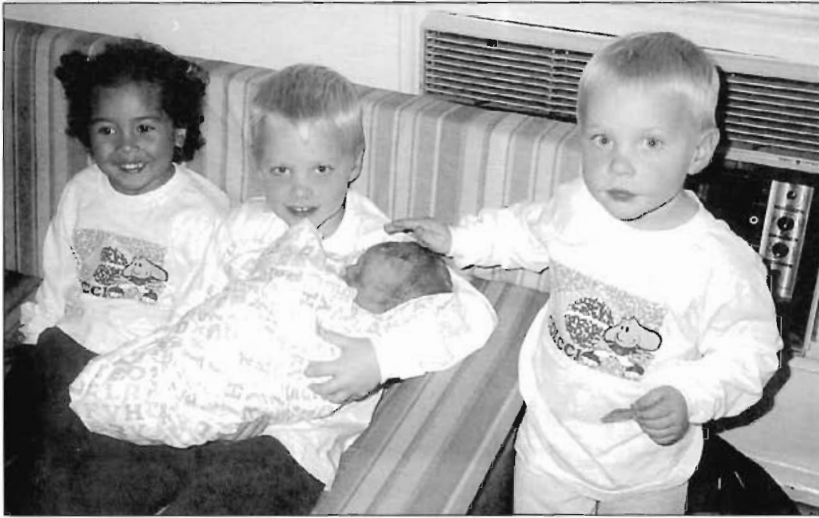
It is really exciting for the Mexican church to be ready to send our own missionaries to the foreign field. The Christians here are catching a vision for the lost! This is a sign of a church reaching maturity, regardless of the numerical size of the church. We are thrilled!





# It's not where you live that counts

— Missionary David Nelson  
Campo Mourão, Brazil



The Nelson children: Rachel, Josiah, Benjamin and Samuel.

**Raising a family is a challenge. Raising a family in another culture is a challenge of a different kind, that also has its benefits.**

**T**hink for a moment about some of the issues a family faces living and working outside of their own country. Do they speak

English or Portuguese at home with just the family? What school

will the children attend: boarding, home school, public or private? What kind of clothes will the family wear? Where will the family find good medical and dental treatment? Will the children “fit in” upon returning to the United States? How involved will the wife be with ministry outside the home? How does the family handle people begging for money since many perceive all Americans as “rich”? How does the family find the proper balance between “family time” and “ministry time”? How “open” will the home be: is it a refuge for our family, a refuge for others, or somewhere in between?

One unique challenge is the language differences. The family has to learn to use two languages. Learning the new language is not easy for anyone, but children usually pick it up quickly and wonder why Mom and Dad find it so difficult. Our family uses Portuguese outside the home and English at home (except when we have company) to strengthen the children's grasp of English. Mom and Dad need the training, too.

It is surprising how quickly we forget and find that it is easy to fill in our sentences with a foreign word here and there. A foreign language is learned in school and in daily use. Learning and understanding a

foreign culture is yet another challenge, usually not learned in school. When we are invited to a birthday party that begins at 6:30 p.m., what is the “proper” time to show up? For us 6:30 p.m. means 6:30 p.m. and we would not want to be late for the party. In Brazil, 6:30 p.m. means anywhere between 7 and 7:30 p.m.

What about our relatives? Where are grandmas and grandpas? Where are aunts and uncles? Where are cousins and friends? They are all so far away from here. A missionary family has to calculate how many years until grandmas and grandpas can come and visit or until we return to the U.S. to see everyone. Do we miss them? Yes! Do they miss us? Sure they do!

God seems to provide others to help fill in that gap — others that the kids call grandma, grandpa, uncle and aunt. They know that they are not the “real ones,” but it sure helps to have them around!

What about the benefits? Is it worth it? Our family is bilingual, that is, we are comfortable speaking in either of the two languages. Not only that, but we also get to travel around and use them on a regular basis. We have unforgettable adventures — our children do not have to travel very far to have a variety of educational experiences. It is like a field trip going into town.

Americans living outside of America know that their country is not perfect, but it seems like it to them. They can see the good and evil in both cultures and still appreciate the best of both cultures. They value the family times — as if the ministry is a family business — all working together, close by each other, each knowing his or her special roles. The children have other friends, yet are special friends with each other.

The accent gives us away: “You aren't Brazilian, are you?” Yet, being different, not fitting in 100%, reminds us that as Christians we will not fit in well with the world's system. We, too are “foreigners” in a foreign land — wherever we may be.

Challenges? Yes! Benefits? Yes! Better? Yes and no! What is most important is that each family follows God's guidance for them, and each family member trusts in Jesus alone for salvation and lives for His glory here on the earth. For where you are living is much less important than for whom you are living.



## On shipping boxes ...

**Vernon, British Columbia —** Living Word Lutheran women enjoyed a garden party at the home of one of their members. The proceeds went to pay for shipping parcels to the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourão, Brazil. A reminder to all sending boxes to Brazil: please do not indicate a dollar value. Only state that they are of **no commercial value**.

**Campo Mourão, Brazil —** Missionary Sonja Dahl is scheduled to return to the States on November 1. A reinterpretation of Brazil's visa requirements makes it necessary for Sonja to leave Brazil. The government has ruled that non-critical occupational people can no longer be in Brazil on a cultural visa. Although Sonja's presence in Brazil is vital to our work and ministry associated with the Miriam Children's Home, the immigration authorities do not see her presence that way. They see her position as a nurse as one that could be filled by a Brazilian.

Sonja's heart is with the children at the home. She has become more than a mother to the children. This is difficult for her and will certainly become so for each of the children as they learn of her impending departure. After a month of rest, Sonja will be available to share in the churches concerning her work. Present hopes allow for Sonja to be in the States for six months. Pray for Sonja during this critical time. Pray for the Brazilian authorities who are making these decisions. Pray for our AFLC World Missions office as we work to find some way to resolve this matter.

— **Pastor Eugene Enderlein**  
**AFLC World Missions Director**

**Elachetal Dibba, India —** Dr. Florence Nightingale examines an elderly woman in this remote village where there is no medical facility. Due to travel difficulties, the Bible Faith Lutheran Church medical team is able to minister to the villagers only once every two months.



Ladies admire one of the many beautiful hand-made quilts. They are appreciated during the cold and rainy days.



The Dorcas Room continues to bless the mission work. People from AFLC churches may reasonably purchase the used items and the proceeds go to help the Miriam Infant Home. All age groups use the Dorcas Room. Address your items to the "Miriam Infant Home" or "Missao Lutarana Livre" in care of one of the missionaries. State on the package that the contents are of no commercial value.



# God's purpose through obstacles

**A** team of 33 traveled from the upper midwest to Leon, Mexico July 31 to August 14, 1998 to assist in furthering the construction on the church building there and to bring encouragement to Pastor Samuel Flores and his congregation.

This was my second Partners in Mission Outreach trip. On both trips I've learned more about waiting on the Lord. We take off with a sched-

**Pastor George and Helen Knapp**, Willmar, Minnesota, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 20, 1998 at Maranatha Free Lutheran in Willmar. The Knapps began their long missionary career in 1958 in Brazil. From 1968 to their retirement in 1989, they served with the AFLC mission in Brazil.

## Answered prayers in Curitiba, Brazil

God continues to answer prayer and provide for His people and for His work around the world. We are happy to have Rebecca Welsch serving as a short-term assistant during this school year. She has been here since the end of July and has already had many cultural experiences. Please pray for her as she serves in this way.

Besides all the regular responsibilities of the church planting ministry, we have been in the process of building a church for our Bateias congregation. The construction is with volunteers on Saturdays and most of the materials have been donated. We are presently at a standstill until more donations come in. Pray that God will provide according to His timetable. We are really cramped in our present quarters and look forward to the day when we will be worshipping in our own spacious sanctuary.

In September we had two special outreach opportunities. First

ule planned, but God reminds us that He may have different plans.

The bus gave us trouble from the very beginning. It's so easy to become frustrated when a vehicle breaks down, especially when you want to get some place and don't have a lot of time.

The border is another obstacle which I've found to be a great frustration. Those on the trips often wonder why we get delayed there or why they don't just let us into Mexico, since we only want to go there to help.

Becoming frustrated does not help the situation. It is better to try to use the time to look for what the Lord has planned. The obstacles have also helped me to pray more for the missionaries who have to deal with this at each crossing.

We were shown God's plan when we entered Mexico. We were so excited to have finally made it after

was an outdoor weekend camping trip in a rock quarry with 50 young people. Several heard the gospel presented to them for the first time. We also hosted a couples retreat from our three churches near the ARCA. It was a special time to minister to couples and families. In October we look forward to a four-day camp for older youth in conjunction with three other churches.

We appreciate your prayers and support of our ministry. God is at work in the hearts and lives of Brazilians. We preach the same message of repentance and life that has been preached since the beginning of time: "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord. "Therefore, repent and live" (Ezekiel 18:31,32).

— **Missionaries**  
**Paul and Becky Abel**



— **Suzanne Hass**  
**Valley City, ND**

a two-day delay in Texas, and then, Missionary Todd Schierkolk's van broke down and we were delayed again, for several hours. But in that time, a young man traveling in our group who is bilingual had the opportunity to speak with someone at the gas station. He shared the gospel with him and gave him a New Testament. I understood why the Lord had us wait.

We finally made it and began to work at the church in Leon. The men were able to finish the roof/balcony of the building by mixing concrete by hand. The women did painting and odd jobs as well as prepare meals.

The plan was to work every day, but another obstacle came our way: the weather. It rained several inches and the city of Leon had a flash flood. Our team had to walk through flooded streets to return to our hotel. It was dangerous but God had His hand of protection on us.

We traveled to Celaya to see Pastor Milton Flores. He showed us where they hope to build a new church. While there, several of the young people played soccer with some local boys and afterward four New Testaments were sent home with them.

Pastor Samuel Flores continued to express his joy of having us come to be with him. He was not disappointed with the inability to accomplish the physical work. That's when I saw again, God's plan, not ours. We had so many ideas of the work we were going to get done, when God had sent us to be an encouragement to the people there.

The PIMO trips are a wonderful learning experience. I'd encourage you to consider taking one to learn about mission work, get to know national workers and missionaries, and learn about waiting on the Lord.



# On a mission?

One of the definitions of mission in the dictionary is, "The special task or purpose for which a person is apparently destined in life; calling."

Jesus defined our mission in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." With this command there is also the promise that the Lord will be with us along the way.

Having had the opportunity to be on several short-term mission trips, I have personally felt God's presence on these trips, leading and guiding in many different ways. He has answered prayers, before we were even done praying them. As coordinator on these trips I really know that we need a lot of prayers and God's leading for these trips to be successful.

How about you? Are you a person with a mission? Is your calling to be on the bus with us as we go and share the most precious gift we can: Jesus Christ and eternal life?

— **Al Brazier**

**AFLC Partners in Mission Outreach Coordinator**

## New bus needed

**Partners in Mission Outreach** voted at their annual meeting last June to look for a newer bus. Their current 1973 model bus can no longer easily get parts. Last March's transmission breakdown while in Mexico was a reminder of this need. According to Al Brazier, coordinator for the organization, "We are projecting the cost of a newer bus to be between \$25,000 to \$30,000, and are trusting that God's people will come forward and fill this need."

If you or your congregation are interested in going to Mexico this winter, please contact Al Brazier at Rt. 2 Box 338, Greenbush, MN 56726; or call (218) 782-2456.

## OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

### Giving when you're no longer living

**A** new home mission congregation to be planted in Arizona ... the world missions home at The ARC ... a chapel/multipurpose building at the Wilderness Bible Camp and new facilities at the Galilee Bible Camp ... new publications from parish education ... computer software and an updated telephone system for the administration of our common endeavors ... Vision 2004 ... the AFLC Foundation.

These and more are special projects that have been blessed with gifts from the estates of concerned friends who wanted to keep on giving even when they were no longer living.

Clifford and Alice Syverson, members of the Norman Church, rural Tioga, North Dakota ... Russell Duncan, one of the first members of the coordinating committee, and his wife Anna, members of St. Paul's, Fargo, North Dakota ... Gust Kveen, a generous supporter of AFLC ministries from the beginning of our fellowship, Roseau, Minnesota ... Alice Konsterlie, Willmar, Minnesota, who served as one of the first officers of the National WMF and whose husband Martin was also an early coordinating committee member ... Della Strand, Rugby, North Dakota, sister of the late Pastor John Strand ... Pearl Aanstad, Hampden, North Dakota, a teacher who will be long remembered for her commitment to Bible camp ministry ...

Magnus Berntson, Valley City, North Dakota ... Nels Jodock, Northwood, North Dakota ... Laura Hegge, Cloquet, Minnesota ... Bernice Kluken, Ferndale, Washington ... Gerald Broden, Lincoln, Nebraska ... Alfred Bedesen, Everett, Washington ... Alvin Gubranson, Bejou, Minnesota ... Pauline Pope, Wadena, Minnesota ... Margaret Aam, Fargo, North Dakota ... Everett Thoreson, Mayville, North Dakota ... Harvey Dyrud, Newfolden Minnesota ... Arthur Remmen, Sisseton, South Dakota ... Alice Jensen, Grand Forks, North Dakota ... Selma Helland, Binford, North Dakota ... E. Oscar Peterson, McVile, North Dakota ... Elvira O'Dell ... these are some of the men and women whose legacies have recently been used to benefit AFLC ministries in so many ways. Some of them regularly attended annual conferences, while others were little known beyond their own parishes. But they all shared a concern for the missions and schools of our fellowship, and planned their estates so that this concern would continue to bear fruit when their life in this world had ended.

The verse of Scripture that comes to my mind is Hebrews 11:4, which states of a faithful Old Testament saint "though he is dead, he still speaks." Let me encourage you to consider AFLC ministries in your estate planning, so that you will leave this same witness to those who come behind us. Talk to your pastor about it, if you need advice, and remember that we are always ready to help.

— **Pastor Robert L. Lee**

## Looking for Christmas program ideas?



Children joyfully tell the story of God's love sent to earth in His Son Jesus. Let children express

their faith in Jesus, the Light of the world through this beautiful Christmas program, *Jesus Lights the Way*, available from AFLC Parish Education. Other program ideas are also available upon request.

— **Marian Christopherson**  
**Parish Education Director**  
(612) 545-5631  
[parished@aflc.org](mailto:parished@aflc.org)



# Succulent peaches or sour grapes?

— Jeanne Brandt  
Abiding Savior Lutheran  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

**M**y patience in the produce aisle is finally rewarded as the end of summer approaches. At last, plump, proud, delicious Colorado

peaches! Mom was right, the Colorado peaches are the ones worth waiting for. They're the best to peel, best to can, and best for my all-time favorite pie. I buy them by the lug and eat them plain, on cereal, with sugar and milk, and especially in pie!

This month's study focuses on Hebrews 13:15, "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess his name." The lesson teaches us that as Christians (those who confess His name) we are always (continually) presenting an offering (sacrifice) of praise to God. It occurs through what we say, what we do, and how we respond to those who are leading us.

**Praise ought to be like peaches: the best we can offer. But I must confess there are times when my praise to God seems more like sour grapes.**

For many years I understood only a little about praising God. I thought it ought to be like a pep fest, cheering my team on to victory, pumping my emotions to a peak; the loudest side wins! Or perhaps it was counting up all the good things God had done for me, then thanking Him or honoring Him because everything in my circumstances had turned out so great. However, it was when distresses came upon me, when my heart was sad, when my circumstances were not so great that I began to understand a

few things about praising God.

First, genuine praise must be through Jesus. My flesh can only lift up a sinful heart. Jesus died in my place, and our study in Hebrews has taught us that He alone can make us holy through His own blood. Accepting His substitutionary sacrifice personally allows me to be seen by God through His blood. Through Jesus I can actually approach God and offer praise that is worthy.

Second, praise doesn't necessarily need to be peppy, and it doesn't occur only when good things are happening. God is actually pleased when I come to Him in brokenness. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (Psalm 51:17). Sometimes, when my soul is weary, and it seems there are no remedies for my heaviness, it is all I can do to fix my gaze on Jesus, and lift my voice to Him. This is praise. When tough times and circumstances surround me I may begin to praise God softly, but ultimately my heavy heart swells with confidence that at His throne I will receive mercy and find there the grace that will help me with my needs. For me, praise comes easiest when I sing, my whole heart bursting, often out of burden as well as joy. Our God is an awesome God.

Third, we praise better as we learn to know the character of God. When I lived in the rolling hills of Wisconsin, a group of women studied together the attributes of God. We discovered that our understanding was cloudy because of our finite nature. We visualize character qualities through what we have humanly experienced. But God is infinite, beyond our comprehension. Little by little as we studied one attribute after another, our misunderstandings faded and the Holy Spirit began to sketch a true and beautiful picture of our living God.

A study of the Bible teaches us awesome truths about the nature of God. That changes us. Knowing, for

instance, that God is sovereign, unchanging and all-knowing increases my faith and allows me to praise with rich assurance. No matter what my need or uncertainty, there is an attribute of God that settles my heart in that particular area. Understanding God's character causes me to trust Him more completely, marveling at His nature. It is good to praise Him for who he is as well as for what He does.

Fourth, praise is often accomplished in obedience. I don't always feel like praising God. That is when I need to exercise my will over my emotions. I don't need to **feel** like praising God, I need to **will** to praise God. In fact, when I don't feel like praising God, that is a signal to me that I need to praise Him more! Bible characters from Moses to David repeat this truth as often they cry, "I will praise God," or "I will yet praise God," (Psalm 42:5). Usually, for me, exercising my will ultimately produces the anticipated emotion. As I will to praise God with my lips and my actions, it is not long before my heart is also soaring with accompanying emotion in my song and genuine motivation for my actions.

We are reminded through this lesson that the sacrifice of praise does not only occur through our lips. We may recognize it best through testimony, prayer, praise songs, or hymns, but all four insights we have discussed apply to our actions as well — the mundane actions and the spectacular deeds. Our praise is also revealed through our response to those who are accountable for leadership over us.

It is fitting that we conclude our study of Hebrews with this particular "therefore." If we have paid attention to instruction, and every other "therefore" this year, we will travel with joy in the journey. We will desire to overflow with our all-time favorite — Colorado peachy praise — the best we have to offer.





## Report from the AFLC Director of Evangelism

After moving from Park River, North Dakota, my family is adjusting to a new life and ministry based in Minneapolis. We are learning that there is never enough time in a day to accomplish the tasks that need to be done! Isaiah 40:31 encourages us: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

Our address is 15380 76th Ave. N., Maple Grove, MN 55311-3252; phone (612) 577-0346.

## Adjusting to a new ministry

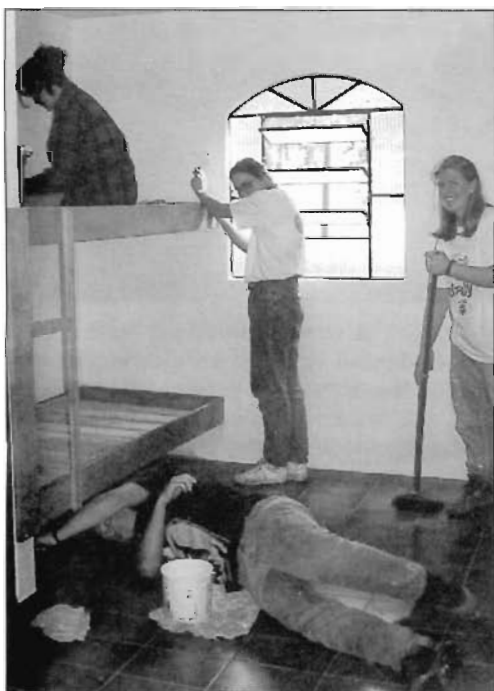
God has blessed us with a school a block away from our home for Caleb and the school district is seeking to meet all his special needs. We thank God that our 16-year-old is now enrolled in Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy. God is meeting our needs now, and we know He will keep on doing so.

The work of evangelism is progressing. There have been requests for weeks of special meetings into the summer of 1999. Also the Commission on Evangelism and myself are seeking ways to raise financial

support and establish communication with AFLC pastors and others interested in evangelism.

The commission on evangelism has the responsibility to raise all of our support. There is no budgeted help through the general fund or the annual conference. We ask for prayer that the financial needs will be met. Call me at (612) 544-5631 or e-mail [evangelism@aflc.org](mailto:evangelism@aflc.org) and I will be happy to find a time to come and share the work of evangelism in your congregation.

— **Pastor James Rasmussen**



**The 1998 Brazil FLY Team.**

## On the GO with AFLC youth mission trips!



**The 1998 Tanzania Team.**

**You could be  
part of a  
mission experience  
of a lifetime!  
WILL you do it?**

India – January 1999

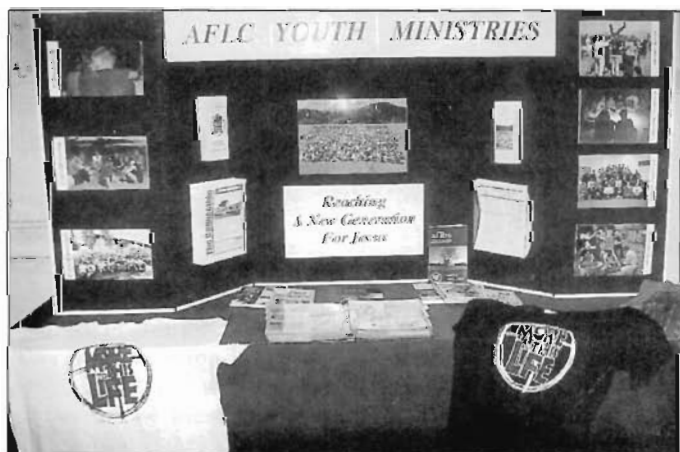
Mexico – Traveling with  
Partners in Mission  
Outreach.

Russia – English language  
camp, the end of May.

Naknek, Alaska –  
summer 1999.

More possibilities in Brazil  
and Portugal.

Contact AFLC Youth Ministries Office  
3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441  
612-545-5631, e-mail: [youthmin@aflc.org](mailto:youthmin@aflc.org)



## It's here!

Make your plans now for the Free Lutheran Youth Convention at Estes Park, Colorado, June 28-July 3, 1999.

Junior high and senior high youth will have split sessions. Evening speakers are AFLC pastors Dan Klug, Steve Lombardo, James L. Johnson, and Mike Brandt. Pam Stenzel will have an evening session with ladies while Dr. Fran Monseth shares with the young men.

Cost for students (age 12-18) is \$300 if registered before March 1, 1999. T-shirts are available for \$12 or two for \$20.

Get more information from the Youth Ministries office.

**Pastor Rob Lewis**, Camrose, Alberta, will be the speaker for meetings during October 18-22 at Prince of Peace Lutheran in Beulah, North Dakota.

**Fairbury, Nebraska** — Faith Lutheran conducted a German Church Service on September 13 with Rev. Fred J. Wolff of Lincoln, Nebraska as the speaker. The congregation's stewardship committee prepared the German meal following the service.

**Sioux Falls, South Dakota** — Abiding Savior Lutheran expects to dedicate their new church building on Sunday, November 15, 1998. The congregation began in 1989 and built their first church with the assistance of the AFLC Home Missions Department. An addition served the needs of the growing congregation until that too, became too small. Pastor Michael Brandt has served the congregation since 1991.

## Pastors recently installed in new ministries

**Pastor Tom Olson** was installed on August 9, as pastor of two mission congregations in Naknek and South Naknek, Alaska. AFLC Home Missions Director Paul Nash conducted the service.

**Pastor Wayne Hjermstad** was installed on September 6, as pastor of Grace Lutheran in Bruce, South Dakota. South Dakota District President Mark Olson of Arlington, conducted the service.

**Pastor Earl Korhonen** was installed as pastor of Hosanna Lutheran of Cumberland and Timberland-Ringebu Lutheran of Barronett, Wisconsin on September 13, by AFLC President Robert Lee.

**Pastor Michael Burke** was installed on September 13, to be the pastor of Hope Lutheran in Ishpeming, Michigan. Home Missions Director Paul Nash conducted the service.

**Pastor Timothy Hurley** was installed as pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran in Ponca City, Oklahoma on September 20, by AFLC President Robert Lee.

## Congregations celebrating anniversaries

**Solid Rock Free Lutheran, Osseo, Minnesota** celebrated their 10th Anniversary on October 4. The congregation, served by Pastor Jim Johnson, is currently meeting at Osseo Junior High.

**Spencer Creek Lutheran, Eugene, Oregon** celebrated their 95th Anniversary on September 13, 1998. The anniversary and Rally Sunday featured Sunday school and worship "the way it was," but not in Norwegian. The noon potluck featured old-fashioned recipes followed by games from "the old days."



Spring Lake Park, Minnesota — Pastor Ivars Krafts was ordained on August 2, at Maranatha Free Lutheran. Pastor Tonnes Pollestad was the service leader and AFLC President Robert Lee preached and led the ordination service. Pictured are the participating pastors: (L. to R. row 1), Dr. Francis Monseth, Ron Nybrotten, Ivars Krafts, and Jerry Moan; (row 2) Amos Dyrud, Wendell Johnson, Jerry Holmaas, Robert Lee and Tonnes Pollestad.



Larimore, North Dakota — On June 28, AFLC President Robert Lee preached the Sunday morning sermon at Living Faith Lutheran and burned the mortgage in a special ceremony following the service. The congregation began in 1985 with informal meetings and construction of a church building began in 1987, using funds from the AFLC Church Extension Fund. The final payment was made in May 1998.

**Bethel Lutheran, Elbow, Saskatchewan** celebrated their 90th Anniversary on August 2. Their morning worship service was held in their new church building and the afternoon meeting was at the Heritage Church. Pastor Martin Christensen serves the congregation.



**St. Mark's Lutheran Church**

**St. Mark's Lutheran, Whitestown, Indiana** celebrated their 150th Anniversary on October 18, 1998, with the theme, "Living By Faith For 150 Years."

The origins of St. Mark's is traced to the work of the missionary society of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, which took an interest in the religious life of Lutheran pioneers in the "western states." Rev. Ezra Keller, missionary explorer, made contact with a number of Lutherans from eastern Tennessee. The first members were hearty individuals who had moved to the frontier in the hope of improving their lot.

The affiliations began with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Indiana, the Union Synod of Indiana, the Indiana Synod, the Chicago Synod, the Indian Synod (ULCA), the LCA and the ELCA. In 1995, the congregation voted to join the AFLC and is served by Pastor Michael Peterson. The congregation's most famous pastor is H. Grady Davis who went on to teach Homiletics at Chicago Lutheran Seminary and wrote the well-known textbook "Design For Preaching," from which the quote is taken: "A sermon should be like a tree ..."

## AFLC Memorial Gifts

August, 1998

Name	Given by	Department
Norman Johnson	Kent/Mabel Quanbeck Eric/Janell Norberg Lee/Hannah Quanbeck Paul/Ruth Kneeland Albin/Carol Haugen	AFLBS
Viola Strom	James/Mary Rolf	
Orville Dvergsten	Gordon/Gladys Rugland	
Nels/Lydia Reinertson	Arlene K. Rolf	Home Missions
Inga Blashill	Thea Hagen Pastor Ted/Dee Berkas	World Missions
Harvey Dyrud	Myrtle Dyrud	
Cornelius Friasen	Susan Enns	
Donald Smithburg	Vernon/Dorothy Russum	
Richard Snipstead	Faye James Pastor Jerry/Ruth Holmaas Pastor Raynard Huglen A. LaVerne Vogsland John/Anne Presteng Wayne/Karen Floan Brian/Pam Floan Kenneth/Harriet Rolf Gerd Lyseng Pastor Jerry/Rebecca Moan Pastor Dale/Cris Finstrom Vernon/Dorothy Russum Pastor Les/Jane Galland Bertram/Arlene Borgendale	AFLBS General Fund AFLTS
George Bahr	Clarence/Edna Quanbeck	
Agnes Halvorson	Carroll/Joyce Rognlie	AFLBS
Marian Rezac and Angela Rustvang	Kenneth/Mary Nash Pastor Ted/Dee Berkas	Home Missions World Missions
Mary Moen	Lorraine Wasland	AFLTS
Hazel Langness and Talbert Koppang	Clarence/Edna Quanbeck	
Corine Felland	Clyde/Bonnie Lundgren	AFLBS
Rufus Kamphaugh	Mr./Mrs. Adolph Kordahl Ruda Hansen Kenneth/Mary Nash	Home Missions
Luther Monson	Pastor Alvin/Loretta Grothe	
Maurice Davidson	Lester/Phyllis Davidson	AFLTS
LaVerne Solberg	Clarence/Edna Quanbeck	AFLBS
Donald Jacobson	Arlen/Vrenda Holm Edith Gudim Kent/Mabel Quanbeck Alfred/Virginia Haugen Jon/Annette Rognlie Clarence/Edna Quanbeck	World Missions AFLBS Evangelist
	Allan/Arlitte Swenson	

**The AFLC Schools Board of Trustees** met on September 21. Pastor Tonnes Pollestad reported to the board that he expects by God's grace, to see an approval vote from the City of Plymouth in November for the schools building plan. Construction on the student center and multipurpose gym will not begin until there is city approval and three-fourths of the costs have been raised or pledged.

Pollestad began serving as full-time Vision 2004 project director on July 1. He also teaches Bible doctrine at the Bible school.



**AFLBS uses the ARC's large outdoor grill for an occasional picnic lunch. Pictured are Jolene Dietsche, ARC retreat coordinator, and Dave Anderson, cook and general maintenance man serving the 140 Bible school students.**



**AFLBS Dean Pastor James L. Johnson, Board of Trustees member Wayne Floan, Vision 2004 Director Pastor Tonnes Pollestad and Board of Trustees member Pastor Gary Jorgenson.**

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences (8 months) – January 1 - August 31, 1998

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$224,870.00	\$14,293.63	171,832.46	76
Seminary . . . . .	112,558.00	5,818.96	55,675.98	49
Bible School . . . . .	180,678.00	10,225.04	90,634.70	50
Home Missions. . . . .	260,263.00	16,035.44	138,883.76	53
World Missions. . . . .	420,686.00	26,309.86	240,788.29	57
Capital Investment . . . . .	16,276.00	1,620.36	10,640.51	65
Parish Education . . . . .	50,335.00	3,162.56	35,259.76	70
Church Extension . . . . .	18,092.00	2,429.09	15,183.81	116
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,278,758.00</b>	<b>79,894.94</b>	<b>758,899.27</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>TOTALS 1997 . . . . .</b>	<b>1,223,905.00</b>	<b>73,067.57</b>	<b>654,180.34</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Goal 67%</b>				

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Ellis L. Bloomfield, Printer



# Get out of the building

I am glad the building our congregation is renting was too small for us to use for vacation Bible school this past summer. We asked an elementary school in the area if we could use the school playground. They said, "yes," so for a week, each morning we set up VBS in a place more often used for bouncing balls and playing tag. God used it that week to work in some young lives. He worked in the life of our congregation as well, teaching us about getting out of the building and into the mission field.

On Tuesday some kids came planning to skateboard and found us in their usual spot. They asked what was going on. We told them and invited them to stay. They did, and came back the rest of the week.

But that's not all. It got even better. During the week, some of them prayed to receive Christ. How great it will be when, in ten, fifteen years a young adult will be serving Jesus, sharing his testimony and saying, "One day I went to the school to skateboard, and there was this thing called vacation Bible school going on, and there I met Jesus ...."

During the summer the elementary school where we had our VBS serves breakfast and lunch on weekdays for free to any kid who wants to come. One of the school's custodians told me one day 125 kids came for lunch. Many came walking on their own for the meals in the morning and at noon.

We started VBS as breakfast was ending and ended as lunch began. Being out in the playground made us noticeable to the kids who came for meals, and some stopped by to check us out.

Others stopped by to check us out when we were doing a VBS program one evening, outside in the parking lot next to the building our one-year-old congregation rents. I doubt they would have wandered in if we had been in the building.

Jesus' call to us is not to "Go and erect buildings and huddle together inside of them." Yet I am afraid that is what we often do. Our buildings become fortresses; places we retreat to, seeking protection from the world. They should be looked at more as sending stations; places we go to in order to be prepared to go out into the world. The call of Christ is to "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15, NIV). We

are to be His witnesses not just in a certain building, but "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NIV).

Jesus stated, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18, NIV). The vision that statement often generates is of the church behind strong walls, safe from the attacks of the world. While God's children are most certainly secure from attack when trusting in Jesus, the word picture Christ is drawing for us is not so much of the church on the defensive, hiding in a fortress, but more on the offensive, breaking down even the gates of Hades. What Christ builds is not primarily structures of wood and brick but

instead transformed lives. These lives built by God are to be out in the mission field that surrounds us, making an impact, overcoming strongholds of evil and winning others for Christ.

Because of the power of God we need not, we must not, be people who hide out in our buildings, fearful the world may sneak in, hoping we somehow hold on until Jesus returns. "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4, NIV). We are to be a people on the attack, but not attacking as the world does. We take the offensive in gentleness, proclaiming in our words and deeds the love and grace of God.

Jesus did not pray that the Father would take us out of the world. He sent us into the world (John 17:15, 18, NIV). Let us be sure that we do not take ourselves out of the world, until God says it is time to go.

Maybe someday God will provide our congregation a building that is big enough to hold most all of our activities. I'm not sure if it will be more of a blessing or a challenge. It will be a challenge to be sure the building becomes simply where we worship and not what we worship. It will be a blessing if the building is not only a safe place but also a sending place. It will be a challenge to ensure that the building is not seen as the church and the church is not always and only seen in the building. The hope is that the world will see the real church — the people who know Jesus and are known by Him — out in the mission field, sharing the good news of Christ.

— *Pastor Craig Johnson*

**Jesus' call to us is not to "Go and erect buildings and huddle together inside of them."**



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AT THE ARC

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## God will carry us through

**P**raise the Lord for His grace and mercy! Many times we look back over our lives and see how many fears and worries were for nothing. God has always taken care of us and He desires that we rely on Him for everything. I Peter 5:7 reminds us to "Give all your worries to Him, because He cares about you" (NCV).

We began this summer knowing it would be our busiest season ever. Our anticipated numbers were twice what we have every had. The anxiety I felt looking at those numbers and the possible problems they represented now seems a waste of my sleep time. God granted us a safe and smooth summer.

God's continuing care of us should cause us to rely totally on Him for all our needs. As we have begun planning for the construction of a 13,000 square foot gymnasium, I have spent night hours worrying about the different aspects of this massive project. It is especially then that I claim the promise of I Peter 5:7 and know I am not in charge. I should have learned that God will carry us through this new project. This must be the process of sanctification!

The prayers and support of the AFLC, ARC Board and all of the staff here are the primary reason why the summer of '98 was such a success! After speaking with the

leaders of the different church groups that were at The ARC this summer, I am excited to report that over 100 decisions for Christ were made. That is what we are all about.

Because our desire is to be good stewards of what God has given us, we believe that a gymnasium/auditorium would allow us to better serve the people He calls to The ARC. Please pray first of all that we would remain true to our mission to be a facility where people can come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Second, ask the Lord what you can do.

1. Pledge to pray for the safe-keeping of those working on construction and those involved in the behind-the-scene operations.

2. Perhaps you have talents and experience that could be used directly with the construction.

3. Monetary donations or helping with a fund-raising event at your home church are appreciated.

4. A financial investment opportunity is also available. The ARC Board has approved a five-year loan plan: \$1000 or

more at 7% and less than \$1000 at 6%.

The estimated gymnasium cost is between \$225,000 and \$275,000, or for under \$20 a square foot. The entire project will be done by volunteers and ARC staff. Praise the Lord for orchestrating the perfect blend of talents and gifts!

If you have questions concerning how you can help in this ministry, please call me at 1-800-294-2877.

(On a personal note, my wife Wendy and I wish to thank you for all the prayers, cards, gifts, and kind thoughts which you shared with us following the death of Wendy's father, Pastor Richard Snipstead.)

— *Eric Westlake*  
*Director of The ARC*



The Association Retreat Center Board stand by the construction site of the gymnasium/auditorium.