

The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

October 14, 1997

We have heard the joyful sound –

Spread the tidings JESUS SAVES!
all around – JESUS SAVES!

**Bear the news
to every land,
Climb the
steeps and
cross the
waves;**



Missionary Sonja Dahl with a
Brazilian midwife.

**Onward!
tis our Lord's
command –**



Maranatha Free Lutheran, Willmar, Minnesota.

**JESUS SAVES!
JESUS SAVES!**

—Priscilla J. Owens
AMBASSADOR HYMNAL #520

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

For I am not ashamed of the gospel ...

*for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith;** as it is written, "The righteous man shall live by his faith."*
— Romans 1:16-17

The most important things for us to know are the things **revealed** in Scripture. These are things we would never figure out on our own because they are beyond the reach of human understanding. The gospel is revealed truth. Without the Scriptures we would never know it.

Many people in the world live without God's revelation. They live in sin or in human goodness because they do not know what God says. May God give us a heart for these people today, that we would help them understand God's revelation, both by how we live and by what we say.

Perhaps the greatest thing revealed in the gospel is the righteousness of God. This phrase, **the righteousness of God**, means two different things. First it refers to the attribute of God's character whereby He is perfectly good and holy, without defect or sin. God is righteous. This is the righteousness which God has.

This righteousness offers us little comfort because it reveals our sinfulness by comparison. We cannot stand before a righteous God in our own goodness, no matter how good we might be.

But the other way this phrase is used in Scripture refers to the righteousness which God gives — that which comes from God. This is the meaning here and throughout the book of Romans. Paul explains his use of this term in chapter three, verses 21-22: "Now the righteousness of God has been manifested, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe."

Like the righteousness which God has, the kind He gives is perfect and complete, without defect or sin. Sometimes we think the righteousness which God gives is somehow insufficient for us or dependent upon our own works or goodness. Nothing could be further from the truth. When God gives us His righteousness, we are perfectly righteous, without guilt or sin. In His sight and by His reckoning, there is nothing for us to add, nothing that can be added!

This righteousness is the basic need of us all. We cannot have any spiritual life, any relationship with God, any hope for eternity unless God has given us His righteousness.

This righteousness is found in Christ. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the key. If Jesus lives in you then you are righteous through Him; if not you have no righteousness that counts. Knowing Christ personally through the Word and believing in Him makes you fully righteous.

If in any way you doubt whether you have God's perfect righteousness revealed in the gospel, call out to Jesus, seek Him in the Scriptures, listen to His Word, draw near to Him at the cross.

Remember this truth: everything in your spiritual life depends on Christ. He is at the center of it all.

There is righteousness in Jesus for everyone today. Let us seek it in Him!

— Pastor Steve Mundfrom
Bethany Lutheran
Sebek, Minnesota

sound bites

1 “According to God’s Word not a drop of evangelical consolation is to be brought to those who are still living securely in their sins. On the other hand, to the broken-hearted not a syllable containing a threat or a rebuke is to be addressed, but only promises conveying consolation and grace, forgiveness of sin and righteousness, life and salvation.” — C. F. W. Walther

“America is spiritually thirsty. After decades of advancing secularism, oppressive communism, and declining spiritual interest, a spiritual awakening is

4 sweeping the world. America is part of this awakening. There is a fascinating mix of disillusionment, post-secularism, generational depression, fear about the future, and return to fundamentalism.

— Leith Anderson

6

“It is hard to fail but it is worse never to have tried to succeed.” — Theodore Roosevelt

2 “I hope that we can trust the Holy Spirit enough that we can encourage an environment in which the turned-off and the burned-out can respond to the gospel, and that ... hearts will receive the healing they so desperately need.” — Doug Murren

“What does the Master teach us? Is it not that if one sheep out of a hundred be lost, we are to leave the ninety and nine and seek that one? But here the proportions are almost reversed, and we stay at home with the one sheep, and take no heed to the ninety and nine perishing ones!” — J. Hudson Taylor

“On the basis of Christian love, missions operate many kinds of helpful activities — schools, hospitals, etc. This is a response to Jesus’ word of mercy toward all who are in need (Matthew 25:35ff.). It is correct that missions conduct such activities. But all the while it must remain clear that the basis of missionary activity is the proclamation of God’s Word unto conversion and the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47).” — Carl Wisloff

5

A plan for Brazil

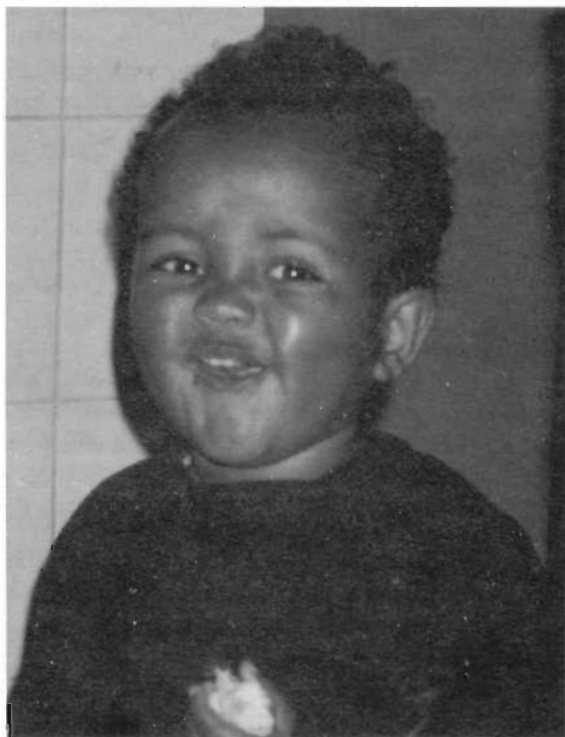
Seven years ago the Brazil Field Conference, made up of AFLC missionaries, prayed and sought the Lord's will for a ten-year plan and goals to bring us to the year 2000. This was to be a guide for mission work in Brazil and beyond its borders. I'll never forget the hot January

day as we sat around our dining room table late into the night. We struggled and consulted the Brazil National Council to give us their input on the future.

Eight typewritten pages emerged out of the piles of pages scraped. Today it's the fall of 1997, and we are seeing startling events happening to our mission. Here are some of those plans.

Compassion ministries

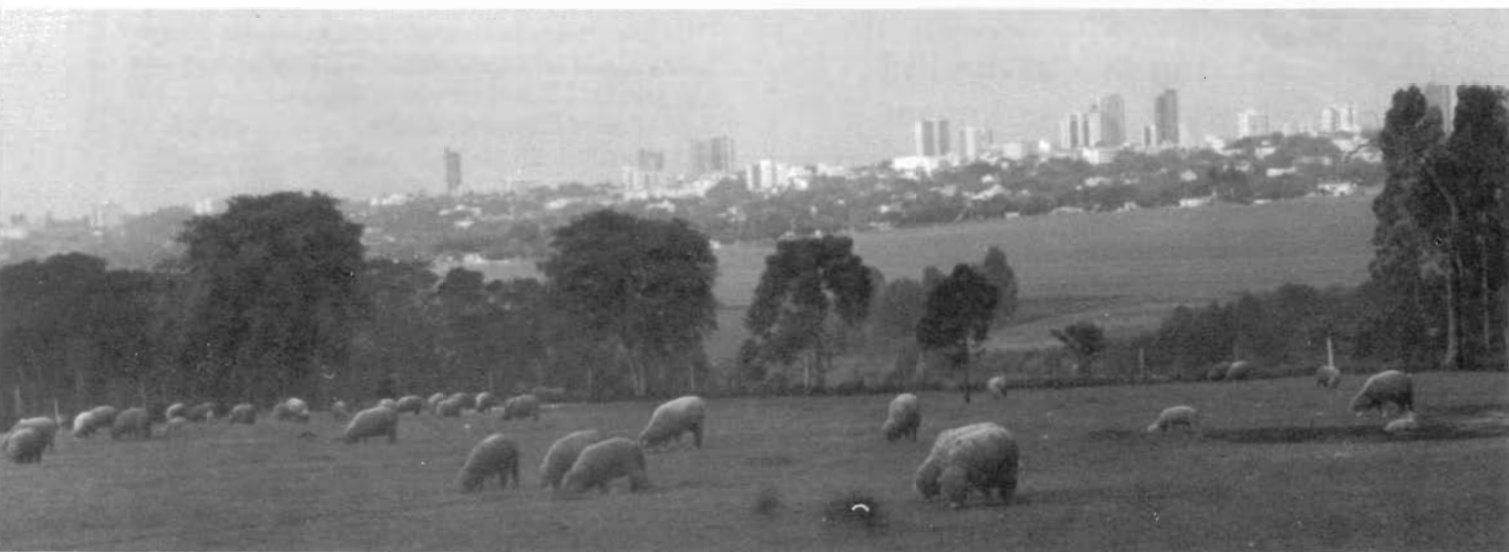
The cries of the hungry street children cannot go unheard by the Church. It is our task to reach out to the helpless. Jesus Christ is the answer to their spiritual needs. The establishment of an orphanage was brought up at the



One of the children at the Miriam Infant Home.



Lucivania is shown with her family. She is the matron at the Miriam infant home. The Canadian AFLC sponsors her ministry.



The view from the Brazil-AFLC campus looking toward the city of Campo Mourão.

— Pastor Connely J. Dyrud
Missionary on furlough
Maple Grove, Minnesota

national annual conference and tabled until the securing of personnel to head up the work.

That was early 1990. It is awesome to realize that later that year the Brazilian city government asked us, the AFLC in Brazil, for help with the street children. By December, 1996, 231 street children have been spiritually helped and physically restored. These children are now in homes in Brazil, or in good homes around the world. This is just the beginning of many new things that the Miriam Infant Home has been doing. Many of you who are reading this, have been instrumental in this ministry with your prayers, support and boxes to Brazil.

Outreach ministries

Another astounding working of the Lord can be found on the first page in outline form of that ten-year plan written on that hot January day.

Paraguay — 1995

Argentina — 1999

Europe: Portugal, Spain

Africa: Portuguese-speaking countries, Spanish-speaking countries

Our Bible school and seminary in Brazil have been conducting annual campaigns in Paraguay. Then about four years ago, we started receiving correspondence, (the Macedonian Call), from various countries in Africa — Mozambique and Angola, both Portuguese-speaking countries. Our mission in Brazil sent them Portuguese Bibles, song books, and Lutheran catechisms.

Two years ago, a college professor in Portugal, who claims to have a small group of Lutherans with him, wrote to AFLC President Robert Lee. He requested more information about our church.

The awesome question is, "Why hadn't these people and nations written to us before 1990?" The Lord tells us in Matthew 7:7-8, "Ask and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." The Lord also urges us to "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into



his harvest field" (Luke 10:2b).

We are now in telephone contact with the professor in Portugal and the Lutheran pastor in Mozambique. Both of these men are anxiously waiting a fact-finding visit from our AFLC.

While all of these miraculous happenings are appearing on the horizon for our AFLC World Missions, the Brazil church is going through a struggle. We may question the Lord's timing on all these events, but I believe we must get our sight focused on him as we look at events around us.

Let's look at the positive growth of the fledgling church. Before 1995, only two churches in Brazil were self-sufficient. Today, none of the 14 congregations are receiving direct financial aid from the U.S. This is remarkable, but with more responsibility given to the local church, there has been belt tightening and losses have occurred. All missions go through these growing pains at some time in their history of nationalization. Pray for our sister churches as they grow in the Lord.

The picture being painted of the AFLC missions in this decade is breathtaking. We are seeing the flowing strokes of the Lord's brush in places on this earth that seemed unthinkable a few years ago. We humbly bow before our Lord and declare as Paul did:

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his way past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:33-36).

The Miraim Infant Home inaugurated this dentist's chair last August. A dentist comes each Saturday to help the children.



the **P**resence, purpose, and power of God

— Debbie Giles
Missionary on furlough
Osceola, Wisconsin

*I have a confession. When asked to write a synopsis for the **AMBASSADOR** of the message I prepared for the National WMF Convention in June, I did not want to do it. I thought it would be boring for you to both hear it and read it. But the Lord has been dealing with me on this issue for several weeks and I am finally understanding, at least in part, why this message must be told and told again.*

Every time I have been asked to speak this year about my missionary experiences, I have excitedly gone through my notes and memories and I am filled with ideas and topics interesting to me that I want to share. Every time they seem to lose their flavor and I sense God's strong direction saying: "Not this time. Tell them again of My presence, My purpose, and My power." I can only assume that you and I need to hear again and again about the powerful, loving nearness of our God. Each time I speak or write these words of testimony, my own soul is strengthened and tuned once again for singing God's song.



Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles, Ingrid and Daniel.

One of the many ways God has made His **presence** known to us on the mission field is by guardian angels. Our work often takes us into difficult situations where all human and material resources fail. At these moments of need we have so often been helped by angels.

One of our favorite memories is of the man, all dressed in brilliant white, who appeared in the darkness to my husband Dan when he was lost on a dangerous mountain trail in Ecuador. After leading Dan safely through very treacherous territory, this "man" vanished from sight.

In Mexico we have experienced several "road safety" encounters with God's angels. We've had angels knock on our car door at the precise moment we've needed to stop in order to avoid an unseen danger. We've seen logs flying through the air

Partners in Mission Outreach

have two trips scheduled to work in Obregon, Mexico, with Pastor Gabriel Mercado. Tentative dates are to leave from Washington state on January 10 and return the 24th. The second trip is to leave Kalispell, Montana, on March 14 and return the 27th. If you are looking for an affordable mission service opportunity, please call (evenings) Al Brazier at (218) 782-2456.

Missionaries Paul and Becky

Abel, Santa Felicidade, Brazil, are praising the Lord for the recent purchase of property for the congregation in nearby Bateias. Pray for wisdom as the congregation seeks God's will in building their church home. Pray also for strength physically and spiritually for the Abel family as they serve the Lord at the ARCA and their churches.

Child adoption from Brazil —

For those who are interested in adopting a child from Brazil, please contact Marc and Marcia Seeley who adopted Greice from the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourão, Parana, Brazil. They can be reached at: 1695 Willow-side Rd., Santa Rosa, California 95401, (707) 571-8284.

directed at our windshield obviously batted down by some invisible force before hitting us. The list goes on. God is always present with us, guiding and protecting!

God has also shown us that despite any and all adverse circumstances, His **purpose** will prevail. We've experienced Him miraculously making our car engine work (despite missing parts!) so that we could make our obligatory trip out of Mexico for visa renewal. We've seen Him raise up a church of mature believers through our feeble attempts at ministry when many times we thought all was lost. I remember our humble beginnings when Dan would preach in Spanish to a congregation of three — me and our two children, Ingrid and Danny. It was discouraging, and we felt like failures more than once, but God's Word was accomplishing that for which it was being sent.

Unbeknown to us, one lady was outside listening, and after four months she came

in and joined us. From this one woman has grown a congregation of fifty members, with seven young people in Bible school! God is accomplishing His purpose in us, through us, and sometimes in spite of us!

God's **power** is visible in all of the above mentioned ways. But it is His power to transform a life; to bring someone who lives in the total darkness of occultism and alcoholism and every other ism to the freedom and light of Jesus Christ, which excites us the most. The wonderful testimonies of people who are living new lives filled with joy and purpose fill another article.

I smile as I consider God's gentle wisdom. He knows what I need. After again writing these simple words of testimony my heart is singing to the Lord: "Your presence is always near! Your purpose can never fail! Your power is always available! I love you."



Renata Hinrichs, Czech Republic, arrived in Minneapolis on September 17, with Pastor Gregory Giemza of the Polish Lutheran Church to translate for him while he visited Bible schools in America. They spent a week at AFLBS. Pastor Giemza is the newly appointed director for the Polish Lutheran Bible school scheduled to open in the near future. Renata is the wife of Pastor Tim Hinrichs, AFLC missionary on loan to the East European Missions Network.

Missionary furlough home needs help!

Willing workers are needed to complete the newly remodeled "Eagle's Nest" home near the ARC at Osceola, Wisconsin. Please call the ARC at 1 (800) 294-2877 if you can help!



After the all-boards' meeting on September 23, Pastors Craig Johnson, Beaverton, Oregon, and Brian Davidson, Ponca City, Oklahoma, checked out the unfinished kitchen at the Eagle's Nest, the missionary furlough home next to the ARC.

Reaching into the interior

Report from Sonja Dahl on medical mission trips

Last summer I had the privilege of serving with two medical mission trips to the interior of Brazil. My first trip was to the Campo Grande area where Missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel are serving, and the second trip took me into the state of Amazonas on the River Purus.

On the first trip, I joined with fifteen other American doctors, dentists, nurses and a small evangelistic team. Our goal was to treat medically and spiritually as many people as possible during that week. We treated over a thousand people medically and witnessed many decisions for Jesus Christ.

Patients would first fill out a brief form then come to my table where they would have their blood pressure taken and explain their ailment. My job was working at that table and translating for the American team. From our table, they were directed to the doctor or nurse practitioner who would diagnose them, give needed injections or do simple surgeries. The free medicines, which were brought in by the American team, included everything from penicillin to worm treatment. The evangelism team told stories, gave puppet shows and witnessed to people as they waited to be treated.

We traveled to three towns where there is limited access to a clinic, so for some people, being able to see a doctor was a great, and rather unexpected treat.

Seven days after returning home to Campo Mourão, I packed my bags and headed for the state of Amazonas for a two-week medical trip. This team was all

Brazilians with the exception of an Australian doctor, his wife, and myself. The team's purpose was to teach classes in medicine, first aid, psychology, and how to teach reading.

The first week was spent teaching medical workers from various tribes how to better diagnose and treat patients. Some traveled for days by river boat to attend.

The second week, part of the team went up river, part went down river, and part stayed in Labrea. To my disappointment, I was on the team who stayed. I was looking forward to a real adventure of riding up river in a small canoe, sleeping in a hammock, eating alligator and turtle meat, being with an Indian tribe, etc.

Our group who stayed were to have gone to a tribe to vaccinate the children but somehow plans were sabotaged and we weren't able to go. Instead we helped out where needed in Labrea.

I did learn the different ways of the Amazon people. Their life is simple. The average age for girls to marry is 14-18. Their diet consists mainly of fish and farina — a coarsely ground corn or manioc. Because of the hot temperatures, shops close between 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. for lunch. The streets are filled with bicycles as it seems everyone has at least one bicycle to ride.

I learned so much from these experiences and will be better equipped to serve in our orphanage, the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourão. Thank you to all who are praying for me.



Sonja Dahl (center) translated for the American team.



Sonja (left) visited at a nursing home in the Amazon region.

I can't stay home

— Darwin Jackson
Elim Lutheran
Lake Stevens, Washington

God calls an appliance technician to the mission field

MaryAnn and I met in California where we lived two doors apart in the same apartment building. I was an appliance technician living with two Norton motorcycles in my living room. I also drank heavily and was into rock music. MaryAnn worked at the State Board of Equalization and had a cute little daughter and her brother living with her. When I first saw MaryAnn it was love at first sight, and I thought if I could get to know her I would straighten out my life. I didn't know she drank too. So I didn't change. In fact we both got worse.

In 1987 we moved to Washington state, I got a good job, and we were married, all in the same week. Through the influence of my great-grandmother we began to check out several different churches until we finally landed at Elim Free Lutheran Church in Lake Stevens. We attended for about six months though our drinking and our marriage began to get real bad.

Then one day as I was sitting on my couch drinking my six-pack of beer I picked up the Bible my great-grandmother had given me fifteen years earlier. For the first time I began to read it. I read the portion that says, "Suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'my master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to ... eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him ... and He will cut him to pieces ... and ... there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:48-51).

At that very moment I realized I was a sinner in desperate need of a Savior. Immediately I went and told MaryAnn I was going to

follow Jesus Christ. She thought I was crazy, but after about three months she saw that my life had changed, and knew I wasn't able to do it myself. She put her trust in Jesus Christ also.

Early on I learned that many people in the world have never heard of the Lord Jesus and His free gift of eternal life. I was willing to go tell them if God would send me, but MaryAnn, at that time wasn't ready. My pastor, Dick Gunderson, said that I shouldn't push her, just pray about it and God would open the door in His time if it was His will. So I did. Meanwhile I believed that my family, Lake Stevens, and my job were to be my mission field.

"At that very moment I realized I was a sinner in desperate need of a Savior."

Later, I asked the Lord to send someone who would go with me into the neighborhood to share the gospel. God answered by bringing intern pastors to our church. I learned a lot from these men and began to pray that God would help me to teach others how to share the gospel. •

Then the Lord sent AFLC missionary John Abel to Elim. Through his influence, as well as Pastor Rick Long of Atonement Free Lutheran Church, I was introduced to Evangelism Explo-

sion. It wasn't until I attended an EE training clinic that I realized God had answered my prayer. It was there that God gave me the vision of using EE to teach nationals in other countries how to do the work of evangelism.

One day, as I was coming home late from work on a ferry I began to read a booklet inside a Keith Green cassette tape I had, called "Why You Should Go to the Mission Field." By the time I was done reading it I was totally convinced I had to go. I did what Keith said to do at the end of the booklet. I wrote to different missions to find out specifically what it would take to become a missionary. Most wouldn't touch an appliance technician at thirty-three years of age. But when I wrote to the World Mission Prayer League, they welcomed us and accepted our application with the understanding that we would complete two years of training. We did this at the Lutheran Bible Institute, and at the AFLC Bible school and seminary.

We have finished our training now, and have been accepted as missionaries with the World Mission Prayer League, and the AFLC World Missions to Mexico. We have been asked how our vision for ministry has changed through the two years of our training. My response is, it hasn't changed at all. I want to do personal evangelism and teach it using EE which models Jesus' (Mark 1:17) and Paul's (II Timothy 2:2) method for the work.

Keith Green was right, "Hell is not just for the weekend!" With 2,500 souls perishing forever every hour who have never heard the gospel "you need a specific call from God to stay home."



— Lidia Herrera
AFLBS junior
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Free from bondage

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. but one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

— Philippians 3:13



Ingrid Giles and Lidia Herrea

Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk, Aguascalientes, Mexico, praise God for Ricardo and Adriana's graduation from the four-year advanced course at the World Mission Prayer League Bible School in Mazatlan. They are two of the first three graduates from this course. They currently serve with the Schierkolks at Spring of Living Water Church. Pray for Ricardo as he wrestles with a call to be a pastor. On September 7, nine people were confirmed at Spring of Living Water: two adults and seven young people.

A new congregation in Palomino has begun. Pray for the strengthening of that church and the instruction of their seven students in confirmation.

My name is Lidia Herrera. I was born in Mexico City 19 years ago, but have lived in Aguascalientes, Mexico, nearly all my life.

Before I became a Christian, I was involved in the practice of Satan's works — I was a witch. Since I was 12, I started to learn of sorcery and astrology. It was easy for my "teachers" to mold me and make me think that I was in the correct way to find the truth.

My family did not notice too much of what I was doing as my parents are divorced. My mom worked most of the day and my disobedience to my grandparents caused them to give up and leave me alone. My father was the one who introduced me to those people and he thought things were well for me.

Although I thought I knew a lot, I never could keep real friendship. I was a lonely girl and when I was 15, one of my boyfriends raped me. I found refuge in my books and became the best student in school. I had more reasons to be proud but the loneliness and hurt remained.

As my senior year began, I started to think of suicide. The idea began to possess my thinking. I smoked heavily and drank and used marijuana occasionally. Nobody knew about that in school because I continued with my good grades and my big smile. The teachers loved me, but at home my family became worried.

My brother became a Christian and started to pray for me. I went to his church one or two times but I still rejected God. My sadness only increased and the meditations and sorcery couldn't help me. The evening of October 12, I was about to commit suicide. Suddenly I prayed. I asked God to give me an answer and I slept.

The following morning my first thought was to go to my brother's church. I decided to take that chance. After all, I had nothing to lose and maybe it was my last day alive. That morning Christ found me and I accepted Him as my Lord and Savior. Praise God.

The next week I broke and burned all my sorcery stuff and books. I started a Bible study to learn more about Christ and my new life (II Corinthians 5:17).

But there is more.

God started to work in my life very quickly. He put in my mind the idea of

attending Bible school. I talked with Debbie Giles, my pastor's wife, and she told me about the possibility of going to AFLBS in Minnesota. Her daughter Ingrid would be there and we could be together.

It was a very surprising time for me. I was going to college, had a good job, then my mom and grandmother became Christians too. We attended our church together, and I had only been a Christian for four months!

I started the process of getting my passport and application to AFLBS. Then came hard decisions: to leave college where my teachers didn't want me to go to AFLBS and tried to talk me out of it; my boss gave me a better job and increased my salary twice; and finally, my family was absolutely against my going to Bible school.

The problems in getting my passport and visa were just beginning. Many times I believed I was wrong. I wanted to run away and not do God's will. Other times I thought I didn't need to go so far and that I was so unworthy to do something like that. The only people who encouraged me were some brothers and sisters in my church.

Finally all papers were in order, but guess what: I fell in love with a non-Christian guy. At first I thought it wouldn't affect my decision, but I was wrong. The last month before I was to leave, I didn't want to go. The Lord talked to me through Jonah, Daniel, Philippians 4:13, and more. And I prayed. All the weight of the guilt was over me and the devil blamed me for my past. My last night in Mexico, with the airplane ticket already bought, I fell on my knees and I gave myself to the Lord. That night Joshua 1:9 encouraged me as never another verse before. I cried and I praised the Lord for His wonderful mercy and love for me.

Now I'm here in Minneapolis at AFLBS, and God is preparing me to comply to His plan for me. I have had the most difficult ten months of my life, but I feel stronger in my faith and burning passion for my Savior who rescued me from the chains of Satan and made me free. I know that I can trust Him. He is always in control. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me" (Psalm 23:4).



Congregation breaks ground in Campo Grande



Missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel, Campo Grande, Brazil, held a ground breaking service on September 20, on their new property overlooking a newly developed neighborhood. The foundation work was started the next day. The first phase of the building project includes classrooms and a small meeting hall. It is hoped that later a sanctuary can be added when the second floor is built. Pastor Abel is also working on a city-wide committee gearing up for a large evangelistic crusade in the year 2000 as part of the city's 100th anniversary celebration. Campo Grande is home for 700,000 people and the capital of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul.

News from the Nelsons in Campo Mourão

The New Semester Begins

The new Bible School semester here in Campo Mourão has begun. We are happy to have all the students who left for vacation back and ready for more. Sarah will again be teaching English at the preschool and Childhood Education, while Dave teaches Doctrine, Greek and English.

FLY Team Mission

Mission accomplished for the FLY Team. Sonja, Sue and Luziani flew from the Iguacu Falls airport to their respective homes. Susie and Heidi decided to stay longer—Susie to be with our family and Heidi to help the Paul Abel family. They helped with Vacation Bible School in Curitiba and Campo Grande; painted the inside of the infant home and finished their time in Campo Mourão working with VBS in our church in Lar Paraná and with Children's Camp which was held on campus. We thank the Lord for their willingness to serve.

International Evangelistic Effort

Who knew what would happen

St. Joseph, Minnesota — Redeeming Love Free Lutheran recently participated in the area's 13th Annual Millstream Arts and Crafts Festival. Nilson had taught some from the congregation how to prepare a Brazilian barbeque. They used retired missionary Helen Knapp's recipe for rice and beans and won first place in the best-tasting category. It proved to be a great opportunity to introduce the congregation and the AFLC's mission in Brazil to the greater St. Cloud community. Pastor Gary Skramstad serves Redeeming Love Lutheran.

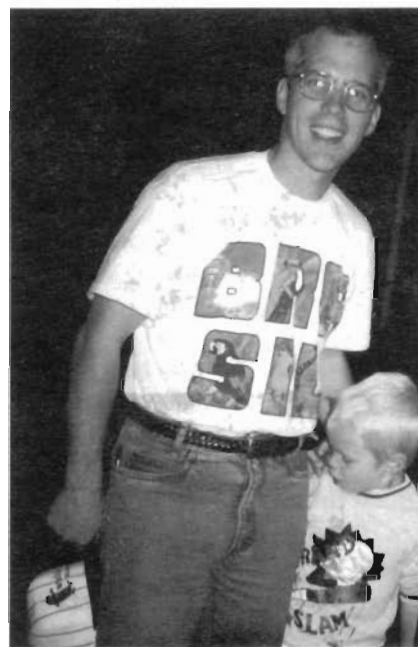
because of a Christmas party we hosted last year for one of the English schools in town? We met Nilson: 25 years old, single, agricultural engineer who wanted to improve his English abilities and job opportunities — that was his motivation, but the Lord had more important plans. He went to the U.S. for several months to stay with Sarah's parents. He experienced love and friendship in an unexpected way from the Redeeming Love Free Lutheran Congregation in St. Joseph, Minnesota. He returned to Brazil with questions and a greater desire for changes in his life. He was hired for a better job when he returned to Brazil. No longer is he trying to clean up his own life by his own efforts. He is now trusting in Jesus Christ alone for his salvation. Pray that Nilson will find good Christian fellowship in a new location, with a new job, in a new state.

Still Waiting

We find ourselves still awaiting news of our Permanent Visa to remain in this country and the adoption of Rachel. At the end of August we went to Curitiba to the Receita Federal to talk in person about our household goods that we brought with us to Brazil. They see us as importing these things for sale, unless we can prove otherwise with a Permanent Visa. However, until we receive our Permanent Visa it is hard to convince anyone. Another missionary couple had to pay several thousand dollars to even get their possessions. We are pleased to have had our clothes, and kitchen items, etc. during these two years, with only the relatively minor inconvenience of faxing and calling to renew our grace period.

Internet Connection

We are looking for a representative from each congregation that prays for us to receive and pass



Pastor David Nelson and Josiah.

along e-mail messages and prayer letters in your local church. If you are interested, talk to someone on your missions committee or council and then let us know. We will include you on our e-mail list. This way the communication process is quicker. Please share with us some of the prayer concerns from your congregations. Our e-mail address is: davenelson@start.com.br

Praise and Prayer Items:

1. Pray for the faculty and staff of the Bible school and seminary.
2. Pray for the students of our schools: Delfina, Cleide, Tirsia, Ivanilda, Elza, Arthur, Valdecir, Jose, Dorival, Carlos, Sergio, and Silvio.
3. Praise for the Lord's provision of a car.
4. Pray for the speedy recovery of Dave's Mom, who underwent heart bypass surgery on August 24. Thank the Lord for His protection during the nine-hour operation!
5. Pray for more men for the seminary and future pastoral ministry.



— Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson
Campo Mourão, Brazil

It's time to plant

Timing. It makes a big difference. The coupon that expired on Tuesday is worthless on Wednesday. The baseball hit into the stands doesn't count as a home run when it is hit during batting practice before the game. Seeds need to be planted at the right time if a harvest is going to come.

The Pacific Northwest District of the AFLC has been praying for a number of years about planting a new congregation in the Portland, Oregon area. The need has always been apparent, and increasingly so as time goes on. Over 1.7 million people live in the greater Portland area and the number is growing rapidly. Estimates are that less than ten percent of the population goes to church on a regular basis. But the timing has not seemed right to start a new work ... until now.

Families who were members of AFLC congregations have recently moved to the Portland area because of new jobs. Other families have been looking for a congregation Lutheran in its doctrine, Bible-centered in its worship and evangelistic in its outreach, and have gotten in touch with us in the AFLC. The leading of God has been strong. The time is now to work on planting a new congregation.

I am moving during this first part of October to the Portland suburb of Beaverton to pastor this new work. Home Bible studies have been going on since spring. Sunday morning worship services will begin, Lord willing, now in the fall. We were originally planning to meet in homes at first, but the number who have expressed a strong interest is already at 30, with 15 of those being children, so we are in the process of looking for a site to rent.

The suburbs in the southwest part of the Portland suburbs where we are planning to locate are full of young families who are new to the area, coming because of the booming economy, particularly in the field of technology. New homes, schools and businesses are going up in every direction. Surveys that we have conducted indicate that children and youth and their needs are a top priority and concern in the area.

The congregations of the Pacific

AFLC HOME MISSIONS



Northwest District have been very supportive and have taken this on as a district project. We are anticipating inviting members of other district congregations and youth groups to join us for outreach and service evangelism events. We are stepping forward in faith, trusting that when God calls, He also provides. "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19, NIV).

It is time to plant the seeds of the gospel in the Portland area, and then prepare to see what God will do.

Before crossing the Jordan river into the land God had promised to give them, Joshua told the Israelites, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you" (Joshua 3:5, NIV). The priests who were carrying the ark of the covenant were then told to put their feet in the water. It was at flood stage and highly dangerous, "Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing" (Joshua 3:15-16, NIV). They stepped forward and saw God do incredible things.

Planting a new congregation is a bit like stepping into the water. It's a challenge and an adventure. We are very much in need of and appreciative of your prayers. We also invite others who may want to relocate to the Portland area for work or school to join us.

We are anticipating being given the opportunity to see God do amazing things. Now is the time to take a step forward and see what God, in His time and His way, is going to do.



— Pastor Craig Johnson
Beaverton, Oregon

Currently there are 24 mission congregations in 13 states. Prospective mission fields include Alaska and Montana.

Why establish mission congregations?

— *Pastor Tony Stockman*
Chippewa Lutheran
Brandon, Minnesota

God's Word answers this question clearly. "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Sin has a terrible curse and effect upon people and its wages are death (Romans 6:23). Souls are perishing! They need salvation from going lost for all eternity in hell. They need a church in their community whose primary focus is evangelism — reaching out to the lost with the saving message of the cross.

God has set before us a mission to seek, reach and teach others the truths found in Scripture. Jesus stated his life's mission in Mark 10:45, "For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." He also said in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus still seeks and saves.

I recently read an excerpt from "Strategies Inc." on church planting studies. They reported, "if a denomination wishes to reach more people, the number of new churches it begins each year must equal at least 3% of the denomination's existing churches. Based on this formula, mainline churches are failing to plant enough churches to offset decline." Our AFLC has 236 congregations on its membership list. If we use this formula we should be planting or adding about seven new churches every year.

Is this an unrealistic goal? I don't think so! God has given our fellowship many won-

derful gifts found in His people. There are opportunities for us to work as a team in reaching and planting new churches. Our established congregations need a vision for starting and nurturing new sister churches. Or perhaps they can adopt a home mission church and pray for its needs.

Any thought that America is over-churched ignores the facts. In 1900, the U.S. Census Bureau counted 212,320 churches. In 1995, with the tripled U.S. population, there were 345,406 churches. There are fewer churches per person than there were 90 years ago.

Here in Brandon, Minnesota, it is harvest time. The farmer is focused on getting the crop in from the fields. He is motivated by the value he has placed on the crop and its worth to him. Nothing distracts him from his task. Jesus talks of another harvest time: "Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest" (John 4:35). On another occasion, Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38).

God has called us as individuals to go to that harvest field. I pray you are willing to go with a servant spirit. He will give you joy in the ministry. He will give you grace and strength to do His will. There are harvest fields all around us ready and waiting.

Let's go to work! It's harvest time.



Church Extension Loan Fund

AFLC Church Extension is a loan fund intended to provide money to congregations who must borrow funds in order to build church facilities and/or parsonages. It's a revolving fund. When a congregation repays its loan, the money is re-loaned to other congregations.

The Home Missions Board pays 6% interest on certificates of \$1,000 or more (five-year minimum). For investments under \$1,000 and/or less than five years, 5% interest is paid. (Rates are subject to change.)

There is a waiting list of churches hoping to receive Church Extension loans. For more information, call the AFLC Home Missions office at (612) 545-5631.

Lutheran Church of Hope, Loveland, Colorado requests prayer as they look for property on which to build. Home Missions Director Paul Nash was in Loveland in August to join the building committee in looking over possible property sites. Larry Haagenon is the pastor of Lutheran Church of Hope.

letter to the editor

Dear editor,

It is so necessary to preach the gospel and give a witness for Jesus Christ. In today's world there are so many people who don't know the Lord, who live without any hope. How important it is that somebody goes and tells them the good news. In fact it is our first obligation to do so and give a testimony about our personal Savior.

My family and I participated in the Free Lutheran Youth Convention in Estes Park, Colorado last

August. We saw that there are people who care about our youth by teaching them the true Word of God. Every speaker had something in his message which made us think, consider and change our hearts. We are so thankful for that!

That week became unforgettable for us as we saw unity and fellowship like nowhere else around us. We understood that by the grace of God, we are witnesses to the great work God is doing in the hearts of young people. That is a highlight of life — to be present at the moment when young people commit themselves to the Lord.

We thank everyone who worked hard to put this FLY 1997 Convention together and we thank those who made it possible for our family to attend. We appreciate your love and prayers. We will never forget the time we spent together in fellowship and praises to our Lord!

I love You, Lord,

— Indra Evamois, Riga,
Latvia

(Indra's husband, Raitis, is attending AFLTS where he is beginning his second year as a special student. They expect to return to Latvia after this school year.)

Calvary, Bismarck, North Dakota — Though they did not hold a Vacation Bible School last year, Calvary saw a good turnout this summer due to hard work by the congregation's members. Interim Pastor John Abel and his wife, Ruby, along with members of the congregation canvassed the area previous to the VBS. They visited about 200 homes and were gratified to see total enrollment of 33 in the VBS. Average attendance at Calvary's Sunday school has been about ten.



Ruby Abel and her VBS class at Bismarck, North Dakota.

Body of Christ, Tucson, Arizona — Pastor Frank Cherney reports that Body of Christ Lutheran is continuing its search for property. The congregation shares its pastor with Living Faith Lutheran, also in Tucson.

Maranatha Free Lutheran, Willmar, Minnesota has been hard at work in the construction of a new sanctuary this summer. The work is progressing well. They hope to be in the facility this fall. The volunteer help from within the congregation has been excellent and encouraging help has been received from other AFLC congregations as well. Pastor Elden Nelson, who serves the congregation, describes the project as a growing time.

Volunteerism is alive and well in Willmar, Minnesota.



Pastor Elden Nelson and Gary Nelson, members of Maranatha, set up the mail box in front of their new church on County Rd. 9, just south of Hwy. 12 on the east side of town. The congregation has built their church with volunteer labor except for the cement and drywall work. Alfie Erickson, a retired electrician from Bethany Lutheran in nearby Sebeka, donated 16 days labor to the project.

Faith Lutheran Church, Metropolis, Illinois

Meet

On June 9, 1996, a new birth happened in Metropolis, Illinois, in the midst of sorrow, uncertainty, and loss. Initially, I was not aware this new birth would impact so many people in so many ways. Weeks earlier, about 45 individuals signed a statement that they, in good conscience, could no longer be a part of the church body they belonged to. On that June morning, the majority of the congregation, however, voted to keep our affiliation the same.

Along with others, I left our family's familiar place of worship. That evening, the group who signed the statement met in a garage for prayer, God's Word, singing and supper. I was still in despair and emptiness at the outcome of that vote, but I knew my heartfelt conviction demanded standing for God and His Holy Word without compromise. I am a struggling sinner, but *"my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness."* How can the world know salvation through Jesus if the church questions the authenticity of God's Word?

Our lay leader that Sunday evening began the devotional time by asking each of us to pray, thanking God for something to help us put this transition into perspective. The Holy Spirit was definitely working among us. The children stood in the circle of our chairs and we all sang "This Little Light of Mine." From that point forward, I have watched in awe of God at His work.

A rent-free Girl Scout house was the new Faith Lutheran's first worship place for six weeks. Pews and hymnals were given to us. Then God provided our present location in downtown Metropolis. Men within our group were called by God to deliver the messages from God's Word. Christians outside our church encouraged and supported us. Our baby step of faith was rewarded with God's gracious response.

During these months, God worked changes in many of our lives. For me, I realized how much I had let this precious gift of grace be cheapened, if not totally denied of its importance to life on earth and to life everlasting. I cannot imagine life without Jesus. I need Him every moment.

In our new fellowship, we experienced changes in how we praise and worship

God on Sunday. Lay people are more involved. Our *Ambassador Hymnal* pages in the 500s are wearing thin. "O Victory in Jesus," is the favorite request of the children every Sunday.

After spending the summer and fall of 1996 studying Lutheran bodies, we chose to affiliate with the AFLC. I am excited about this because of the AFLC's commitment to a personal relationship with Christ (John 3), the strong emphasis on evangelism (Matthew 28), and the refusal to compromise on the authenticity of the Bible (II Timothy 3:16).

Last summer's highlight was when our men from Faith Lutheran planned a crusade for Christ with others from Christian denominations. Individuals came to know Jesus and believers from other groups came together with the common ground being the Lord Jesus Christ. Two weeks before the crusade, Pastor Todd and Miriam Klemme and their four children settled into our community to join us.

Nothing that I have shared or experienced was accomplished except through God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Psalm 118:1 describes how I see all that has happened in our new church: "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his

— Lisa Bremer
Faith Lutheran
Metropolis, Illinois

Lutheran Church of the Resurrection Cottonwood, Arizona



Members of the congregation.

new AFLC congregations

Rancho San Diego Lutheran El Cajon, California

A four-year-old congregation, Community Lutheran Church in Oceanside, California, by faith went out on a limb. Without a negative comment, this congregation voted unanimously to begin a new congregation in Rancho San Diego, including a call to a full-time pastor.

Community Lutheran knew this decision may cost \$600 to \$2,000 just for monthly rent. They were also aware this would be done without any dollars from the AFLC or its home missions department. A small nucleus of Lutherans, who also wanted this church, would serve as a strengthening influence.

Fifty-five miles separate Oceanside from this suburb of San Diego. John Kent, a former church youth director, was hired to serve Community Lutheran one-quarter time during these first months of also serving as the lay pastor of Rancho San Diego Lutheran. During these recent months, he has worked closely with Community Lutheran's Pastor Orville Hepler. This past summer he also attended the AFLC annual conference, the youth convention, and studied at the seminary's summer institute.

The 1997 Southern Barnabas Team spent a week at the end of July with The Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Cottonwood, Arizona. The team assisted with Vacation Bible School, beginning with 13 children enrolled and ending with over 30. At the end of the week, a Friday night ice cream social and closing program was held with 91 people attending.

Cottonwood's new congregation, formerly known as Verde Valley Lutheran Mission, is located just two hours north of Phoenix. It's a beautiful town where most of the population is made up of year-around residents.

Currently AFLC Home Missions is sending pastors to serve them on a Sunday-by-Sunday basis. Pray for this congregation as they organize and call an interim pastor and prepare for a full-time pastor in the future.

The first service for Rancho San Diego Lutheran was held on July 20, 1997. Three significant negatives were present: they met in a rented church; they started in the hottest vacation

month of the year; and worship service time was 1:30 in the afternoon. Though many attended from the sponsoring church, the attendance that day was 65. Recent attendance averages over fifty. Sunday school, youth meetings and mid-week Bible study all began the second week. Summer time did not scare the planners.

AFLC President Robert Lee joined the new congregation to dedicate their newly rented facilities on September 7th. Pastor Kent is spending at least eight weeks teaching the doctrines of the Lutheran Church and the Bible in an adult confirmation class.

Both congregations expect no need will arise for subsidizing from the AFLC Home Missions. Many in Community Lutheran share that they are being blessed equally with those in the new church. The Oceanside church took on this project even though it has loans of about \$400,000 and is planning a school building project next spring.

In California alone several communities are crying for a new church. Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out harvesters and for willing, sponsoring churches who will step out in faith.

— Pastor Orville Hepler
Community Lutheran
Oceanside, California



Pastor John Kent

Good Shepherd Lutheran Lincoln, Illinois

Good Shepherd Lutheran is the newest AFLC congregation. A group first met with AFLC President Robert Lee during the Labor Day weekend and began conducting worship services on September 28, 1997. Lincoln is located in central Illinois, north of Springfield.

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WOMEN'S PAGE

Joy

The contrast between the lives of the two famous women who died recently provides food for thought as we look at the October lesson "God gives us Joy." What will bring us joy — clothes, riches and beauty, or humility, service and faithfulness? How does the world view the concept of joy? This month's lesson will focus on joy from God's point of view and give us some insight on how to share the joy that He gives us.

The dictionary defines joy as "a strong feeling of pleasure, or something that causes gladness or happiness." I remember several times being especially joyful over a gift someone gave me or over a special event in my life; but the joy over those things and events has long since faded. The joy we feel from earthly pleasures remains in our memories, but the strong feeling soon vanishes like an early morning mist.

God wants us to experience a joy that is so intense and complete that it becomes a very part of our being; a joy that will remain with us for the rest of our lives; a joy that will find its fulfillment when we stand before Him in thanks-giving and praise. Psalm 16:11 describes it: "You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

God tells His people to be filled with the Spirit who gives us true joy. How do we become filled with the Spirit? Romans 12:1-2 says, "I beseech you ... by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will."

We must seek and obey His will in order to have continual joy. What a glorious day it will be when I can hear God say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your master." Then I will be like the butterfly who sheds the cocoon of its former self, spreads its wings and feels the joy of freedom. At last I will see face to face God's Son, My Lord and Savior — the Source of all the joy bestowed to me here on earth.

Our joy in the Lord must come from the Holy Spirit because joy is a fruit of the Spirit. My prayer is that each one of us will allow Him to work in our lives and that we invite Him to control our whole life and being. True, lasting joy that radiates from us to others, comes only when He is the owner, proprietor and keeper of the temple — our body, that He has built to inhabit. May we experience what Acts 13:52 describes of the disciples: they "were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."

— Helen Kjos

Medicine Lake Lutheran
Plymouth, Minnesota

WMF In Memoriams

Forfin Rustad, McVille, ND
Pastor James Asp, Morris, IL
Edward Esterline, Poplar Bluff, MO
Loretta Person, Niorbrara, NE
Lemoin Hanson, Sunberg, MN
Milo Hoff, Brooton, MN
David McCreary, Sioux City, NE
Hazel Herno, Wahpeton, ND
Eva Aune, Starbuck, MN
Edith E. Getzlaff, Willow City, ND
Marvin Jorstad, Tioga, ND
Marie Nelson, Kandiyohi, MN
Harvey Duncan, Valley City, ND
Florence Sandness, Valley City, ND
Pastor John Strand, Remer, MN
Josie Knutson, Tioga, ND
Orlando Urevig, Wallace, SD
Anna Mae Peterson, Morris, IL
Hazel Sonnenberg, Spicer, MN
Rachel Berglee, Wolf Point, MT

Bible School building project underway with Vision 2004

Initial communications with the City of Plymouth have been positive, architect firms are presenting their proposals, topographical site survey is underway: Vision 2004 has begun! The first goal of Vision 2004 is to break ground next spring for a gymnasium, classroom, student center, and library building on the twenty-five acre campus at 3120 East Medicine Lake Boulevard.

The AFLC Board of Trustees is contacting the 160 home owners within a block and a half of the campus to invite them to an informational meeting to share the building plans included in Vision 2004. The Board has hired Pastor Tonnes Pollestad, of Andover, Minnesota, as project director. Pastor Pollestad is working half-time while continuing to serve as pastor of Maranatha Lutheran in Spring Lake Park along with Seminarian Ivars Krafts.

Board of Trustees Chairman David Borg said, "With our present situation of students and projected growth, we might have to address dormitory space sooner than expected." Eighty percent of last year's juniors returned. If that trend continues along with preliminary numbers for next year's junior class, enrollment could soar to 200. The current dorm space is full at 143 students.

The Board's goal is to reach as many AFLC people as possible to explain Vision 2004. For more information and to share your concerns or suggestions, contact Pastor Tonnes Pollestad at (612) 544-1194 or Board Chairman David Borg at (320) 286-5275. Thank you for your continued prayers for this project. The next building committee meeting is scheduled for October 20.

OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. II Corinthians 4:5

Servants

The scriptural concept of servant leadership is central to building a free and living congregation. Yet it is clear that this important teaching is currently under attack in many church circles, even among those who may pay lip service to the autonomy of the local congregation.

It is possible to profess agreement with the AFLC Fundamental Principles, that the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth, and yet to structure the congregation in such a way that this principle is denied. There may be no authority **above** the local congregation, and yet in certain instances the authority **within** some congregations rests almost completely in the hands of the pastors, elders, or church council.

The pastor is called by God to be a servant of the local congregation. He looks to Jesus as his example, seeking not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45), not lording it over those allotted to his charge, but leading by example (I Peter 5:3).

The officers of the congregation are called to be servants, too, for the scriptural exhortations to the elders apply to them as well. To be elected to an office means that you have been chosen to serve, not to rule. Jesus spoke to His disciples when they misunderstood their calling, reminding them to "let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant" (Luke 22:26).

The AFLC is also called to be a servant of the congregations. This is the only reason for our existence, to serve under the authority of the Word and the Spirit of God, assisting local congregations to accomplish together what one cannot do alone. Some might call congregational polity "mob rule," convinced that the pastors and other leaders will know what is best for the rest of the believers. Yet it is frighteningly obvious that church history is filled with the record of grievous errors committed by those who presumed that they knew what was best for others, supported by claims of divine authority that in reality seemed only to serve their own human ambitions.

We believe in the Word alone, in the priesthood of all believers, and in the Holy Spirit's indwelling of all believers. Jesus is Lord of the Church, and we look to Him to lead through all of His people. Yes, the reality of life in the local congregation is sometimes far from the New Testament standard, yet the answer is not to remove authority from an imperfect Body to an imperfect pastor or board. The answer is the quickening preaching and teaching of God's Word, which still melts hard hearts and changes stubborn minds, guiding His people according to His will.

The call to lead is a call to serve, and this applies to pastors and church officers, as well as to the AFLC itself. May the Lord help us to always serve in the spirit of His Son, who said:

You call Me Teacher, and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example, that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; neither one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them (John 13:13-17).

— Pastor Robert L. Lee

PEOPLE AND PLACES



Rev. Hans J. Tollefson
1902-1997

Rev. Hans J. Tollefson was born September 22, 1902 to Levion and Hannah Tollefson in L'Anse, Michigan.

He attended school in L'Anse, and graduated from high school in 1922. He then graduated from Augsburg College in Minneapolis in 1926. Led by the Lord into the Christian ministry, he enrolled in Augsburg seminary and graduated in 1938. Hans was ordained in the Lutheran Free Church in 1939.

That same year he married Ruth Nygaard in Zahl, North Dakota.

Pastor Tollefson possessed a simple faith in Jesus and spent his life in ministry to Him. His first parish was in the Lutheran Free Church congregation in Bella Coola, British Columbia, Canada. He then served four congregations in Palermo, North Dakota for seven years. Next he served in Hampden, North Dakota for five and a half years.

In 1955 he and his family moved to Astoria where he served Bethany Free Lutheran Church until 1964. He joined the clergy roster of the AFLC in its early days. He returned to North Dakota, and served three churches in Hatton, North Dakota for five and a half years. Finally, he ministered in Eben Junction, Michigan for three and a half years. He served

as an interim pastor in Ferndale, Washington for nine months.

He retired in Astoria in 1975. That was not the end of his service to the Lord, however. The Lord used him as a counselor to the pastors of the congregation. He served as deacon as late as five years ago at the age of 90. His singing voice remained strong to the end and often was used to minister to the congregation. He always had words to say to encourage and edify.

Hans was also known and appreciated as a man of prayer.

Ralph H. Beyer, 75, Osceola, Wisconsin, formerly of Stacy, Minnesota died on August 16, 1997. Born on September 23, 1921, in Oriska, North Dakota, he married Irene Bucholz in Lucca, North Dakota. They farmed for a time before going into the construction business.

In 1980, he took early retirement from construction to answer the call to go into full-time Christ work. Ralph and Irene managed the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement Retreat Center at Dassel, Minnesota until the end of 1982. They moved to the ARC where Ralph was employed until 1985 when he was called to serve as Dean of Men at AFLBS. He retired from this position in May of 1988. At that time Ralph and Irene returned to the ARC and volunteered their time during the summer months, spending the

Hans died Sunday, September 7, 1997. He is survived by his wife, Ruth; his son Alfred and daughter-in-law Trinna Tollefson, and his son Richard. He is also survived by his grandchildren Amy, Alivia, Noah and Rose Tollefson, and his sister, Clara Westrom of Skanee, Michigan.

The funeral service was held September 9, at Bethany Lutheran in Astoria Oregon. Pastor Martin Horn officiated and Pastors Alvin Grothe and Craig Johnson participated.

Blessed be his memory.

winters in Texas.

Ralph served the Lord with a joyful spirit and enthusiasm. He had a genuine concern for the souls of others. He took great pride in the appearance of the ARC grounds. He enjoyed gospel music and the preaching of the Word. Ralph is sorely missed by his family, the ARC staff, and his many friends.

Ralph is survived by his wife, Irene; five sons, Keith (Linda), Terry, Kermit, Larry, Chris (Lori); a daughter, Karen (Ed); 14 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

The funeral service was held at Sunnyside Lutheran in Stacy, Minnesota on August 20, with Pastors Dave Keippela and Paul Nash officiating. Interment was at the Oriska Lutheran Cemetery, Oriska, North Dakota.

Blessed be his memory.

Pastor Charles Sampson, Orion, Illinois, has accepted a call to serve Newark Lutheran Church, Newark, Illinois. He began his ministry there on October 12. He was approved by the Coordinating Committee through colloquy from the Association of American Lutheran Churches, and is included on the AFLC Fellowship Roster.

Cokato, Minnesota — Good Shepherd Lutheran is hosting a Prophecy Conference during October 26-28. Pastor David Barnhart of Abiding Word Lutheran in Melbourne, Florida, will speak at the Sunday morning worship services and each evening at 7 p.m. All are welcome to come and hear scriptural messages on Israel.

Dates to note

AFLBS Fall Campus Days – October 17-19

AFLBS Parents' Weekend – December 5-7

Schools' Christmas Concert – December 7, 4 and 7 p. m.

AFLC Pastors' Conference – January 20-22

AFLBS Spring Campus Days – April 3-5

Schools' Graduation – May 23

AFLC Annual Conference at St. Olaf College,
Northfield, Minnesota – June 17-21

El Campo, Texas — Faith Lutheran celebrated its 10th anniversary on August 31, 1997. Aid Association for Lutherans sponsored the noon meal after which an anniversary service was held. The congregation hosted special meetings during October 9-12, with AFLC President Robert Lee as the speaker. El Campo is southwest of Houston, 50 miles off the Gulf of Mexico.

Pastor Richard Asmussen, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, has accepted a call from Ebenezer Lutheran Church of Evergreen Park in Chicago, Illinois, and began his ministry there on October 1. Previously serving an ELCIC congregation at Parkbeg, Saskatchewan, he comes through colloquy from approval by the AFLC-Canada and the Coordinating Committee, and has been placed on the lay pastor roster.

Jewel, Iowa — St. Paul's Lutheran experienced a unique advertising approach to make more people aware of their congregation. Last summer a family of wild turkeys decided to roost next to the front door of the church. They became so tame that one could walk within ten feet of them. An inquisitive bird, they became so curious on Sunday mornings they would sit on the window sills looking in on the worshippers. Before authorities came to remove the messy family, a CBS TV station from Des Moines filmed the unwanted church family and Paul Harvey humored his listeners with the story.



Elbow, Saskatchewan — Bethel Lutheran dedicated their new church building on June 22, 1997. With the fellowship hall accomodating the overflow crowd, about 300 members and friends participated. The congregation accomplished their original goal and began worshipping in their new building debt-free.

Order your new FLY songbook

Make Music to our God is now available in both the words-only edition (\$3) and the music-words edition (\$25). To order your copy, contact Pastor Tim Carlson at P.O. Box 339, Wheatland, IA 52777, (319) 374-1002; or the Free Lutheran Youth office at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441, (612) 545-5631.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences – January 1 - August 31, 1997

| FUND | TOTAL Subsidy | REC'D IN AUGUST | TOTAL REC'D TO DATE | % TOTAL |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------|
| General Fund | \$279,330.00 | \$15,127.47 | 132,045.39 | 47 |
| Seminary | 113,300.00 | 7,171.12 | 56,171.17 | 50 |
| Bible School | 142,509.00 | 3,265.16 | 68,398.94 | 48 |
| Home Missions. | 257,432.00 | 8,934.30 | 119,533.90 | 46 |
| World Missions. | 341,000.00 | 25,447.43 | 220,669.58 | 65 |
| Capital Investment | 19,000.00 | 2,900.47 | 9,136.76 | 48 |
| Parish Education | 56,517.00 | 1,988.60 | 35,013.62 | 62 |
| Church Extension | 14,813.00 | 3,233.02 | 13,210.98 | 89 |
| TOTALS | \$1,223,901.00 | 73,067.57 | 554,180.34 | 53 |
| TOTALS 1996 | 1,232,267.00 | 80,076.93 | 688,689.28 | 56 |
| Goal 67% | | | | |

Pastor Don Richman, Bloomington, Minnesota, is visiting churches in October with Pastor Stanislav Pietak, in the Czech Republic. They are sharing the need of buying back a building taken from the church several years ago by the former communist government. Pastor Tim Hinrichs works with Pastor Pietak and his congregation.

Minneapolis, Minnesota — Faith Lutheran has prepared and completely furnished their parsonage apartment in the church for Pastor Ove Sander, his wife Liina and two sons. The Sanders are from Estonia. While in Minneapolis, Pastor Sander is studying at the Free Lutheran Seminary in preparation to return to teach seminary classes in Estonia.

Roseau, Minnesota — Spruce Free Lutheran is hosting the annual Northwestern Minnesota District meeting on October 26, at 3 p.m. Speakers are Home Missions Director Paul Nash and Loniell Dyrud.

Evangelism grant awarded to LEM

Lutherans for Evangelism, a ministry of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement based in Golden Valley, Minnesota, will receive a \$37,115 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans. The funds will enable the organization to provide small and medium-sized Lutheran congregations with the necessary tools to start new congregations. Lutherans for Evangelism promotes growing congregations through the use of "cells," groups of seven to 15 adults and their children who are led by a lay leader. These individual cells meet in the homes of their members and expand as new members join. The method is cost effective, adaptable for different cultural backgrounds and not limited by the size of the church facility.

AFLC Memorials July-August, 1997

| Name | Given by | Department |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Duane Swanson | Edith Gudim | AFLBS |
| Helena Ullestad | Mr/Mrs. V.G. Handsaker | Home Missions |
| Leon Windingland | Pastor/Mrs. J. Rasmussen | World Missions |
| Fern VanAlstine | Knudsvig family | AFLBS |
| Catherine Gundale | Mr/Mrs. Andrew Larson | |
| Moni Huseth | Delbert/LuVern Jones | |
| Charles Peterson | Mavis Tenneboe | AFLT |
| Moyle Anderson and | | |
| Hazel Hermo | Ken/Mary Nash | Home Missions |
| Marie Nelson | Halvor/Virginia Knapp | AFLBS |
| | Byron/Dorothy Klemmetson | Home Missions |
| | Ella Rekedal | AFLT |
| Walter Bradley | Mr/Mrs. Gordon Rugland | |
| | Mr/Mrs. Stanley Carlson | |
| Lillie Lindner | Gerald/Karen Swanson | Home Missions |
| Pastor John Strand | Pastor/Mrs. C. Oswood | Parish Ed |
| | Andrew/Karen Anderson | AFLT |
| | Beatrice Anderson | |
| | Anna Marie Dahle | |
| | Gerald/Karen Knudsvig | AFLBS |
| | Ronald Gravgard | |
| | Mr/Mrs. James Rolf | |
| | Aini Myking | |
| | Stan/JoAnn Miller | |
| | Kenneth/Harriet Rolf | |
| | Mr/Mrs. Adolph Kordahl | |
| | Presteng Construction | |
| | Harold/Bethel Erickson | |
| | Larry/Lori Olson | |
| | Pastor/Mrs. G. Mundfrom | Gen. Fund |
| | Judith Wold | |
| | Vernon/Dorothy Russum | |
| | Guy Flaten | |
| | Carlton/Esther Flaten | |
| | Loiell/MaryLynn Dyrud | AFLT |
| | Pastor/Mrs. Ted Berkas | |
| | Pastor/Mrs. T. Skramstad | |
| | Pastor/Mrs. G. Skramstad | |
| | Thomas/Delores Amb | |
| | Albin/Carol Haugen | |
| | Robert/Helen Knutson | |
| | Pastor/Mrs. J. Rasmussen | |
| | Mr/Mrs. Arnold Vaa | |
| | Pastor/Mrs. Robert Lee | |
| | Pastor/Mrs. Rodger Olson | |
| | Ella Rekedal | |
| | Jennie Solberg | |
| | Mabel E. Johnson | |
| | Llewellyn/Joyce Pederson | World Missions |
| | Pastor/Mrs. Einar Unseth | |
| | Pastor/Mrs. John Abel | |
| | Leola Furman | |
| | Pastor/Mrs. Amos Dyrud | |
| | Luther/Adeline Monson | Home Missions |
| | Pastor/Mrs. Elden Nelson | |
| Ralph Beyer | Gordon/Doris Newell | AFLBS |
| | Ernest/Darlene Miedema | AFLT |
| Howard Johnson | Robert/Carol Dietsche | Home Missions |
| Art Jeglum | Gerald/Karen/ | |
| | Hilman Knudsvig | AFLBS |
| Jossie Knudson and | | |
| Marvin Jostad | Randall/Karen Pederson | AFLBS |
| Robert Jaeger | Ella Oscarson | AFLT |

It can be done

You know something can be done when you see someone do it. I know it is possible to run the race of faith and run it well; to walk with God with integrity for many years; to serve Him and His church and finish strong. I know this is possible because I have seen it done. In particular I have seen it done by a man who recently finished the course of his life on this earth: Pastor Hans Tollefson.

I do not remember very much about the first time I met Hans, but that is understandable. I have been told my first outing was to his house when his wife, Ruth, had a baby shower at which I was the honored guest.

He began to be used by God as an influence in my life even before then. I am certain he began praying for me soon after he heard my parents were expecting a child. Those prayers continued to the end, and for them I am so deeply grateful.

Hans was used by God when I became a recipient of God's grace when he baptized me. I also believe that Hans demonstrated God's special love for children and His interest and delight in them when, I am told, he visited our home and took time to get on the floor and play with me and my trucks.

Hans left my home congregation when I was still a child to serve other congregations. My family, however, kept in close contact with him and his family and then, when I was in my early teens, he returned to my hometown. He wasn't receiving a salary as a full-time pastor anymore, but he was still a full-time servant of the Lord, and a special role model and influence in my life.

A runner does not do well if he lacks a proper focus. He cannot be looking from side to side. Hans ran with perseverance because he had his eyes fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1,2). He was focused on what was important: knowing Jesus as Savior and Lord, and inviting others to know Him as well. He reminded the congregation in one sermon, preached after he retired but was filling in, that we cannot emphasize too strongly how important it is for people to be saved.

The conviction was strong in Hans' heart that the way of salvation must be proclaimed. Sacrifice is appropriate in order to make that proclamation.

Hans' first parish in the Lutheran Free Church in Bella Coola, British Columbia, was considered at the time quite remote. Many had said no to going there,

but Hans said yes when the president of the LFC asked him to go. It was not easy, but that was not the issue. The issue was people needed to hear the good news of Jesus' love.

I have missed some special events and celebrations that were going on in my hometown since I began serving a congregation. Hans understood. He said once, "You have a parish now." It was expected that I would often go without, do without and miss out on certain things, like Hans had done, because the gospel needed to be proclaimed.

Hans possessed much knowledge, but his preaching and serving were not just an intellectual exercise. It came from the heart. He told of his sermon preparation, how it would begin early in the week, deciding on the verses of Scripture he would preach on. Throughout the week he would meditate devotionally on those verses, praying for God to work through the Word in his heart first of all.

Pastor John Strand told me of a time when a man who was known as an excellent public speaker heard Hans preach. He commented to Pastor Strand afterwards, "I may be known as a great orator, but that man is a great preacher."

Hans' effectiveness came not so much because of humanly-developed skills, though he had those, but because of a God-developed passion for the Lord and for souls. Skills without passion leads to simply the tickling of ears but not the transforming of hearts.

Not long before he passed away, Hans' mind had started to get confused. As I visited him he remembered who I was, but many other things he couldn't remember and wasn't certain about. But then I read from the Bible about "the peace of God, which transcends all understanding" (Philippians 4:7, NIV). Hans started talking about the peace that Jesus gives. His mind was clear on that. He was certain about that peace, how important it is and where it comes from. He was confident, resting in His Savior.

He forgot some things, but he didn't forget Jesus, and Jesus didn't forget him.

I thank God for letting me know one who "fought the good fight, ... finished the race, ... kept the faith" and for whom there was in store "the crown of righteousness" (II Timothy 4:7,8, NIV).

— Pastor Craig Johnson

**"He forgot
some things,
but he didn't
forget Jesus,
and Jesus
didn't forget
him."**

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Periodicals

ARC Family Retreat coming soon!

October 24-26 marks the date for this year's Fall Family Retreat. Pastor Michael Brandt is the speaker. There will be a separate program for both the younger children and the teens. As we did last year, prepare to enjoy a Christian Costume Party on Saturday night. Children and adults are encouraged to dress like their favorite Bible character, animal, or famous Christian. An added feature to Saturday night's activities will be Mikael Rudolph, a Christian mime and comedian.

Cost for the retreat is \$50 per person, with a family maximum of \$150. If you can't decide if you should attend, read what others have to say about last year's retreat:

Last year we attended the first Fall Family Retreat at the ARC. To say we had a wonderful time would be an understatement. The fellowship with other friends and believers was so special. The speakers were inspirational and informative and the activities were loads of fun. Time at the



New flags at the entrance of the Association Retreat Center.

Gifts to Lutheran Bible camps will be matched!

Lutheran Brotherhood announces its newest member matching gift program for Lutheran Outdoor Ministries. If you are a Lutheran Brotherhood member, this good news applies to you. Lutheran Brotherhood will match dollar-for-dollar gifts from \$25 up to \$100 given by members to the Association Retreat Center and other Lutheran camps. This match can be used annually through this matching gift program.

An individual or family that wishes to have a gift matched will send their gift to the ARC or the outdoor ministry of another Lutheran camp along with an application for Outdoor Outreach. The ARC will verify the application and send it to Lutheran Brotherhood.

For more information call the ARC office at 800-294-2877 or Lutheran Brotherhood member matching gifts office at 800-3328-7168.

ARC is so special to our family and we look forward to those days all year long. We hope to see you there next time.

— Vicki Holmquist

The ARC's Fall Retreat is great because it allows you to get together with friends more often. It is also a time of spiritual

growth. I would definitely recommend it to anyone who enjoyed family camp.

— Jared Langness

I liked the Fall Retreat. The best thing was the candy and the hay ride, and having a slumber party with my friend Owen.

— Jonathan Langness