

The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

October 15, 1996



SEE

*What
God is doing*



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 15, 1996
Volume 34, Number 13



The magazine of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441. (612) 545-5631

Editor: Rev. Craig Johnson
Assistant to the Editor: Solveig Hjermstad
Editorial Board: Rev. John Mundfrom, Oryen Benrud, Rev. Jerry Moan.

CONTENTS

Congregations growing into the next century	p. 4
His plans are best	p. 5
How to pray for missionaries	p. 9
Pray for our national workers	p. 10

The Lutheran Ambassador

(USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413)
is published every three weeks except monthly in June and July (16 issues per year) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

For editorial inquiries and information:
The Lutheran Ambassador, Box 423, Faith, SD 57626; (605) 967-2381; fax (605) 967-2382. E-Mail cjohnson@efn.org

For subscription changes and information: The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441. (612) 545-5631.

Subscriptions rates:

\$15.00 a year, Group Rate, U. S.

\$16.00 a year, Individual, U. S.

\$18.00 a year, International

Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, MN and additional mailing office.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441.

AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Courage or fear

Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.
— Deuteronomy 31:6

Combat veterans have said, "There are no atheists in the foxhole." To face the fury and the fire of an enemy that is determined to destroy you strikes fear into the heart of a man. It takes much courage to go forward against such danger and crawl out of the safety of the foxhole. To advance seems to require super human strength.

God, through His prophet Moses, is, in our text, preparing Israel for combat; to go over Jordan and possess the promised land. This involved facing and conquering a formidable foe. A fearful prospect! This is where courage was to displace fear.

Moses told them, "Be strong and of good courage," and in the same breath he said, "Do not fear nor be afraid of them." Why? Because, "The Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

Joshua was to be their new commanding general when Moses died. Possibly he was feeling some pangs of fear also. So, not forgetting him, Moses said to him in the "sight of all Israel, Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them" (Deuteronomy 31:7) This encouragement is repeated to him in Joshua 1.

This old world is full of fear and it isn't going to get any better. God said, "Things will wax (become) worse and worse" (II Timothy 3:13). "Men's hearts will

fail them from fear" (Luke 21:26). The unsaved, of course, have reason to fear, especially regarding their final end if they do not repent for "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

Christians have many enemies in this world — the devil, the world and our own flesh. These are formidable foes. It is easy to allow fear to creep in. That is of the devil. He loves to use fear to immobilize us so that we are incapacitated, motionless and unable to be and do what God wants for us. Fear of the enemy is sin. It can keep us from letting the world know we are a child of God. It can prevent us from asking God's blessing on our food in public or witnessing to someone.

Fear ought to have no place in the Christian's life except to fear God with a childlike fear or reverence. Listen to God's Word, "*Be strong — do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord is the One who goes with you.*" He will never leave us. David wrote: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1). Let us go forward in Christ, our victorious one!



— Pastor
Alvin Grothe
Astoria, Oregon

SOUND BITES



"Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."



—Bob Pierce

"The command of God extends to 'all people everywhere.' That is as comprehensive as one can get, so the church needs to take the gospel everywhere to everyone. Every person we meet needs to repent and turn to God."

—Ajith Fernando

"He (Paul) believed in the Holy Ghost, not merely vaguely as a spiritual Power, but as a Person indwelling his converts. ... He believed that Christ was able and willing to keep that which he had committed to Him. He believed that He would perfect His Church, that He would stablish, strengthen, settle his converts. He believed, and acted as if he believed."

—Roland Allen

"Gradually my pleasant sane dream of becoming a linguistic professor vanished into this ridiculous idea of going to other countries to talk to savages about God. I knew it wouldn't make sense to my parents; it didn't even make much sense to me. But over the months, as I walked to school, as I sat and daydreamed in class, as I read the Bible, He gave me something I'd never bargained for: compassion."

—Bruce E. Olson

Mission-Oriented Sites on the World Wide Web:

1. Brigada: Your Gateway to Missions Networking (<http://www.xc.org/brigada>)

2. AD2000 and Beyond (<http://www.ad2000.org>)

3. Summer Institute of Linguistics (<http://www.sil.org>)

4. World Christian Home Page (<http://www.xc.org/world-christian.html>)

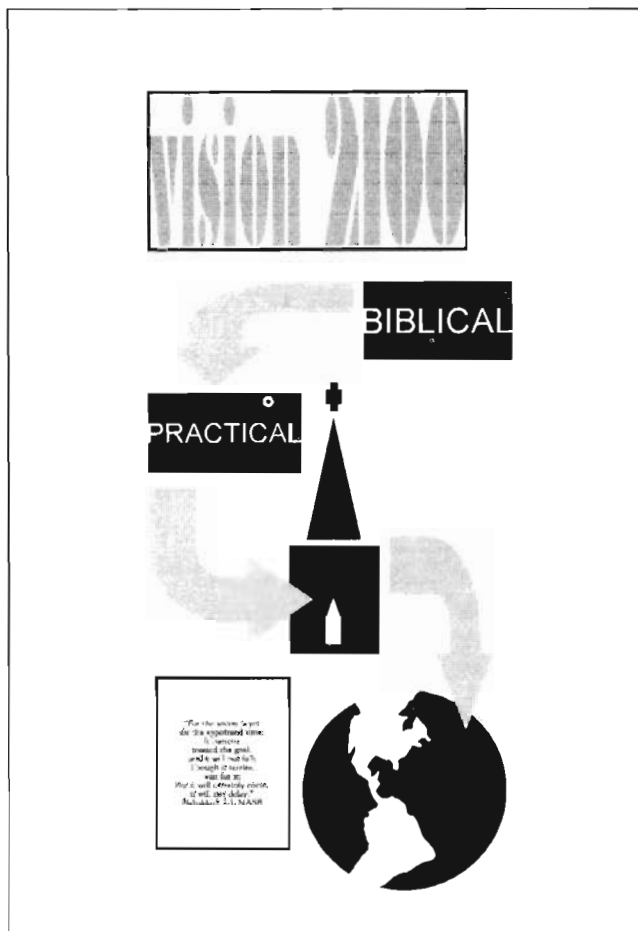
5. Christian Missions Home Page (<http://www.sim.org>)



"Those who go and those who serve as senders are like two units on the same cross-cultural outreach team. Both are equally important. Both are vitally involved in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Both are dynamically integrated and moving toward the same goal. And both are assured success, for those in God's work are on the winning team!"

—Neal Pirola

Congregations growing into the next century



— Pastor Al Monson
Chairman, Home
Missions Committee
Lakeville, Minnesota

God calls the Church of Jesus Christ to look back to the cross and forward to the finish line, but always with our eyes upon Christ. God calls His people to walk by faith. That challenge is before us as we encounter the 21st century.

Proverbs 29:18 states, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (KJV). In Hebrews 12:1 we are encouraged to "run with perseverance the race marked out for us." Paul wrote, "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 3:13,14).

One of the realities of the emerging

century, is that yesterday's successes are no guarantee for tomorrow's survival. We need a fresh vision for the years ahead. Vision 2100 is not a program, but it is a process by which AFLC Home Missions can give Lutheran pastors and laity a box of biblically-based tools that help the church deal with the unprecedented problems, pressures and opportunities we face as we move ahead.

Vision 2100 helps congregations and pastors discover and identify their *vision, calling, and mission.*

Habakkuk 2:2 says, "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it" (NKJV). Vision 2100 comes alongside congregations to help them write their vision for the future based upon God's Word. It is not our vision, but the congregation's vision. Vision 2100 trains pastors and leadership in relational, communications, creativity, decision-making and ministry skills. Vision 2100 assists pastors and congregations to develop strategies to accomplish their calling and mission.

The resource person for Vision 2100 is Pastor Richard Anderson of Lakeville, Minnesota. Pastor Anderson is an AFLC pastor presently serving with Tentmakers' ministry. He has a love for the congregation and pastor. He desires to assist and encourage them to meet their vision under God. Please pray for Pastor Anderson as he works with pastors and lay people that God would build strong, Bible-based congregations.

Vision 2100 also includes a desire to recruit and train couples (young and retirement age) to be parish builders. These are people who give of themselves to assist the pastor in teaching and outreach. They move to a local community where a mission congregation is located and find housing and employment as desired. Parish builders are not paid a salary by Home Missions, but are commissioned by Home Missions to minister with a pastor to help build a free and living congregation. They become a part of the life of the congregation, assisting in such areas as teaching, youth ministry, visitation,

His plans are best

"For 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

We had been in Arkansas for over two years. I had finished my doctorate and was on the faculty of a university, but somehow we felt this was not the place where we desired to settle down and call "home." Each year, university positions would open up in places where we felt we would be happier. I would apply, sometimes obtain a response, occasionally an interview, but never an offer.

As the time passed each year when positions would be filled, we understood that God had other plans in mind for us. We approached each potential move with the attitude that if this was where God wanted us to be, He could open the door and make it happen. When door after door closed, we continued to trust in Him, believing that He knew what was best and that these were not the plans He had for us.

In the spring of 1995, I applied for a position at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. My wife asked, "Why Colorado?" It wasn't much closer to home where family and friends were and where we always thought we wanted to be. I had no response other than, "It sounds like a good position, and you never have to say 'yes' or 'no' until a job is offered."

Because of circumstances beyond their

control, I wasn't invited for an interview until late July. At the same time, I was also talking with individuals at another university which was much closer to home. On the last day of July, I received a phone call from Northern Colorado informing me that I was their choice and that a written offer would be coming shortly. The people at the other university were still deciding on who they would interview, although I had been told I was at the top of their list. About two days later, I learned about an AFLC congregation in Loveland, Colorado, that had recently been accepted as a Home Mission church and had called their first pastor. Loveland is about 17 miles west of Greeley, and I immediately knew God's hand was at work in this situation.

Within ten days, I agreed to the offer from Northern Colorado, put our house on the market, sold it, and packed up all our earthly belongings and left for Colorado! On the day we were loading our truck, I received a call from the other university inquiring if I was still interested. Once again, God had closed every door but one, the one where He wanted us to serve Him.

Upon arriving in Colorado, we were warmly welcomed into the fellowship of →

— Dan Mundfrom
Greeley, Colorado

music and canvassing. They are encouragers to the pastor. They serve as a prayer warrior with the pastor. They take some of the pressure off the pastor and his family in those early months and years of a new congregation. Parish builders help create an understanding of how the AFLC works as new people become involved in a mission congregation.

We on the Home Missions Committee are excited about the ministry of parish builders in the life of AFLC Home Missions. We believe many people are looking for the adventure of helping to build mission congregations in the United States.

We believe couples exist who have the flexibility, because of job or retirement, to move to a new area to be a part of a team in building a mission congregation. Please pray about your involvement and how you could be a member of parish builders in the AFLC. We have more information and applications in the Home Missions office. Call (612) 545-5631.

Please pray for AFLC Home Missions. Pray for Pastor Paul Nash, Larry Walker, Pastor Richard Anderson, the Home Mission Committee members, congregations, pastors and Vision 2100.



A glance around AFLC Home Missions



Monroe Free Lutheran Monroe, Washington

God is blessing the work in Monroe. Recently the congregation posted two directional signs along US Hwy. 2, east of Monroe. The congregation continues to meet in rented facilities, and therefore struggles with an identity in the community.

Thankfully, the congregation doesn't have to struggle with its identity in Christ or in Lutheranism in the area. The evangelistic emphasis of the congregation has been most recently evident in the Christian Education Board's decision to use Child Evangelism Fellowship's materials for Sunday school. The teachers are excited to be a part of challenging each child to receive Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior.

Pray that God would clearly guide the congregation to a building and property to call "home."

— Pastor Earl Korhonen

HIS PLAN

the Lutheran Church of Hope in Loveland. We were thrilled to be among Lutherans who had similar beliefs to ours, and they were excited about having contact with someone who had actually been a part of the AFLC before. Although we missed our friends and our church in Little Rock, we soon felt at home among new friends and became actively involved in the work of the congregation.

We have been identified as parish builders for our involvement in God's work here, but the truth is, we haven't done anything extraordinary or special. We patiently waited where we were until God opened the right door for us. We responded when God called us to Colorado. We were willing to take on tasks within this church when asked, and we lovingly serve our Lord in any way we are able.

But there are many others, both within

our church in Loveland and in other locations, who have done all of this and more. We praise God for those faithful Christians who believed strongly enough in God and His Word to leave their churches and start a new work, trusting in Him to bless their faithfulness and prosper their efforts. These are the true parish builders and we thank God for their faithfulness.

We also thank God for the AFLC and for the home mission work here and in other places. We marvel at how He led us here and how He continues to lead us each day. We praise Him for revealing to us the plans He has for us, plans to prosper us and give us hope and a future. We can truly testify that we have prospered spiritually by following God's call to Colorado. The hope we have for our future in heaven gives us the strength to serve Him daily.



Shepherd of the Valley Free Lutheran, Palmdale, California



Back row (L. to R.): Kent Hembd, Perry Cooksey, Ken Cleck and Pastor Paul Nash. Front: Pastor Christian and Dienne Andrews and family.

Almost a year has passed since we moved to California's Antelope Valley and I began my pastoral ministry here. A verse particularly meaningful to me is I Corinthians 4:1,2: "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy." Though one might apply these words in a number of ways in our setting, what has become most important to me is that I be faithful in obedience as I share the gospel of Jesus, and that I let Him do the work of growing the congregation. I am comforted in knowing that I am not called to be successful as the world counts success — dynam-

ic, full of charisma or an imitator of mega-church models. Rather, I have been called to use the gifts that God has given me faithfully, in a trustworthy manner. That is all.

— Pastor Christian Andrews

God has continued to bless us since sending Pastor Christian Andrews as our permanent pastor. We have been exploring our congregational identity and have written a mission statement, defined objectives and set goals. We desire to grow in the knowledge of God and His Word and serve our families, congregation, community, and the world in His love.

Our congregation is actively developing outreach, worship,

study, fellowship and children's ministries. Our outreach includes a mailing welcoming newcomers to our community and door-to-door ministry. We have annual seminars in personal evangelism. We are in the process of exploring variations to the worship service. Children of all ages enjoy pastor's children's sermons. We are blessed to have a concert trumpeter, Kent Hembd and devoted pianist Gerry Solberg lead our music ministry.

A study of the Lord's Prayer and our discussions on prayer have led to the formation of prayer triads: one-on-one with pastor, church leader; first and third Friday evening prayer meetings; and directed prayer prior to council and congregational meetings. We have also studied inspiration and use of Scripture and currently are reviewing our constitution. One Friday a month is set aside for family fellowship. We enjoy a "faith fellowship" meal once a month. (Pastor says he has faith that everybody will bring enough food).

A key component of our children's work is the music ministry. René Cleck produces biannual children's mini-musicals. Perry and Rebecca Cooksey are taking the teens on monthly social outings. Plans are to have pastor lead a monthly youth Bible study. Our Sunday school curriculum is a club program developed by Pastor Andrews and supervised by Rebecca Cooksey.

We are thankful for the AFLC's continued support of our ministry. We covet your continued prayers. We extend a special thank you to Pastor Paul Nash and the Home Missions Committee for their work with us and the for the ministries of the AFLBS Ambassador and Barnabas teams.

— Ken and René Cleck
Palmdale, California

Warroad Free Lutheran, Warroad, Minnesota

I have found nothing is more important than obeying God's will. He truly does provide everything we need. Please notice I did not say every thing we want. The key to being in God's will is obedience. We need to be like Abraham — willing to obey at any cost.

I have found the secret to obedience is, not trying to move whole mountains at one time,

but moving mountains one pebble at a time — patience. Though we seem small and inadequate at times, remember God uses those whom He chooses. Let us be faithful in proclaiming the gospel in the name of Jesus and God will equip us for each task He wants accomplished.

— Pastor Alvin Sather

A glance around AFLC Home Missions (continued)

Maranatha Free Lutheran Andover, Minnesota

Our numbers are small, money is not plentiful, but yet God still works. One example of His blessing is our recent beginning of another Sunday school year. We wondered just how many students we would have. It seemed few, yet, Rally Sunday came and we were blessed with several new students and more who plan to come. God never fails.

As pastor, not only have I seen God working in our church and Sunday school, but He has been very busy in my life, showing and teaching me many things. One of them is how to fully follow and do the will of God. So many times I pray and ask the Lord to show me His will for my life and ministry. But instead of waiting for Him, I try to figure it out myself. I have been learning to pray, "Lord help me to do Your will, as You have set forth in Scripture." Then to go ahead and do it, even when I am unable to see where the next step may take me. I don't need to know because God does and that's what matters.

— Pastor Tonnes Pollestad

Prince of Peace Lutheran, Beulah, North Dakota

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow" (I Corinthians 3:6). Especially in a home mission congregation, there is a great desire for growth. We all want to see more people coming to church and more in Sunday school. It can be discouraging when that numerical growth doesn't happen as quickly as we would like. As humans, our natural response is to work harder, create catchy programs to attract more and do lots of promotion. None of these things is wrong and each may be important.

However, God has been impressing on me as a pastor that

He is the One responsible for growth. What He produces may not be at my speed or in the areas I think are important. Inner growth of the Christian cannot be measured in numbers or seen week by week. But it happens nonetheless. As God makes individuals to grow, there will be congregational growth as well. He has been teaching me to be patient and to understand the importance of prayer to undergird and support the ministries we have. God is faithful. Do I believe that? Do I trust Him? Sometimes I struggle in these areas. But as the seed is planted and watered God promises to make it grow. That is my sure and certain hope!

— Pastor John Mundfrom

Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Menomonie and Free Lutheran Church of Ella, Pepin, Wisconsin

My main subject in the school of sanctification is "Trust and Obey." At times I'd be fearful to see my report card. I am far from the 4.0 "Be ye holy as I am Holy."

— Pastor Paul Pillman

Lutheran Church of Hope, Loveland, Colorado

We became an AFLC congregation in 1995. Especially within the past year, God has worked to strengthen us as a congregational family and to make us a real part of the AFLC family.

As we study the Word, worship and serve our Lord, a stability has developed within our congregation that brings excitement for the Lord and a caring for others that can be felt by newcomers. This also provides a healthy environment for our young people who have become a group of good friends reaching out to others. We have only begun the process of building a congregation. With great joy, we look back this past year and realize how greatly we have been blessed by God and how He is working within us. Thank you for praying for us.

— Karen Brockhoff
Loveland, Colorado

Body of Christ Free Lutheran, Tucson, Arizona

You might think that meeting in an elementary school would be a handicap to church growth, but God is faithful and affirming to our congregation that a local church isn't a building, but believers called together to worship, proclaim the gospel and encourage and help one another in Christ. The desire to study God's Word has caused people to gather. An

insert in the newspaper and signs on the road have brought some visitors to Sunday worship. But it is the openness, friendliness, and genuine concern of members that God is using to invite and incorporate people into the congregation. Lives that reflect Christ day by day have really witnessed to people. God is at work.

— Pastor Frank Cherney

How to pray for missionaries

Missionaries spend their deputation and furlough time visiting churches, not only to share their vision and calling, but most importantly, to recruit prayer partners. To serve the Lord is to engage in spiritual battle. Only with the power of the Spirit can there be victory. Prayer unleashes this power. In Ephesians 6:18-20, Paul gives us guidelines on how to effectively pray for our missionaries.

Pray constantly.

Our prayers must not be only during some special time of the month or in the worship service, but rather "on all occasions." Put up reminders in your home or business. Use missionary prayer cards as visual reminders.

Pray consistently.

Our missionary prayers should also include those who are working for the Lord in areas we may not be financially supporting. A prayer guide such as *Operation World* by Patrick Johnstone (Zondervan) can help us know what God is doing in the world and give direction as we bring our prayers and petitions to God "for all the saints." This broadens our missionary vision.

Pray concretely.

Besides praying daily for God's work and workers around the world, it is good to have a specific person or family that we remember. Paul asked the Ephesians to "pray also for me." Letters to and from

that individual or family will help us be more objective in our petitions. Even in this area, Paul teaches us to:

Pray for clarity. Paul's words are "pray that words may be given me."

Pray for courage. Twice Paul asks to be "fearless." Even experienced missionaries have to deal with fear in sharing the gospel with others.

Pray for communication. The gospel is a "mystery" to many in the world. Satan has blinded their eyes. Pray that the Holy Spirit will enlighten the hearts and minds of those who hear the Word of God.

Pray for adequate conditions. This does not mean that conditions will always be "adequate" from our point of view. Paul was writing from jail. He was an "ambassador in chains." But from God's perspective, this condition was necessary so that Paul would have time to write many of the epistles that minister to us today. Pray that God would provide to the missionaries the conditions necessary to produce lasting fruit and give them encouragement in times of trials.

Are we praying like this for our missionaries? Let's commit ourselves today to be real prayer warriors on their behalf.



The author is a former missionary to Brazil and current president of the Christian Foundation for Mission youth which supports Bible camp, evangelistic and social ministries in that country.

— Pastor
David Abel
North
Royalton, Ohio



World Missions purchases house for missionaries

The AFLC World Missions committee recently signed papers for the purchase of this home near the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wisconsin. The plans are to renovate and add on to the house before it is used as a home for missionaries on furlough. This is the last of approximately 15 houses sold by the ARC.

PRAY for our national workers

— Pastor Milton
S. Flores
Gethsemane
Lutheran Church
Celaya, Mexico

*That this
people turn
to you, but
you must
not turn to
them.*

— Jeremiah 15:19

The Book of Acts records the beginning of the Christian Church. Throughout the book, we read of Paul's missionary journeys into the pagan empire of Rome. We notice the great commitment of all the apostles to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their decision to spread the gospel brought suffering, pain and hard work. It cost something.

Two thousand years later, our AFLC mission work must be similar in commitment, courage and prayer. People in our generation need to come to the knowledge of the truth and the good news of salvation.

First century history records the spiritual and numerical growth of the congregations in spite of the troubles the new believers faced because of superstitions, heresies, idolatry, paganism of the Gentile world and the opposition of Judaism itself.

As the 20th century concludes, our national congregations throughout the mission fields of our Association need Christian men and women kneeling in prayer to effectively face the challenges from both inside and out.

Our AFLC missions in Brazil and Mexico are among people speaking the romance languages that were spread five centuries ago. Portuguese and Spanish came from the Latin. Note that Spain was in Paul's mind to visit (Romans 15:24,28). The opposition to the gospel has increased as much as the population has grown. In many areas of Latin America, Roman paganism of the first century has its parallelism today.

I remember as a child going to school quoting the words of Jeremiah 15:19. It was not easy being a Christian and a target of ridicule from classmates, teachers, relatives and neighbors. Things have not changed that much in spite of the increasing modernization of our nation. Religious bigotry continues. In Mexico, believers in Christ are few in comparison with unbe-

lievers and in many cases, even pastors' relatives are not Christians at all.

Acts 18:9-10 says: "Do not be afraid, keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, ... because I have many people in this city." Jesus' words to Paul motivate all of us in the AFLC to pray for national pastors, that we may be faithful to the preaching of the Word and handle correctly the truth (II Timothy 2:15).

Pray for new believers that they may be faithful to Christ in the midst of their unbelieving family and friends.

Pray for the pastors' families that they may accept the only one mediator between God and men.

Pray for the national workers' children that they may not be a stumbling block in their ministries.

Join us in praying for faithful supporters from our own congregations acknowledging that "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Pray for our youth that the Lord would raise up workers for the harvest.

Pray for freedom in our meetings to praise our God and that we may be alert to guard against those who would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Let us pray constantly for each other throughout the AFLC family, that the Holy Spirit may bless us as we go forth preaching the Word of God where He has placed us. May the history of our ministry be acceptable to the Lord, and our lives, in fervent prayer, like those in the beginning of the Christian Church.



See what God is doing

Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles, Aguascalientes, Mexico — We've been serving here since 1985. In these eleven years, the Lord has raised up two congregations in the city and a new work is beginning in the nearby state of Zacatecas. Young people from the first of these two churches, have gone to the Bible school/seminary run by the World Mission Prayer League in Mazatlan. One couple is now interning in Aguascalientes — Ricardo plans to be the first pastor ordained from this work while Adriana, his recent bride has specialized in youth work. Another couple are now studying at the Bible school. They are Fernando and Monse. Their desire is to be the first Lutheran missionaries from Mexico (as far as we know) to go to the foreign field. They are interested in working in the Moslem world. Pray for our Bible school students!

The Partners in Mission team that recently visited Aguas-

calientes, built, among many things, a wooden platform that can be used for evangelistic preaching, music concerts and plays in the outlying areas of the city. Pray for our two congregations as they reach out into their communities. We hope to see the Lord raise up a whole string of free and living Lutheran congregations in Central Mexico.

MEXICO



Missionaries Giles and Schierkolk (left) with some of the men at a recent retreat.



Pastor Dan Giles passing out tracts at an area fair.

Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk, Aguascalientes, Mexico — We are in our first year of ministry in Mexico. We are getting settled and growing more accustomed to life here, practicing our Spanish and learning about congregational life. The transition was a little harder than expected on our five-year-old Rachel, but thankfully that is improving.

We are working at the Springs of Living Water Church with the Giles family. Barb is involved in children's ministries and Todd is preaching in Aguascalientes and helping with evangelistic work in the suburbs of Palomino and Douglas and the small city of Jerez. In the near future, we anticipate overseeing the work in Aguascalientes while the Giles family are in the USA for furlough.

Brazil missionaries go on Partners in Mission trip to Mexico

Always game for adventure, we jumped at the opportunity to participate in the Partners in Mission trip to Mexico in August. Paul helped drive the bus and Becky was in charge of the meals for the group of 25. We all enjoyed having such a great chance to see another country and to visit our missionary friends in Mexico. We were encouraged by the spiritual fruits evident in the ministry of Dan and Debbie Giles and enjoyed spending time with them and with Todd and Barb Schierkolk. We were happy to be able to encourage them by our visit and to help in fixing up their church building for a special wedding. Our Partners in Mission family of 25 grew together in special ways and had fun being a part of God's work in Mexico.

— Pastor Paul and Becky Abel



The Partners in Mission team.

Brazil missions trip planned

A missions trip is planned from February 17 to March 3, 1997 to Curitiba, Brazil.

Cost of the round trip package is \$1500, from Minneapolis. Contact Becky Abel by November 1 at (715) 268-4590.



Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles at their congregation's first wedding last August.

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

The Lutheran Ambassador

Publication No. 588-620, Filed 10-1-96

Issued every three weeks, except monthly June and July. Sixteen issues annually.

Annual subscription price \$16.00

Mailing address of Office of Publication and headquarters of General Business Office: 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

Publisher: The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

Editor, Managing Editor: Craig Johnson, 86286 Pinegrove Rd., Eugene OR 97402.

Owner: The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441.

Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders: None.

The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes has not changed during preceding 12 months.

Publication Name: The Lutheran Ambassador.

Issue date for circulation data: 9-24-96.

Total number of copies:

Avg. copies each issue during past year: 4,557

Copies 9-24-96 issue: 4,408

Paid and/or requested circulation:

Through counter sales:

Avg. copies each issue during past year: 100

Copies 9-24-96 issue: 100

Mail subscription (Paid and requested):

Avg. copies each issue during past year: 4,357

Copies 9-24-96 issue: 4,208

Total paid and/or requested circulation:

Avg. copies each issue during past year: 4,457

Copies 9-24-96 issue: 4,308

Free distribution by mail:

Avg. copies each issue during past year: 50

Copies 9-24-96 issue: 50

Total distribution:

Avg. copies each issue during past year: 4,507

Copies 9-24-96 issue: 4,358

Copies not distributed:

Avg. copies each issue during past year: 50

Copies 9-24-96 issue: 50

Return from news agents:

Avg. copies each issue during past year: 0

Copies 9-24-96 issue: 0

Total:

Avg. copies each issue during past year: 4,557

Copies 9-24-96 issue: 4,408

Percent paid and/or requested circulation, average and 9-24-96 issue: 98%

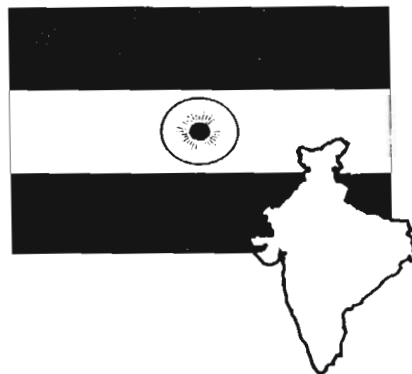
/s/ Ellis L. Bloomfield, Printer

See what God is doing in India

INDIA



Dr. Kamar and a patient. The BFLC works with Dr. Kamar in setting up temporary clinics in the rural churches. Christ the King Lutheran in Pipestone, Minnesota, is collecting medical



supplies from an area hospital to send to Dr. Kamar. The church will conduct special services at the same time the clinic is set up.



Pictured are Missy Nash and Rhoda Monseth last summer while visiting five BFLC churches. The girls were on a ministry team with Royal Servants and traveled to India, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

See what God is doing

Mission work around the world is going through a metamorphosis. The methods, means and people we work with are changing but the Great Commission will never change. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

Yesterday

Looking back brings joys and fond memories of how the Lord worked in the hearts and lives of people. We've seen the alcoholic, wife and child beater saved and changed; the demon possessed released; the sick healed and the vile sinners made clean.

In days past we chained up all four wheels on our Jeeps and forded rivers, sometimes so deep that I felt the Jeep being carried down stream by the current.

We slept in dirt floor huts and watched the rats fight on the open rafters over our heads. We ate fried chicken that included the head and claws.

We hung a white sheet on a wall in villages and showed biblical film strips run off our 12 volt car batteries and would have hundreds of people out to see and hear the gospel.

Little wood chapels sprang up all over the center of the state of Parana. A Bible school and seminary was built in Campo Mourão to train Brazilian pastors and lay leaders.

Today

Brazil has changed drastically. It's hard to find a Jeep anywhere. Most roads are asphalted. Rural electricity has made life better everywhere. TV, computers, faxes, education and stable economy have thrust Brazil into the modern world.

We are now baptizing the babies of the parents that we bap-

30 years of missions in Brazil

tized. The Brazilian pastors work alongside the missionaries in church planting and teaching in their seminary. This year the Brazil AFLC conference approved expanding into two new states: Mato Grosso do Sul and São Paulo. We do thank the Lord for this mission vision and goal to expand each year. The double front thrust puts the Jonathan Abels in Campo Grande, MS and Pastor Benvindo in Presidente Prudents, SP. (Please remember Pastor Benvindo in prayer as he has just been diagnosed as having Parkinson's Disease.)

The AFLC is extending a helping hand to the needy. The Miriam Infant Home for abandoned children started about five years ago and has given hope to an average of fifty children annually. All of our congregations have basic food and clothing programs to help their needy ones. Bible camps and retreat centers for the teens and couples are in action in Curitiba and Campo Mourão. Hundreds of lives are being touch and changed by the Lord.

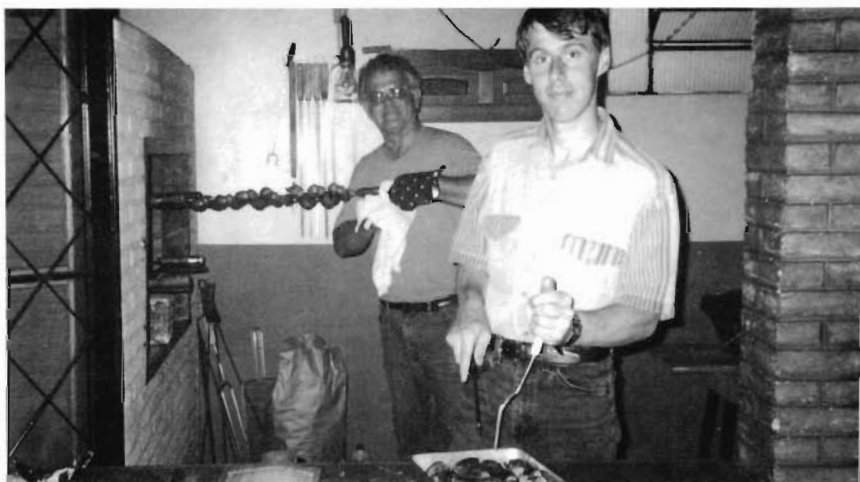
The national church work and

training of pastors and lay leaders are being put more and more under Brazilian direction. It is their country, their church, their future. We as American missionaries are here to help them.

Tomorrow

I've heard some say: "We do not need to send missionaries to Brazil any more. They have their own pastors now." Others add, "It's too costly to send missionaries today." Some believe a generation of mission work is enough anywhere in the world. But did the Lord put certain standards, monetary or time limits on His Great Commission? His command is to go and send as long as the doors remain open for the gospel. To think or do differently is total disobedience to the Great Commission.

Short termers have come to Brazil to help. They may not know the language, but they come ready to help. John Elkins, an electrician from Dickinson, North Dakota, spent a month with us putting all our electrical wiring underground on the school campus. He also worked on the



John Elkins and Missionary Connely Dyrud prepare the annual barbecue for students and staff at the Campo Mourão campus.

ARCA in Curitiba. Pastor Jim and Lorene Winters from Canada ministered for three months with us. Jim kept busy as a handy man and Lorene, a nurse, worked with the abandoned children. Next month a young lady from East Grand Forks, North Dakota, is coming to do a study on the advantage of abandoned children and senior citizens being able to help each other.

Two short-term missionaries were later called by God to return full time. They are Sarah (Skramstad) Nelson and now Sonja Dahl.

I'll never forget the elderly lady in Alvorada who lived in a one room shack. It was leaning, the floor was dirt, the roof was black plastic and the chickens roosted on the bed post. Her husband had died and she was alone. One of our church members asked us to visit this lady. We went that Sunday in the cold of winter. As she lay dying, her face was radiant as she said: "Pastor, I don't have much time left here on earth but thanks to you for coming to me to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Today I know that I'll go to that mansion that Jesus built for me." That night she slipped into eternity.

As I returned home late that night I thought: "Isn't the Lord awesome. He called me off a farm in northern Minnesota to go to this little shack on the other side of the world to share this simple but all important message. Why? Because He prepared a place for her in heaven." All I can humbly say is: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His way past finding out" (Romans 11:33).



— Missionaries Connely and
Carolyn Dyrud
Campo Mourão, Brazil

Campo Grande on the move

On Saturday night last May 25, we drove into the wide boulevards of Campo Grande (big field), Mato Grosso do Sul (thick forest of the south). Trusting in God's promise, "The One who calls you is faithful and will do it" (I Thessalonians 5:24); we sought to be courageous and plant a church in this new state capital.

Tamba and I were still taking things out of boxes when my father and retired missionary, Pastor John Abel and Evangelist Benvindo arrived with a tent on June 1, for our first crusade here. For seven days we held tent meetings with an average attendance of over 45 people each night. The thermometer dipped into the low 50s (that's considered very cold here), otherwise the crowd might have been larger. Nevertheless, God blessed the week and fifty decisions were made for Christ.

Now we are following up with those people. We held meetings twice a week in the home of Artur and Maria, who are now helping start a third AFLC congregation in Brazil. Two years ago they moved to Campo Grande to be close to their children and had asked us to come to help start a



Evangelist Benvindo



new work in this city. At age 83, Artur is blind and somewhat crippled. Maria is always reaching out to her neighbors and doing whatever she can to help.

Shortly after we began meeting in their home, the Lord provided a small building for us to meet in. On July 1, we rented this facility and began repairs and painting. On August 11-12, we dedicated our new facilities and 40 people joined with us along with Pastor Oseias, the AFLC President of Brazil and his family, five Bible school students and Evangelist Benvindo.

Here in Campo Grande, we have been encouraged by other denominational groups as these Christians seem to have a great burden to reach the lost.

At the same time we have found cults also taking their stand without reservations. Rev. Moon bought a large piece of land where he is establishing his beachhead in Brazil. Last month he gave a free barbecue to some 50,000 people of our city and showered over 300 ambulances upon many small towns in our state. Jehovah Witnesses are always knocking on our doors and four blocks from our house is a large Mormon church. Pray for us as we are here to be a lighthouse to show people the way to eternal life in Christ. The task is not easy but praise the Lord He never leaves us or forsakes us. Indeed, we will be victorious in this "big field" of Campo Grande!



— Missionary Jonathan Abel

See what God is doing

What we've learned in Curitiba

David Nelson

We arrived here in Brazil 18 months ago as new missionaries. In this time the Lord has been teaching me many things. One of the most important of these changes in my life has been a greater boldness in speaking with people about spiritual things and their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe two reasons for this boldness exist. First, many people are faithfully praying for us as missionaries. And second, actually being in this country I have seen the desperate condition many people live in

mainly due to an absence of a Christian home and heritage. People need Jesus; they need to be rooted in the Word of God; they need solid Christian fellowship.

Sarah Nelson

Living far from family and friends, and all else that is familiar has helped me see the need to develop into the person God has called me to be. This past year I've learned that God's desire for my life doesn't depend on others' opinions or ideas about what they would like me to be. God's desire

for my life depends upon what Christ has done for me, and has led me to do and be, in response to His love for me.

The Lord has also taught me to look to Him for my definition of ministry. For a mother of three ages five and under, ministry includes a lot of time talking in simple sentences, changing diapers, and wiping tears. The Lord is showing me how I can be effective in sharing Christ with others here in Brazil, while still being there for my children. I have found great joy in both Brazil and babies!

Can we keep this Angel?

WARNING: *When visiting the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourão, Brazil, beware of the irresistible children. Your heart just might be stolen.*

Such was our case when we dropped by for a casual, unsuspecting visit at the home of Pastor Jim and Lorene Winters, who had their living room occupied by cribs for the younger babies of the orphanage.

Baby Lucineia, four months old, touched our hearts. As we left for our home in Campo Grande and the ten-hour drive, all we could talk about was this "Angel" as our April Joy insisted we call her.

A month later we took her under our wings with high hopes of adopting her — at least to care for her until her family situation is resolved. Adoption in Brazil is a very complex process.

Angel is the youngest of five siblings who reside at the Miriam Infant Home. They arrived there

last February, malnourished and rejected by their mother, who is suffering from manic depression, and who has not taken interest in



getting them back. The father, an alcoholic who also has a mental illness, cannot hold a job. The parents often fought and separated.

Perhaps that explains why the older children do not wish to leave our orphanage. Unfortunately, none have a birth certificate. We assume they, as well as Angel, were born on a farm. The oldest girl is six and the fourth child, a boy, has special needs.

These last three months have been full of activity as we once again adjust to baby needs and hours. However, it is a fun time because of the life and love Angel has added to our lives. She has fit in so nicely that people comment about similarities, never guessing she has come from a dysfunctional family. Maybe it is the healthy glow about her and the loving atmosphere created because of her. We count it a privilege to have her among us and sincerely pray that the answer to the question, "Can we keep this Angel?" will be a very blessed and heavenly YES!



— Missionary Tamba Abel

No turning back

On August 16 the "reverse" on our van decided to quit working. We've been going forward ever since! Our van is a good reminder to us that God wants us to keep going forward. When we reflect on our great salvation and our calling into His service we can sing with confidence, "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back."

Our travels around the country representing AFLC World Missions have taken us through 25 states and even included a surprise trip to Mexico. We've been blessed to renew acquaintances and establish new relationships with people in over 60 congregations. Thank you for your warm welcome and your interest in being a part of our outreach in Brazil. We praise the Lord for great reports about the progress of the work in Brazil. Your prayers and support make it all possible.

As of September 2 our family is happily settled in an ideal spot in Amery, WI, and the children are studying in the Mustard Seed Academy of the Amery Free Lutheran Church. We continue to travel on weekends to share about our work in Brazil. Please keep us in your prayers as we work on preparing Portuguese ministry materials for sunday school, VBS, camps and seminars.

We plan to return to Brazil right after Christmas. Marshall and Tara Nessa and their daughters hope to join us on our trip to spend a six-month internship on the mission field. Pray for them and for Sonja Dahl as they prepare to be useful in the Kingdom's harvest work. May God's work keep going forward (and our van, too!).



Pastor Paul and Becky Abel

Missionary candidate prepares for Brazil

This past year raising support in eager anticipation to serve as a missionary nurse in Brazil has been an exciting yet trying time. As Charles Dickens wrote, "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times."

The exciting times have been watching the Lord work through the lives of the AFLC people, prompting them to give not only financially, but also offering priceless words of encouragement and prayers so that His work would continue to go forward.

Other exciting times have been meeting the women at Women's Missionary Federation rallies, seeing first hand how important it is to be a woman of God.

Others have been the endless miles driving to new places to be greeted with a welcome as if I had been there before.

Then the trying times: not knowing when Brazil will be my home; several trips to the Brazilian Consulate in Chicago (on September 9, the application was approved and now I await the visa); and the moving from a house to a small apartment to a room at the Bible School. These



times have become a blessing because they have taught me to put my complete trust in God to allow Him to do His work in me so that others may know him and glorify His name.

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

— Ephesians 3:20,21



— Sonja Dahl

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Sonja received her visa from Brazil on September 18, only ten days after approval at the Brazilian Consulate in Chicago! She is busy packing and doing her final deputation before her expected departure in November. As of this writing, she still needed a promised 13 units of support (one unit is \$50 monthly for five years). Pray for her during these busy and exciting days.



Sonja Dahl and Becky and Paul Abel.

See what God is doing around the world

Kuwait City, Kuwait — Christian leaders in Kuwait are “astounded” by the number of conversions to Christ which have taken place following Kuwaiti Muslim Robert Hussein’s public declaration in December that he had become a Christian. According to a report from New Zealand’s Center for Mission Direction, four more Kuwaiti Muslims using pseudonyms have allowed their stories of conversion to Christ to be printed in *Al Hadaf*, a weekly newspaper. “I think there are many Kuwaitis who are Christians in secret,” said one prominent Arab Christian in the evangelical community. Another evangelical source estimates that up to 300 Kuwaitis living abroad have come to faith in Christ. Around 150,000 Christians from 50 language groups live in Kuwait.

Medina, WA — When the wealthy parishioners of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Medina, Washington, sent money to help a Bedouin tribe in Israel’s Negev Desert, they enclosed a copy of the parish newsletter, *The Collect*. To their surprise, they received in return a check for \$42 from the Negev Educational Association of Laqiya, one of Israel’s poorest villages. The gift was in response to a newsletter article about a fundraising drive to help pay for a new church roof. The people of Laqiya are shepherders who live without modern amenities, while the residents of Medina include such wealthy people as Microsoft founder Bill Gates. The Rev. Fletcher Davis, rector of the church, said, “We are all children of God, and those of us on this side of the ocean are truly humbled and heartened by such a donation.”

Missionaries Tim and Renata Hinrichs, Cesky Tesin, Czech Republic — Learning to be faithful — that’s what the Lord has been teaching us these last months. Sometimes we have the feeling that we must show our accomplishments so that our supporters realize that we are doing our best. But that’s a problem. It’s all “me” instead of the Lord.

We are learning that we must be faithful to the Lord in small tasks, attending a pastors’ meeting, participating in the church choir, speaking for a few minutes every week in Czech at a Bible



meeting, or faithfully studying the language every day. The Lord wants us to surrender the little things before He can give us something else.

Our aim and our call is to serve the Lord and His people, not to please ourselves or others at home. Our ministry here in Cesky Tesin is not marked with fantastic groundbreaking fireworks, but we are learning real ministry is faithfulness to the tasks and people set before us by the Lord day by day.

Much of our work is still in language study. Other daily tasks include involvement in our church in Trinec, five miles away. There I help Pastor Pietak with various ministries. I also teach a Bible history class at Ostrava University. The course is part of a curriculum preparing people to be religious teachers in the public schools. It is an awesome mission opportunity. At home we lead an English conversation course for workers in the church and Renata teaches English part-time at the high school.

The Lord is so good to us and we praise Him for His great provision. We wait on Him to guide us in the days ahead.

— Missionary Tim Hinrichs

Missionaries Bill and Rachel Chesley, Chad, Africa

The Chelseys are with Wycliffe Bible Translators learning the Migaami language to begin their translation project. It has been a challenge to find dependable and competent language helpers in the village of Mongo where they currently live. Rachel (Mundfrom) is balancing language study with caring for their three children. At last report, they were awaiting the arrival of their Toyota double cab pickup from Japan. Bill would go to Cameroon to get it,

however, the rainy season has begun (relief from the 110-115 degree temperatures) and roads become nearly impassable.

Bill takes some time each day for “school” with the two oldest children, age three and four, while Rachel does the marketing or language study. They thank God for giving them this opportunity and are grateful for all the prayer and financial support making it possible for them to be in Chad.

Building for eternity

Chicago, IL — Although nine out of ten Americans own a Bible, fewer than half actually read it. And many of those who read the Bible find it difficult to understand. Lack of comprehension was the number one frustration associated with Bible reading in a national survey conducted for Tyndale House Publishers.

"The survey confirmed that Americans understand the importance of the Bible, but they don't feel it relates to their lives," said Mark Taylor, president of Tyndale House Publishers.

Americans clearly value the Bible. Survey respondents named it as the "most influential" book in the course of human history by an overwhelming margin (80 percent). Dr. Spock's *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* and Darwin's *Origin of the Species* were a distant second and third, with five and four percent of votes, respectively.

The survey, conducted by Barna Research for Tyndale, also discovered that "baby busters" — the 18-30-year-olds also known as "generation X" — expressed more interest in reading the Bible than baby boomers (ages 31-50), builders (51-68), and seniors (ages 68 plus), but are also least convinced of the Bible's value.

Brasilia, Brazil — Two church groups in Brazil have joined forces to condemn the "day-to-day" violence in rural Brazil and the lack of punishment for those who murder peasants. "In the name of Jesus, we want to bring your attention to what is going on in the Brazilian countryside," the groups said in a "Letter to the Brazilian People." The letter from the Coordinate of Ecumenical Service and the National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil was sent to President Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

The newly constructed castle's tower was five stories high, according to a newspaper report last February, and the completed building included a 3,000-seat auditorium, a children's play area and an elegant restaurant with high, arched ceilings. Located on 2 1/2 acres several hundred miles north of Helsinki, Finland, the impressive structure's opening celebration attracted thousands, and the owners hoped that many more would attend the concerts, theatrical programs, etc., that were projected for the coming months.

Their optimistic plans for the future had only one major flaw. This majestic castle was built of ice and snow, and today nothing remains of the ten-foot walls that melted away under the heat of the midsummer sun.

Some of the projects and programs of the church contain the same tragic flaw. I don't mean that they are in danger of melting away. Rather, like the snow castle, they are built only for time and not for eternity.

Paul wrote in one of his epistles: *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God that was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But each one should be careful how he builds* (I Corinthians 3:9-10). God's people are called to be a part of His building program. To build for eternity means to construct a church of living stones, winning souls for Jesus Christ.

There are many good things that we can do, even in the name of God. But the best of all is to *evangelize*, bearing the

good news of salvation to lost sinners. Our programs and projects may seem more permanent than an ice palace that soon will melt away, yet they will build only for time and not for eternity unless evangelism has the highest priority.

The 1996 Annual Conference overwhelmingly approved the calling of a full-time evangelist, and adopted a budget accordingly. One of the highlights of the conference was a resolution calling for the delegates to make a faith promise toward the support of this position, resulting in commitments of more than \$24,000. The Evangelism Commission has already met three times since these decisions were made, and their prayerful goal is to plan for the installation of a new evangelist when we meet in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, next June.

Our growing family of congregations can hardly be served by one traveling evangelist, if this is the only vision that we have for this position. Therefore, the commission is considering the need for an "equipper of the saints" as well as an evangelistic preacher, seeking a man with a burden for multiplying himself by training a multitude of evangelists to minister within the AFLC, while carrying the banner for a stronger evangelistic emphasis throughout our fellowship and its ministries.

We are called to be careful how we build. The most careful spiritual construction always keeps eternity in view with a focus on evangelism, for the sake of lost sinners and our loving Savior.



— Pastor Robert L. Lee

Experience the joy of forgiveness

Recently my family watched the story of Corrie Ten Boom in the video, *The Hiding Place*. I was challenged once again by Corrie's sister Betsie as she exemplified a forgiving spirit to her tormentors in a Nazi concentration camp. Corrie, too, by the grace of God was able to forgive.

Most of us have never suffered as these women did, but we are given opportunities in life when we must ask the Lord's help to forgive others who may have wronged us in some way. Some verses which have spoken to my heart concerning this matter are found in II Corinthians 2:5-11. Many times I have come back to this place in the Bible which begins, "If anyone has caused grief."

Within the church, our families or the workplace, this "grief" may be as small as an unkind word, a misunderstanding or perhaps a false accusation. Or it can be of the greatest of hurts which people bring upon each other. Our natural tendency may be to harbor bitterness or resentment, but the Word of God gives another response. Verse seven tells us first of all we are to forgive, but it doesn't stop there. The verse goes on to say we are to show comfort to that one who has caused pain, "so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow."

Paul is primarily referring to a church setting where one has caused grief to many, and "the punishment inflicted on him by

the majority is sufficient for him." However, I believe these verses can apply to a personal grief as well. You and I may become a convenient target of someone's frustrations. That same person may be suffering in ways we do not know or a genuine difference of opinion may exist. In any case, we are told to give comfort.

After forgiving and showing comfort, verse eight takes us one step further as it says, "I urge you therefore to reaffirm your love for him." This admonition is perhaps the most challenging but can also be the most rewarding as the Lord helps us to find creative ways to show love to that one who has caused us hurt. The situation may not change overnight and the other person may not readily accept what we give, but as we are faithful to pray and to love, God will do His part to change hearts, bringing healing and reconciliation in His time.

In verse nine, Paul reminds us of our need to be obedient in all things. Verse eleven sums up why this paragraph is so important: "In order that Satan might not outwit us, for we are not unaware of his schemes." We must daily ask the Lord's help to forgive even as we daily need His forgiveness in our own lives, lest Satan be given an opportunity to cause bitterness among us.

We may never have to suffer as Corrie and Betsie Ten Boom, yet we, too, are called upon to forgive those who sin against us. Just as they did, we must look to Jesus, our perfect example of one who forgives, comforts and faithfully shows us His love day after day.

Bear with each other, and forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

— Colossians 3:13



— Mrs. Mary Aadahl
Byron, Minnesota

Sun City West, Arizona — Pastor Robert D. and Muriel Giles are hosting regular weekly Bible study classes at their home in Sun City West. AFLC members and friends who desire Bible-based studies and fellowship and are wintering in the north Phoenix area are cordially

invited. Muriel will arrange meetings for the ladies, using the Women's Missionary Federation studies, if enough interest is shown. If interested and in the area, contact the Giles at 23112 N. Drifter Way, Sun City West, Arizona, 85375 or call (602) 214-2045.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences — January 1 - August 31, 1996

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$241,472.00	\$14,656.11	\$128,934.11	53
Seminary	122,626.00	5,824.01	50,792.11	41
Bible School	184,696.00	13,084.54	96,196.61	52
Home Missions.	253,270.00	10,751.28	121,932.02	48
World Missions.	341,257.00	30,286.59	247,484.46	73
Capital Investment	24,639.00	1,105.12	10,118.68	41
Parish Education	49,289.00	3,386.78	27,208.07	55
Church Extension	15,018.00	562.50	6,023.22	40
TOTALS	\$1,232,267.00	\$80,076.93	\$886,688.28	58
TOTALS 1995	1,484,851.00	75,035.21	694,251.70	47
Goal 87%				

Up Coming

"Ignited by God to Pray"

Eastern North Dakota

Fall Youth Rally

at Zion Free Lutheran

in Valley City, ND

October 17th, 3:00 p.m. —

18th, 12:00 p.m.

Register with Pastor Joel Rolf

701-845-4177

"Go Fish Weekend"

South Dakota Fall Rally

"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

1. Serving in Sioux Falls

2. Learning at the Holiday Inn

3. Playing at the YMCA

October 19th, noon — 20th, noon

Register with Pastor

Mike Brandt

605-331-3862

South Central Minnesota

Faith Haven Fall Rally

Pastor Mark Olson speaking

AFLBS team leading music

October 25th, 6:00 p.m. —

27th, 11:00 a.m.

Register with Pastor

Tony Stockman

612-834-4875

Fall Family Camp at the ARC

All Saints theme, come dressed as your favorite thing from the Bible. Hayride, bonfire, and more.

October 25th-27th

Register with Eric Westlake

715-294-2877

Dawson McAllister

Student Conference

"Making Peace at Home"

at the Minneapolis Target
Center

December 6th-7th

Register with Shepherd

Ministries, 214-580-8000

Youth Notes

Combining youth groups

Some distinct advantages exist in doing things together with other Free Lutheran Congregations. When we combine our youth groups together, we will be able to do things we could not do alone. We can provide high quality outreach and growth events and we can challenge our youth to get involved in ministry.

Combining youth events is a good idea in smaller congregations. Researchers point out that larger youth groups have fewer problem youth! It is probably because these groups become the "in" thing. The dynamics of small-

er youth groups can create complications that larger ones do not have!

Networking of Youth Workers and Pastors is good. One can begin here. It is no new concept but seems new today. Pastors won't you please get involved with your young people? When you are part of them, you are part of the solution for youth ministry! Then you can follow by combining youth groups. The result of this can be a more total impact on the lives of our youth.

— Pastor Dennis Gray
Greenbush, Minnesota

A community youth ministry spotlight

In the 1000 people of Newark, IL a remarkable thing has been happening. The youth ministry is growing beyond some small group meeting together. Six churches and six to seven schools take part in a youth group mania. In one typical week five youth meetings take place. Many of the youth attend multiple groups.

➤ From West Lisbon Lutheran in Newark: Monica Anderson is the youth leader of the Heirforce junior high youth group. Some 30 to 35 youth meet every Wednesday.

➤ From Helmar Lutheran in Newark: Dave Christian works with Rich and Rhoda Niles leading the Jesus and Me (JAM) Junior High group. They meet with about 25 every Wednesday.

➤ Helmar Lutheran has a Senior High group run by Matt and Julie Davidson on Wednesday nights with 30-50 attending.

➤ Steve Larson and his wife have another Senior High group going on Sunday nights in the ELCA church.

➤ All of the above groups feed the college age group run by Rick Tollefson on Sunday nights.

The focus: a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, growing in your daily walk of faith, and inviting your friends to get to know Jesus. It is very simple but it draws youth from five communities and almost all of the leadership is done by lay volunteers. Does it seem impossible? Not for God! "I can do all things through Christ" (Philippians 4:13).

Contact Pastor Kevin Olson
AFLC Youth Director
3110 East Medicine Lk. Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55441

Phone: (612) 545-5631
Fax: (612) 545-0079
<http://www.minn.net/aflc.org>
E-mail: hqmail@aflc.org

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Central Minnesota congregation joins the AFLC

Minnewaska Lutheran Church in Starbuck, Minnesota, recently voted unanimously to join with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. The congregation was originally a member of the Lutheran Free Church before joining the American Lutheran Church and then the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They have been served by Pastor Mauritz Lundeen for the past five and a half years. The church has seen recent growth and was encouraged with the 25 students registered for Vacation Bible School last August. They have begun significant repairs on their building and look forward to the ministry the Lord has for them in their community.

Elbow, Saskatchewan — Bethel Lutheran Church had a ground breaking service for their new facilities on July 21. Work is underway and they hope to be fully enclosed by winter. The Elbow Bible Camp was the week of July 6. Registered campers

Calgary, Alberta — Bethlehem Lutheran Church hosted their Church Stampede Breakfast on July 13. Though they prepared for 150 people, they served approximately 500. At the end of July, the congregation hosted a week of Vacation Bible School. Of the 62 children attending, some heard the story of Jesus for the very first time. One child accepted Christ as her personal Savior.

Nathan Dyrud and Brent Olson, from Middle River and Fergus Falls, Minnesota, left August 29, 1996, for Chonbuk National University in Chonju, Republic of Korea. They join Adam Lee, Crystal, Minnesota, teaching in the foreign language and English departments. Adam is beginning his second year teaching at the university.

Pastor David Abel, North Royalton, Ohio, has resigned as pastor of Abiding Savior Lutheran Church. His future plans are undefined.

Pastor Del Palmer and his family's new address is 150 - 130th Street W., Shakopee, MN 55379.

numbered 277. The evening speaker was Dr. Francis Monseth, dean of AFLTS in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Lostwood, North Dakota — First English Free Lutheran celebrated their 75th Anniversary on July 14, 1996. The theme for the day was, "To God Be The Glory" and the theme verse was taken from Isaiah 40:8, "The grass withers, and the flower fades, but the Word of our God shall stand forever." The congregation has been a part of the AFLC since 1988 and forms a parish with Our Saviour's Lutheran in Stanley, served by Pastor Rodney Johnson.

Arlington, South Dakota — Calvary Lutheran began their Fall Meetings with a Sportsmen Banquet on September 14. The guest speaker was Pastor Everett Hind, Pipestone, Minnesota. The evening evangelistic services concluded on September 18.

Pastor Ted Berkas, Wallace, South Dakota, is the interim pastor of Calvary Free Lutheran in Fosston, Minnesota.

Pastor James Asp, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, and his wife have moved to Morris, Illinois. Their son-in-law, Pastor Steven Lombardo is the pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Morris.

Fairbury, Nebraska — Pastor Jan Horne was installed as the pastor of Faith Lutheran Church on September 8, 1996. Area pastors participating were: Dr. Howard Franzen, Pastors Joe Schultz and Don Voorhees. Two weeks later, Faith hosted a series of special evangelistic meetings with Pastor Mark Olson, Arlington, South Dakota, speaking.

October is "Help in Service" month

October is the month set aside for special offerings within the congregations of the AFLC to be designated to the Help In Service (HIS) Fund.

Over the years, the HIS fund has provided temporary assistance to pastors, their widows, and others in the service of the AFLC who are suddenly faced with unforeseen financial difficulties such as medical expenses, living expenses, insurance premiums, to name a few. These funds are available because individuals

and congregations are willing to give and to follow the scriptural challenge which accompanies the words, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the Word of God in order to serve tables." The fund is administered by the Pension Board.

Thanks to all who contribute to this fund from the Pension Board and from all who have benefited from it.

— Rod Kjersten
Member, AFLC Pension Board
Roseau, Minnesota

How do you raise a missionary?

Evidence abounds all around us this harvest time of year that many people know how to raise vegetables. Another kind of wisdom is also needed and that is the knowledge as to how to raise a missionary.

Corn does not magically appear one day and then jump out of the ground and into a truck waiting to whisk it off to market. Much time, effort and know-how is necessary before that day when it is ready to perform its service and be consumed. Similarly with a missionary — they generally do not appear in a flash out of nowhere, like Superman jumping out of a phone booth. They are raised. Those that are most effective are the result of proper preparation.

The Apostle Paul was an intelligent man, a gifted speaker and an able leader before his conversion to Christianity. We would think that after he was saved he could step right into missionary work. If his conversion had happened in America 1996 he would have been offered a book contract, a video series and speaking engagements within a week.

But that's not what happened. It is estimated that it was 12 years after he met Jesus on the road to Damascus that Paul went on his first missionary journey. God knew Paul needed time to prepare.

Part of Paul's being raised to be a missionary came from his friendship with Barnabas. In Acts 11 we read of Barnabas going to Tarsus and looking for Paul and then bringing him to Antioch. Barnabas, whose name meant Son of Encouragement, encouraged Paul to get involved in God's service.

Some, whether intentionally or not, may give a future missionary the impression that difficulties are going to be set before them to see if they are truly serious about mission work and able to handle the challenges which will come. God most certainly gives times of testing. The testing, however, is to be done by Him. We are called to "encourage one another and build each other up" (I Thessalonians 5:11, NIV).

Are you and your congregation setting obstacles before possible future missionaries or offering a hand of help and words of encouragement? Do you know a future "Paul" toward whom you can be a "Barnabas"?

The Holy Spirit came to the congregation in Antioch and said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul

for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2, NIV). The call to missionary service came to Barnabas and Paul through the congregation.

The model given is not so much of missionaries telling congregations of their call and their plans, but more of the congregation telling the missionary of the call that has been given. Do we in the congregations neglect our responsibility when we so often wait for the missionary to sense the call of God and take the initiative in pursuing future service?

Certainly God directs agencies, committees and individuals. But we believe our church body's first fundamental principle is biblical in its statement that "the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth." Before other organizations and individuals, God speaks to and through congregations.

God's ideal is of a person being a part of a congregation. The call for that person to be in missionary service comes to the congregation. That person is then encouraged, equipped and raised up by the congregation for God's service.

In Acts 13:2 the call came to the congregation "While they were worshipping the Lord." They were not in a committee meeting. They were not goal-setting. They were not seeking to fill a position. They were worshipping. Their focus was on the Lord, and then the call came.

As we grow as worshipers, our missions sending and going and supporting will grow as well. Worshipping God and seeing Him in His majesty as the prophet Isaiah did will lead us to respond as Isaiah did: "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8, NIV).

Worship is an extremely practical means of preparing for missionary service. It is also essential. Truly effective mission work cannot be done without a proper view of the nature of God and what He has done in Christ. That view comes through worship.

Has your congregation raised any missionaries lately? It does not require fancy buildings and impressive programs but a congregation that is worshipping and encouraging.

God can cause great things to rise out of places that we do not see as promising soil. By the grace and power of God, small seeds of preparation and service can grow into a bountiful harvest.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

**As we grow as
worshippers, our
mission sending
and going and
supporting will
grow as well.**

Shout with joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious! Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man's behalf!
— Psalm 66:1,2,5

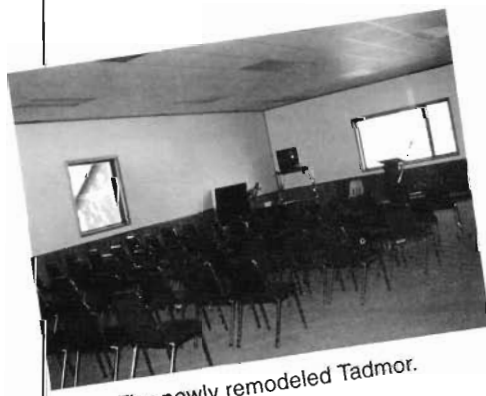
The Association Retreat Center

One morning recently at staff devotions, our director, Eric Westlake talked about how we as Christians sometimes get caught up in congratulating ourselves for all we have done for God and the furtherance of His kingdom. He read from the first chapter of Genesis, how God created everything with a single word and said, "It was good."

How can we, as mere created beings, do anything that is "good" without God being at the center of it? No matter if we work at a Christian retreat center, or teach at a Christian school, or spend time with our children, if God is not in it, it is nothing. This is so important for us at the ARC to remember. Being human, it is easy to take credit for the success of the camp, the quality of the speakers, the safety of the campers, even the cleanliness of the bathrooms. God deserves the praise and glory for allowing us the opportunity to serve Him and giving us the strength and the wisdom to carry out His work.

This fall, we are trying something new! October 25-27, 1996 is our Family Weekend. The weekend features a teen program, children's program and several seminars that are of interest to the Christian family. Saturday night is a special treat for kids! We are having a Bible Festival. Come dressed as your favorite Bible character, verse, story or animal. It'll be a great weekend to spend time with your family in a Christ-centered environment!

The Free Lutheran Youth convention in Colorado is being held next summer during the dates that Family Camp has been traditionally held. To allow as many teens and adult workers to attend, the 1997 ARC Family Camp will be held from Saturday, July 5 through Friday, July 11. Junior camp will be for grades 4 to 8 and will be held at The ARC July 27 through August 2.



The newly remodeled Tadmor.



Picnic area outside of Tadmor.