

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 16, 2001

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October 16, 2001
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Editor: Rev. Craig Johnson
Assistant to the Editor: Ruth Gunderson
Editorial Board: Rev. John Mundfrom, Oryen Benrud, Rev. Jerry Moan, Rev. James L. Johnson.

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For editorial inquiries and information:

The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441; 763-545-5631; fax 763-545-0079; e-mail craigj@teleport.com
ruthg@alfc.org

For subscription changes and information:

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Blessings from the basics

"I believe in God the Father ..." This is such a common confession of faith, used so frequently that we may easily forget that this is an extremely lofty statement. In fact, if God Himself hadn't revealed Himself as a heavenly Father, we wouldn't dare make such a confession for fear of blasphemy; nor would it likely occur to us to do so.

The religions of men don't normally include a god who is a father, but rather a harsh and demanding, often cruel or vengeful, god; a god whose anger must constantly be appeased; a god who subjects his followers to bondage; a god who grudgingly gives and greedily takes. Such is fallen man's natural view of deity.

How good for us that God has revealed Himself, as He truly is, in His Word. He has revealed Himself as a providing and protecting father to his children, and He daily confirms this in our life experiences.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the father welcomes a repentant sinner home with great joy and open arms. In teaching us to pray, the Lord instructs us to begin our petitions for every need of body and soul with the words, "our Father." In the book of Hebrews, we find that the Father "disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness" (Hebrews 12:10). Romans 8:2 tells us that the Father has sacrificed His only son to free us from "the law of sin and death."

As we meet God in His Word, we find Him so gloriously opposite of fallen man's ideas about God. This illustrates yet another wonderful truth: God is not who men naturally think Him to be; He is exactly the God that we need Him to be. When doubts and questions

about the goodness of God trouble your heart, don't try to think your way out. Go to the Word of God. You will meet the Father there, and as He reveals Himself to you anew, your doubts and questions will give way to gratitude and peace.

"I believe in God the Father ..." This is a statement that only the converted sinner can rightfully make. This confession of faith is reserved for those whom the Father has saved out of the old life of sin into the new life, "which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Ephesians 4:24b).

When we know God as our heavenly Father, we have new life imparted to us through faith in Christ as Savior, and this new life testifies of His faithfulness. "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

In this world of fallen sinners trying to find God on their own, the Father places His children. The greatest honor that can be given man is this: to be a child of God. As His child, each one has unique opportunities to make God known to others. It is as we faithfully study His Word and learn to interpret life in light of His Word that we grow in fellowship with and likeness to our heavenly Father.

"I believe in God the Father ..." May we never forget what a great honor it is to make such a confession.



— **Pastor Dale
A. Mellgren**
**Mt. Carmel and
Trinity Lutheran
McIntosh, Minn.**

Now only 37 percent of Christians worldwide are residents of the developed Western nations.

— *Christianity Today*
2/5/01

The great explosion of the church

wasn't the result of a strategic planning retreat. Rather, it was about ordinary people, moved by the grace of God, sharing the provisions they had been given by Jesus — the message of the gospel, their financial resources, their labor, and their love.

— *Matthew Barnett*

The true measure of a church's missions-mindedness is not its missionary budget, nor the number of people it supports overseas, but the proportion of its own members who recognize that because they are saved by Christ, they are meant to be sent by Christ.

— *Horace Fenton, Jr.*

Sound Bites

When was the last time your church leaders wept over the plight of your city instead of worrying about paying the bills?

— *William Easum*

Has your church ever tried something so big that it would fail if God wasn't in it?

— *Bob Russell*

We become a "come to" church as we invite others to "come to our building and enjoy our nice services."

However, if we view the church as a New Testament gathering of believers, we will become a "go to" church — one that goes out looking for the lost rather than waiting for them to find us.

— *Jack Dennison*

Who Will go?

Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy students take on the missions challenge

One of the ways that I have been blessed in my life is through participation in mission trips. The last trip was this past spring, when a group of students and chaperones from Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy went to Jerez, Mexico. In preparation, we had to practice almost every day for puppets and mime and music dramas. We also learned songs in Spanish. Another way we prepared was by learning about the culture and people of Jerez. We had Lydia, who was from Aguascalientes, Mexico, come and talk to us about the people, culture and how what is appropriate in the United States is not

always viewed as appropriate in Mexico. We also knew that the trip would be hard spiritually. Jerez is a city that was closed off to the gospel until about 100 years ago. It would be important for all of us to be praying in advance for the people of the city and all the people we would come into contact with. We spent much of our time in prayer as a group. We had a great trip and we got to see God work in amazing ways and provide for and take care of all our needs.

— **Sara Nash**
2001 MLLA graduate
AFLBS junior



Academy students had a chance to participate in a cultural exchange at three public schools in Jerez, Mexico.

made me aware that there are a lot of people all over the world who need to know Jesus. Some would never hear that *Cristo Salve* unless missionaries like the Giles and the Schierkolks were there to tell them. I also realized what a huge job missionaries have as they not only have to be the voice of Jesus, but they have to use their hands, their feet and all of their energy to teach people about His love.

Christ Saves is the message the whole world needs to hear. So please pray that the missionaries can keep telling this great news.

— **Joel Rasmussen**
2001 MLLA graduate
AFLBS junior



A group of students from Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy, Plymouth, Minn., arrived at Jerez, Mexico, last spring for a short-term mission trip.

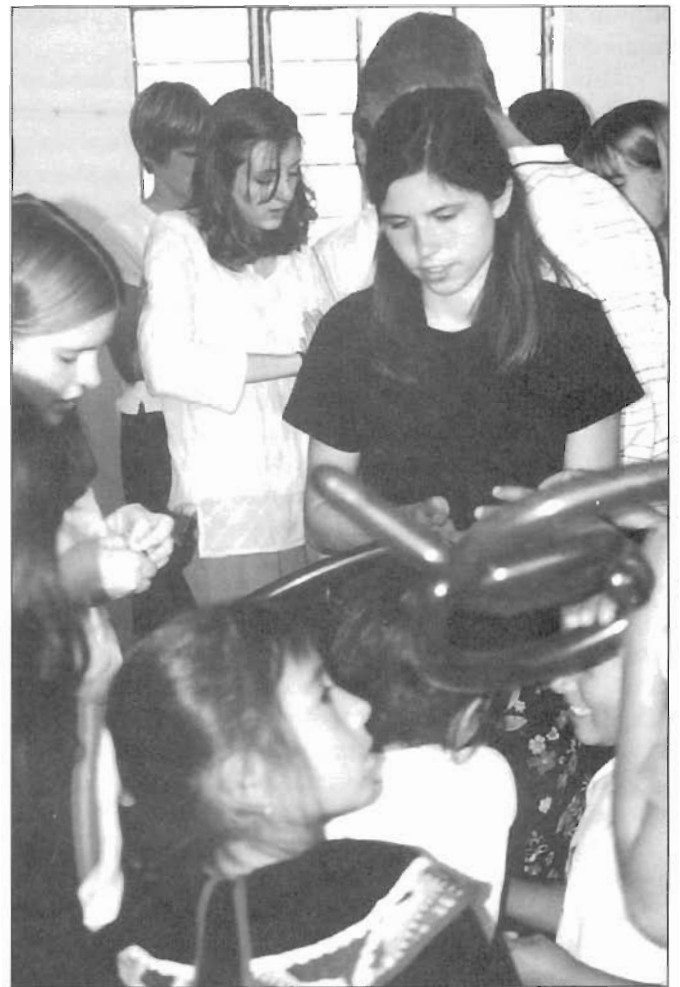
Going on a mission trip to Mexico with Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy was a very good experience for me because it changed many little areas of my life in big ways. This trip and the many things we experienced opened my eyes to things that I had either ignored or missed before.

First of all, the trip changed my thinking. I went to Mexico thinking that we would do all this work and that that would bring a change in many others' lives there. Well, we did our best to share Jesus, but it affected my life just as much as some of those there. I ended up being surprised by God many times and found out that missions actually could be something for me. In the past I have kind of put that thought away, thinking that it just wasn't for me; but now I am much more open to God's leading in that area.

The second area of my life that was changed was my actions. We really stuck out sometimes because of the different programs and ministries we did, so it was very important that we made sure our actions didn't offend anyone or portray a wrong message. Most people were interested, but some were skeptical. If we offended people right off the bat, they probably wouldn't listen to our message. It reminded me that we might be "the only Jesus some people will ever see."

I think I was challenged and changed the most in my prayer life and trust in God. There are so many stories I could tell of how God answered prayer and directed us. He is totally worthy of our trust, and I really saw that in a practical and consistent way while we were in Mexico. I know that it was because of all the people praying for us. There have been too many times in my life when I have prayed just for comfort, and now I realize that prayer brings action from God. Expect an answer when you pray! That's one big thing that I learned.

Be a missionary? Me? Not until I actually went on this mission trip did I ever even consider it. My thoughts and feelings have changed now, though, and I'm so glad God allowed me to share the experience. God is so awesome!



The team learned balloon art before the trip and shared their skills with children in Mexico.

— Sarah Franz
2001 MLLA graduate
AFLBS junior



Come fly with **FLAPS**

— **Ruth Gunderson**
Assistant editor

At 5 a.m. Sept. 30 my alarm blares a grating message in my ear. Just five more minutes, I think, and hit the snooze. Then I remember: I'm flying today. And I smile to myself.

By 6:30 a.m. I am showered, fed and clothed as I gather all my gear for the long day ahead of me. Camera? Check. Notepad? Check. Pillow, snacks and gum? Check. One more thing: my sense of humor. After all, I am on my way to meet Paul Nash, AFLC Home Missions director.

This day is a mystery to me, I think, as I head to Anoka County Airport. There I will meet Paul and Lavon Bohling, director of resource management for AFLC Missions. We will fly, I am told, to the Minnesota towns of Bemidji and Fertile in the morning, then head out for parts unknown in North Dakota.

At 7:15 a.m., I arrive at the airport. Shortly after, Lavon arrives with AFLC President Bob Lee. We open up the hangar, and I catch my first glimpse of the Piper Cherokee Six. It's small, but clean. I'm thinking about climbing in and chasing big adventures in the sky. What will God do with us today?

But first we push the six-seater out of the hangar. It's amazingly light. In no time we're seated: Pastor Lee and I in the back, Lavon as co-pilot and Paul at the controls. By 7:45 a.m., I have no time for regrets. We're chasing down the runway, then we're up, the sun just breaking the horizon.

I first heard about FLAPS (Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters) about a month ago. I had just come on board with the Ambassador and moved my office into the AFLC headquarters building in Plymouth.

"The Lord gave me the vision 41 years ago when I was 5 years old out in the field," Paul told me of his hope to use planes to complement missions work.

A pilot since his years at college, Paul teamed up with Lavon, an accomplished corporate pilot, three years ago when FLAPS was incorporated. Their goal?

"In general, it must be to serve the needs of spreading the gospel through the use of the airplane," said Lavon, who also serves as the director of FLAPS. "This is not a toy ... It's a working machine that has to prove itself."

FLAPS first started with a Cessna 150, used in the wilds of Alaska by Pastor Tom Olson, who was on loan to the Lutheran Mission Societies. The Cessna is now in Arlington, Wash., with Pastor Mike Crowell while it awaits a new commission. Earlier this year, FLAPS acquired the Cherokee, which is used as a cost-effective and time-effective



The six-seat Piper Cherokee requires constant maintenance. Paul Nash and Lavon Bohling pause during the trip to wipe bugs off for a more efficient flight.



ABOVE: Members of Maple Bay Free Lutheran Church, Mentor, Minn., Sunday school sang during the Sept. 30 service. **LEFT:** Paul Nash and Lavon Bohling pilot the Piper Cherokee Six.

tive way to get AFLC staff out to the congregations.

"This is just taking the wear and tear off of the staff so they can effectively serve the churches," said Paul. "Everything in this headquarters is set up to do one thing: to serve Jesus Christ, and secondly to serve the churches."

I wanted to see that first hand.

By 9:15 a.m., we had dropped Pastor Lee off in Bemidji, from where he headed out to Shevlin to install licensed pastor Jim Christianson at Lanstad Lutheran Church. Christianson also serves Sell Lake Lutheran in Shevlin and Trinity Free Lutheran in Wilton.

We are back up in the air by 9:20 a.m., and this time I am in the co-pilot's seat next to Lavon. Ten minutes later, we are over a cloudbank, something not in the forecast. We can't land in Fertile if it is cloudy because the airport is not rated for an instrument landing system (ILS), a necessity with clouds. After some debate, Paul has found an ILS-rated airport in Crookston, some 20 to 30 miles away. There, Lavon "shoots the approach" (flying lingo for using the instruments to come through the clouds). Under the clouds, they fly by sight to Fertile. We arrive there at 10:20 a.m., somewhat late for the service at Maple Bay Free Lutheran Church in Mentor, Minn.

After the service, where Paul and Lavon gave a presentation on FLAPS and Home Missions, we eat lunch and are on our way again by 1:55 p.m. We land at Mayport Airport in Mayville/Portland, N.D., at 2:20 p.m., where we meet Coordinating Committee member Ralph Peterson. The hope is to gas up and head out. But recent events have changed operations at many airports, so no gas can be found at Mayport. Instead, the pilots change plans, once again, and we are on our way to Grand Forks, N.D., by 3:15 p.m. By now, I feel like an old hat at this, and lounge comfortably in the back seat with my feet up, reading a good book.

After a quick hop to Grand Forks, we land at 3:30 p.m. There, we gas up the plane and drive into town for food. By 5:15 p.m. we are back in the air again, in what I now come to call the Volkswagon van of the air.

We land in Cooperstown, N.D., at 5:50 p.m., where a church member meets us and takes us to Binford, N.D., for an evening service. The last stop is not without its challenges: the PowerPoint presentation is fouled up by computer problems. But Paul and Lavon press on, bringing the need for prayer to yet another congregation.

Pie and conversation are cut short as we pack up quickly and headed back to the airport at 9:15 p.m., still needing to pick up Pastor Lee in Fertile and head home. That part of the trip I don't much remember. As a passenger, I can sleep, and I do. I do remember the touch-down in Anoka. Pastor Lee thanks God for a safe day. My watch reads 11:50 p.m. We unpack and push the plane back into its home before heading our separate ways.

On the ride home, one thought crosses my mind: I'm sure glad I don't have to do this tomorrow. On the other hand, I think as I climb into bed at 12:45 a.m., traveling by car would mean another day to accomplish all we had done.



Missions

— Dr. Francis Monseth
Dean, FLS

At our doorstep

Free Lutheran Seminary is experiencing an enlarging opportunity to train international students for ministry in their own countries. Over the years, the seminary has had a number of students from other nations, but more recently, there have been many more inquiries and many more applications from people in various parts of the world. In addition to the international students who are already on campus from several places, applicants have been accepted for this fall semester from Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, Pakistan and the Czech Republic. Already, applications are being received for the fall of 2002 from Estonia, Latvia, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia and Haiti.

What should we do? We are not a large seminary. We have an abiding concern to equip pastors to serve our congregations in North America faithfully and effectively. But what about these who want to come from so many other places? Why do they want to come to study here? Are some seeking to “use” the seminary as a means to escape oppressive conditions in their homelands? How can we discern which applications to accept? With these questions in mind and with a deep sense of dependence upon the Lord, the seminary believes that every application should be prayerfully considered.

Of great importance in the consideration of applications are the reasons for a person wanting to come. If there is an evangelical and conservative Lutheran seminary in the applicant's homeland, the counsel is for that person to prepare there. Sadly, such seminaries are becoming more difficult to find. In a meeting with the leaders of a conservative Lutheran church body in the Czech Republic this spring, they told us that they have three options for theological training for their pastors, but all of these

schools espouse liberal theology. “We send our young men to these schools and they come back with a different theology.” They asked if they could continue to send their men to our seminary until the day comes when they could begin their own school. Two men from this church body are studying at our seminary this year. Similar situations exist



Junior seminarian James Musenze, who recently arrived from Uganda, gives his testimony on the first day of classes at FLS.

in other parts of the world from which our students have come and from others who want to come.

The Board of Trustees and the administration of the seminary are continuing to hold the standards high for admission. An International Student Covenant agreement was prepared this past year, and it is required that every international applicant sign this document. Among the many matters that the applicant agrees to is his sincere intention to return to his homeland for Christian ministry upon completion of his studies.

We believe God is marvelously opening the door of opportunity wider for the seminary to have a part in the equipping of qualified Christian international

students who will go back to their respective countries to serve Christ and His Church. Indeed, what we are seeing before our eyes is "missions at our doorstep."

The presence and participation of students from other nations in the life of the seminary continues to be of rich blessing and inspiration to both the faculty members and our North American students. Greater awareness of the "one holy Christian Church" certainly is part of the inspiration. Also, there is an increased realization of the vast multitudes who need to hear the gospel around the world as one "rubs shoulders" with men who are burdened for the lost in their homelands.

The vision of early leaders of the AFLC was that we would be essentially a "spiritual life movement" in contrast to just another church organization. It was the conviction of these pioneers that we would seek to work together with those of "like mind" from other Lutheran church bodies as well as other Protestant groups in ministries and programs that would advance the Kingdom of God. The prayers of these early AFLC people are being increasingly realized as we see the influx of students from so many places as well as the tremendous "open doors" for mission work around the world. We praise the Lord for what is happening. Yet, we sense our weakness and inadequacy.

We are encouraged as we consider that our great and gracious God so often delights in using what is small in the eyes of the world to bring glory to His Name. We are heartened by God's promise to the Apostle Paul and to all who sense their weakness and insufficiency, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness" (11 Corinthians 12:9). We are daring to believe that even as the Lord is expanding the ministry of our "little seminary," He will provide according to our needs.

Note: Up to the present, the seminary has been able to provide part-time work as well as modest grants to international students to help them pay for their educational expenses. That effort will continue, but the jobs are limited as are the grants. That is why the Board of Trustees of the seminary has set up an International Student Fund so that more will be able to come and study with us. There is an urgent need for funds at the present to help those who have come. Please contact the seminary for more information on how you can be of help through your prayers and gifts. There is also an opportunity to "adopt" an international student during his studies here. One AFLC congregation, for example, raised funds to pay the airfare for an international student.



In their words

Theological study at AFLTS helped me to know more about the Word of God. So many doubts that I had before coming to the seminary were clarified. The subjects that I studied have been helping me in my ministry here in India a great deal. I thank God for all of the faculty. Every morning, the seminary students prayed for special requests from congregations. Through this example I have learned to spend much time at our Lord's feet for the needs of our churches here in India. The fellowship of my friends in the seminary helped me to grow in Christ more and more. I thank God and praise the Lord for the opportunity He gave me to study at AFLTS. My continuous prayer is that the seminary ... should provide the same good education to the international students so that they can go and serve the Lord in their own country. Praise the Lord!

— **Pastor Luther Dasari**
President, AFLC-India
Chirala, India

During my stay ... I have learned many things that are helpful to me and my ministry. The staff of the seminary were really a model of Christian life. I appreciate your teachings and believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, which is the only norm of correct teachings. ... This is the correct Christian doctrine, which ... touched my life and strengthened my ministry.

The cooperation and fellowship with your faculty members and my fellow students was a blessing to me as a pastor and ... administrator. I always pray for you.

— **Pastor Zakaria Axwesso**
Executive secretary, Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Tanzania, Mbulu Synod
Mbulu, Tanzania

Studying at AFLTS deepened my theological knowledge. But the most important benefit was the enormous spiritual encouragement I experienced ...

Much fruit came for me when I was assigned to read through CFW Walther's *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*. I was reading that book ... when at once the Lord suddenly spoke to me that God will give mercy in Christ to those whose heart is terrified and broken by His holy law. ... There was indeed a bright light in my little working room when God gave me this realization that grace alone saves. I can call it my conversion, a rebirth, and the beginning of my new life.

— **Pastor Ove Sander**
Dean of Pastoral Training Institute
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia
Tallinn, Estonia

Are you my **Mother?**

How taking on the role of nurturer revitalized one congregation



Pastor Les Johnson was installed at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Wilson, Wis., on Sept. 23.



Later that afternoon, the church dedicated their building, a school the congregation recently purchased and renovated to worship in.



The new church had support from many groups and individuals, including Pastor Phil Featherstone, Osceola, Wis.

Many of you probably recognize those words from the children's book by the same name. It is the story of a young chick who gets separated from his mother before actually hatching from its egg. Once hatched, it travels earnestly around the countryside, posing this question to various animals, longing to identify a mother who will nurture and comfort it.

This happened to our congregation in the early spring of 2000. We were having a special speaker one particular Sunday. After the service, I came to find the reason for the visit of some was not our speaker; they were orphans. Not physical orphans mind you, but spiritual orphans in search of a mother.

These were not birds that appeared at our service that Sunday morning. They were people from another flock (denomination), people who were in need of direction and guidance. We talked for about two hours that day, they sharing their needs and I sharing about Amery Free Lutheran and the AFLC. I came to find out that their former pastor, a godly shepherd, had left not long before due to his conflicts with the denomination on a variety of issues. Unfortunately, the interim pastor did not share his predecessor's evangelical perspectives, leaving the evangelical membership at a loss for leadership. They needed direction, they longed for a home.

The following Friday found my wife, Vicki, and me at a sort of congregational "town hall" meeting to discuss various needs and options for the group. In the room that evening were some of the most committed, hungry and spiritually open people we had ever met. They wanted to follow God, and they wanted to retain their church family if at all possible.

This was not a group of disgruntled rebels, defiantly demanding their own way. They had tried to work from within to move, as a body, in an evangelical, biblical direction. But, as frequently happens, many in the congregation did not share their conviction, choosing instead to close lines of dialogue, demanding denominational allegiance — something this committed group of evangelical believers just could not do. So here they were, spiritual orphans, looking around the countryside for a mother to love and nurture them.

It was at this time that the leadership of Amery Free Lutheran sensed God's direction to act as a covering for this fledgling group. We began to move on, providing the necessary provisions for their spiritual care: pulpit supply, youth and confirmation support, Christian Education resources, etc. We established this group from Wilson as a legal mission ministry of Amery Free Lutheran while they sought incorporation from the state. Amery Free's leadership created a separate accounting fund within our own ministry books to allow for the process of

Wilson's offerings, outside donations and the payment of their expenses. They were on their way.

As time progressed, these "infants" continued growing and maturing, making their own decisions and seeing God's mighty hand move on their behalf. They established a place to worship, and finalized the necessary incorporation proceedings with the state of Wisconsin. They began wrestling with questions of affiliation and set up programs for ministry to their children and youth.

The "child" was maturing into adolescence. Incorporation was secured. Financial independence was established. A name was chosen: Christ the King Lutheran Church. God began opening doors leading to future independence with the opportunity of purchasing a former school building south of Wilson. Affiliation with the AFLC was completed and home mission status was received. And though we still provided pulpit supply in conjunction with many staff members from the AFLTS and AFLBS, our position became one of support, rather than direction.

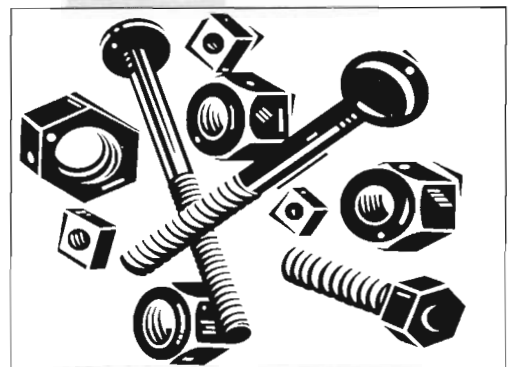
This brings us to the day this is being written, Sept. 23, 2001, to be precise, when the reins of oversight are officially turned over to Pastor Les Johnson, the new pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church.

Traveling together with the members of Christ the King over the last 18 months has been a remarkable and wonderful blessing. It has truly been a delight to work with such a hungry and diligent group of saints. It has challenged our membership at Amery Free Lutheran in both actions and prayer. It has brought us great excitement to hear God's many miracles at work in their group and challenged us to look for the same in our own ministries. They have also shared their gifts of encouragement and labor with us as we began a building project ourselves. It has been a truly remarkable privilege to mother and mentor Christ the King Lutheran and I would like to thank many who have assisted in this process: Pastor Phil Featherstone, Pastor Walter Johnson, Pastor G. Barnum Smith, Pastor Paul Nash, Eric Westlake, Jason Norlien, Paul Welsch, the AFLTS staff and the AFLBS staff.

And as we let go and watch these young eagles fly out in faith, we cut the apron string and say, "Now, where is another group of lost chicks?"

**'It has
brought us
great
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same in our
own
ministries.'**

— *Pastor David Johnson*
Amery Free Lutheran
Amery, Wis.





Surviving

On the trail

An MTI student keeps a diary during a recent biking trip north of Duluth

— **Kara Crimmin**
Oswego, Ill.

Photos by
Amber Nelson
Glyndon, Minn.

Sept. 17, 2001

10:30 a.m. — We're finally leaving and are on our way to our destination, just 75 miles northeast of Duluth. We arrived at our campsite just after 5:30 p.m. Right away we began to set up camp, our tents and food preparations. We ended up being short a tent, so we were closely confined in our sleep-

DAY ONE

ing arrangements. It's funny how well you can get to know someone after spending the night in a tent.

Most of us are pretty excited about beginning our biking expedition tomorrow. A few of us, myself included, are a little worried about how much physical strength we are actually going to have throughout our trip. But, as always, we look to the Lord for our strength ... knowing that He is always faithful.

Already, I can feel a sense of unity among our group. Just little things like singing praise songs before supper and doing each other's dishes without even having to ask. It's amazing how much the Lord can work in such a diverse group of people. His power is so evident already. I pray that He will continue to work in each one of us this week both individually and as a group.

DAY TWO

Sept. 18, 2001

We woke up at 7 a.m. today and began taking down

camp right away. We were hoping to be on the bike trails by 8:30 a.m., but because of all of the bike preparations, it was closer to 9:30 a.m. by the time we left. Paul (Blom) was kind of the leader of our group, because he's had the most experience with mountain biking. We started biking on some gravel roads, going about six miles. Then we stopped for about 15 minutes and began our journey on actual biking paths. It was a little more difficult than the gravel roads because there were a lot more rocks, as well as steeper hills. We stopped about every six miles in order to take a break and let everyone catch up with each other. By the end of the day, we had gone a total of 19.7 miles.

For me, it was a difficult ride. I pushed myself more than I have in a very long time. It





felt good at the end. However, more than once I asked God and myself what I was doing here ... what God's purpose was in all of it. He just smiled and told me to keep going. And then I had to laugh at myself for questioning God's will. He just reminded me that I need to trust and seek Him, because He has total control ... and His will is always perfect, even when we don't understand it.

We returned back to camp at about 1:30 p.m. Pastor Richard Gunderson led us in devotions on Colossians 1:9-23. We discussed the need for prayer everyday and the need to pray for others, including our churches. It's so easy to forget the importance of intercessory prayer and how much it is needed. It seemed to be a real eye-opener for the entire group. It's so amazing to see God's Word work in each one of our hearts.

We had the rest of the night off, to just kind of relax and enjoy ourselves. Paul and Andy Coyle attempted to make a fire the Boy Scout way, simply by rubbing two sticks together. They were close, and I really thought that they were going to get it. But, unfortunately, there wasn't enough time before it grew dark. Maybe next time ...

I'm so thankful that the Lord has brought us all together on this trip. We all have such a good time ... all we ever seem to do is laugh, so it's a blast. Just another one of God's blessings. I pray that He continues to work in our hearts and lives ... that He reveals Himself to each one of us in a new way.

DAY THREE

Sept. 19, 2001

It's been an amazing day to watch God's power be revealed. It's so awesome how He puts certain situations, certain trials, in our paths. And He uses them to teach us and to show us His incredible faithfulness.

We began biking today at about 8:30 a.m. The first 10 miles or so were great, just like yesterday. However, after the first 10 or 15 miles, we didn't get very far because the trail that we were supposed to be on turned out to not really be a trail at all. We ended up in front of a swamp. And the only way we could get over was to go through it. So the guys had to build a bridge out of tree branches across the swamp in order to get us and our bikes over. We thought we'd be home free once over the swamp, but little did we know what was ahead. It turned out to be tall grass and trees like you wouldn't believe. So we ended up carrying our bikes through the brush for about a mile or two. We finally stopped, and some of us went in different directions to try and find another



TOP: Liga Plaveniece, Kara Crimmin, Sara Kjos and Paul Blom pause at a swamp during day three of their biking trip. The team got lost in the woods and ended up traveling more than 30 miles to get out.

ABOVE: Paul Blom, Andy Coyle, Liga Plaveniece and Kim Matt join in prayer after a long day on the trail.

LEFT: Andy Coyle carves a stick at the campsite.

See **MISSION**, page 14



Liz Komarnicki, Willingford, Pa., takes a moment to reflect during the trip.

MISSION: Students rely on faith in God

From page 13

path back to the main road. It was a rather funny thing to realize that we were lost and didn't know how to get back out. We tried about three different directions, and yet all of them failed. It was quite an adventure ... we loved the challenge of it. This is definitely what survival training is really all about. About three hours later, we finally found our way back to the road. Andy and Ziggy (Zigmars Evamois) rode their bikes to go find Pastor Gunderson, while the rest of us waited for about an hour and a half. He eventually came, and we were off on our bikes again ... but this time for only about 10-15 miles. By the end of the day, we had all ridden for about an average of 30-40 miles. It turned out to be quite a long day, but definitely an exciting one.

It was amazing to see how God worked in the situation. He kept all of us safe and helped us to find our way back, while teaching all of us many lessons throughout the day. We definitely learned what it means to fully rely on God and give Him total control of all situations. And we learned that we couldn't do it on our own strength, but only His.

DAY FOUR

Sept. 20, 2001

Today we had an off day, to

just kind of relax and breathe in God's beautiful creation. Paul, Tomasz (Chmiel) and Ziggy went mountain biking for about five hours. It turned out to be quite more than they expected. They decided to follow a couple of cross-country skiing paths — both the difficult ones. It started out well, but then they started running into a few swamps. They finally realized that they were going to have to go through one of them. The swamp that they decided to go through turned out to be about knee deep. They had to carry their bikes for a few miles. Tomasz said that there was a point when they were all really discouraged. So they gathered in a circle and prayed for the Lord to help them get out. As always, God was faithful. He helped them find their way out and replaced their discouragement with joy in knowing that He was in total control.

As I sit here writing this, it's hard to believe that the week is almost over. When I think back on the last four days, I can honestly say that it's been an amazing experience ... an experience that I'll probably remember and cherish for the rest of my life.

I think, though, that the most important thing that we'll take away

from this week is the lessons that we've learned — the lessons that we've learned from each other. But more importantly, the lessons that God has taught us. I've learned that with God's strength, I can do anything. I've pushed myself harder in these past two days than I ever have before. And it's because of Christ that I was able to do what I never thought I could.

As a group and individually, I think we all learned a lot of the same lessons. One being patience. But even more important than that, I think we've learned that God's power and His purposes are so much greater than we could ever imagine. He's teaching us to trust in Him more and more and in ourselves less and less. And to seek Him in everything — because He is always faithful. It's amazing how at our most difficult and challenging moments, just when we're ready to give up, God gives us His perfect strength — a strength that we've never known before. Yes, God is definitely faithful to His children.

DAY FIVE

Sept. 21, 2001

We're on our way back to

school ... back to civilization. We packed up our stuff before having a morning Bible study. We got back on the road at about 11:30 a.m. As I look around at the people surrounding me ... the MTI students, Pastor Gunderson — my "team" — I realize how much I've really grown to love each one. Not just a human love, but also a godly love ... given by the Lord Himself.

I feel as though our entire group really connected this week — like we really understand one another now. I think we have all grown as a group, as well as individually. I can feel a genuine love and care by everyone in the group. It's such an amazing feeling to have people there for you, to encourage you and to help you. People that we didn't even really know a couple weeks ago have suddenly come together — by a bond that is unbreakable — because of Jesus. And that is only because of God's power.



Starting over

Beginning a new mission

About a year and a half ago, after more than 20 years on the mission field, we found ourselves once again opening a new work in a new place. Our question was the same as it had been the first time around. "Where do we start?"

We knew it was time to leave Aguascalientes, where there was a free and living Lutheran congregation and a Mexican pastor who had graduated from seminary and was ready to be ordained. We started out by praying for guidance — not just once but over a period of weeks. Then we made a list of places we thought the Lord might be sending us. We started prayerfully taking a day every now and then to go to these places and poke around and see if the Spirit of God told us something.

One possibility we didn't really talk about was a small town called Jerez located in the mountains of the state of Zacatecas. We had been there before. Todd Schierkolk and I had held a Bible class for a while in the home of one family there who had been members of the church in Aguascalientes several years ago, but the response both from this family and from the community was not even lukewarm. The Schierkolks and we had talked about living in Jerez, but always as a grim possibility that neither of us liked very much. The town was spiritually dark.

One Sunday night in January the subject came up again. Both Debbie and I felt strongly impressed that we should go to Jerez and check it out, just to make sure that God was NOT calling us there. It's a three-hour drive from Aguascalientes to Jerez. We finally got off around noon like the proverbial herd of turtles, and continued to meet obstacles along the way. After a while, this very opposition led us to believe that perhaps God was indeed leading us to Jerez. (By this time in our missionary career we had gotten better at recognizing the enemy's tactics.)

The problems kept coming, and we kept going. We stopped in Zacatecas at the KFC for some chicken to eat on the road, and met more trouble. Apparently the guys on the construction crew in the empty lot where we parked our car were having a fight with the crew of the KFC. They blocked the entry to the parking lot with a chain to keep us from leaving. They almost opposed our leaving with violence, but our guardian angels must have been on duty, and eventually we were safely on the road again.

As we rounded the last corner before Jerez and the lovely valley came into view, we had our first surprise. It was beautiful. Where was the darkness, dirt and depression we associated with Jerez? God gave us new eyes to see what He wanted us to see — and it was a lovely sight. The minute we stepped out of the car we

knew that Jerez was where God was calling us. This was to be our new home and we started looking for a house to rent right away.

By this time we were not basing the call to Jerez on the presence of the family we had been previously visiting, as they had been spiritually cold for too long. We decided to stop in to see them before leaving, just to be polite.

We knocked on their door, and caught them both at home. Their mouths literally dropped open with shock upon seeing us. To our surprise, they fell upon us with tears and hugs.

"What are you doing in Jerez?" they asked.

"We're looking for a house," we told them. "The Lord has made it clear to us today that we're going to live here and plant a church."

As Claudia prepared lunch for us, they told us why they had reacted the way they had.

Since leaving Aguascalientes 10 years earlier, they had not been able to find a new church home. They were discouraged, frustrated and at the point of despair. They felt they could no longer live as Christians without a pastor and a congregation of their own where they could learn God's Word and find spiritual support and companionship. At the same time that we were in Aguascalientes discussing whether or not God was calling us to plant a church in Jerez, these two weary souls had fallen to their knees together and prayed, "Lord, please send us Dan and Debbie Giles to start a church here in Jerez. We can't make it on our own anymore."

That was why their eyes got round and their mouths dropped open when we knocked on their door two days later, and why they had cried when we told them what we were doing. They have since told us that it was an answer to prayer so rapid and direct it almost scared them. They've been faithful to God and to our new little church ever since.

The practical shape that church planting takes is just reaching as many people for Christ in as many ways as we can. The guiding principle of the missionary is: whatever works. Along with the Schierkolks, we pass out tracts, host kids' clubs, ladies' Bible studies and several one-on-one discipleship sessions a week. We even have an evangelistic Spanish Website up and running that people are reading. For most of this we do double duty, as we have both a Spanish ministry and an English ministry in Jerez. God is good.

— Dan Giles
AFLC missionary
Jerez, Mexico



What is a chaplain?

— Chaplain (MAJ) D. Mark Antal, 136th Quartermaster Battalion, North Dakota Army National Guard

Recently, I wrote a paper about my philosophy of being a chaplain. Soon I will complete 20 years as a soldier. I've had the privilege of serving in the North Dakota Army National Guard, United States Army Reserve and on active duty with the United States Army. Over the course of these years, I have served as a chaplain assistant and as a chaplain. I've been a member of the engineers, ARCOM staff, TRADOC, NATO Headquarters, Medical Command, Air Defense Artillery and Quartermasters. Some might say I have had a hard time holding down a job. I prefer to think God has blessed me with a wealth of friends and opportunities to serve a variety of soldiers. Not that I am an expert in the field, but I'd like to share with you my thoughts on what a chaplain is.



Chaplains are unique in the respect that we wear our religious insignia, rather than rank, on our cap. There are three reasons for this distinction.

The first reason for this distinction is that we are **SHEPHERDS**. I wear the cross because I am a Christian chaplain. My church body has ordained me as a minister of the gospel. As a shepherd I am to care for the spiritual needs of the congregation God has provided. Under the direction and strength of God I give spiritual counsel to the soldiers I come in contact with, regardless of rank, religion, race or unit they serve. The chaplain is a guide, bringing soldiers to God and God to soldiers.

The chaplain is also a **SOLDIER**. We wear the same uniform as the soldiers we serve. We can be found with the unit on the running track, doing the APFT (Army Physical Fitness Test). And we can be found in the classroom, having our basic soldier skills refreshed. The gas chamber has never been my favorite memory of basic training, but I understand the importance of wearing the protective mask and MOPP suit. I prefer a wool suit and leather shoes, but because I am a soldier, I proudly wear the uniform and participate gladly in the activities of my unit. On the battle field the chaplain is identified quickly as a caregiver and is a physical reminder of hope in God.

Last, but most importantly, the chaplain is a **SERVANT**. The heritage of the Chaplain Corps is one of selfless service. Chaplains throughout U.S. history have served alongside their fellow soldiers in fox-

holes, mud holes, snow banks and wherever soldiers traveled. The goal of the chaplain is to be a servant to all soldiers and their family members. To be a servant means to put the needs of others first.

When I think of the chaplains I admire most, these three qualities are always present:

Shepherd-Soldier-Servant. This is a theme verse for the chaplain: "Have this attitude which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, being in the very nature of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:5-8).

In a few months, almost every American soldier will wear the black beret. In the center of the blue flash you will see the cross, worn by your North Dakota Army National Guard chaplains. We proudly are different because of our motto: *Pro Deo et Patria* — For God and Country.





Members of New Vision Free Lutheran Church, Spokane, Wash., gathered with five other area churches for prayer meetings on Sept. 11, the day the World Trade Center in New York was hit by hijacked planes and collapsed. Pictured (center right) is Pastor Doug Wagley.

My dear friends in America,

I have been encouraged by the changes that are happening in America. It proves again that God is not dead or wounded. He has not left, and He even does not sleep.

Do you know what He does?

Let me remind you of the words the Psalmist experienced: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (Psalm 23:5).

Yes, enemies are time-to-time stronger than we expect, but God is still in control.

In one of our secular Estonian newspapers, there was a cartoon that hit the heart of the matter, I think. There was described Satan looking down at the terrorists in the pot and saying, regretting: "What have you done?" They just had America praying a national prayer, and for sure this is the thing that evil has not counted on.

I think that Satan has been defeated by the unity of God's people, their willingness to pray and to care for each other.

I know that this has made you stronger in Him. And by the way, these kind of blessings are possible to experience only in the presence of our enemies. To see God preparing a table, and knowing that He will do that in spite of the enemies — that's something to be grateful for.

God knows how to change tragedy into victory for He has done that before on Calvary.

Be encouraged. The rest of the world is praying with you and for you.

— **Pastor Heldur Kajaste**
Allika Baptist Church
Tallinn, Estonia

We were deeply shocked by the attacks of terrorists in New York and Washington. The massacre of an innocence is brutality. Our whole nation was shocked by this terror. Moreover, our AFLC(I) was deeply grieved by this brutal massacre.

But in this situation, our Lord who is the great comforter would guide and give courage to His people to overcome the problems.

May our Lord would give comfort to the people who are suffering from this incident. And we are sending our deep condolence to the people who lost their lives in these attacks.

— **Pastor Luther Dasari**
President AFLC (India)

My dear brother in Christ,

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ..." (Psalms 46:1-2).

My family and our congregations in León, Celaya and Irapuato and I, we are very concerned about the sad happening [Sept. 11] in New York and Washington, D.C. In truth, there are no human words sufficient to adequately express such a lamentable, barbaric act, condemnable in the light of divine and human justice. May God have mercy on the authors of such a diabolical plan.

I tried to communicate with you by telephone on that Tuesday at the Medicine Lake offices, but no one answered the phone. Our recourse has been to pray for you trusting in the promises of the Lord.

... Warmest greetings from me personally, my family and from our congregations.

Pastor Samuel Flores
León, Mexico





Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt, Sparta, Wis., with his group "The Seven," from Christ is Lord Lutheran Church, Onalaska, Wis., stand at the entrance of the AFLC Bible School and Seminary in Campo Mourao, Brazil. Pictured (left to right) are Pastor Connely and Carolyn Dyrud, Tessa Fahrendholz, Carol and Rod Mowbray, Sara Wall, Cari Mowbray, Unverzagt and Allysa Freeberg. The group came down on a two-week vacation to work with the children at the Miriam Infant Home and with Amecam, the street teens on the work farm. They also did repair work around the campus.



The group from Onalaska, Wis., brought with them a 12-string electric guitar to be presented to the Central Church in Camp Mourao for use in the praise and worship of our Lord. Pictured is Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt presenting the guitar to Pastor Connely Dyrud, pastor of the Central Church.

Extension course added to Polish Bible school

As the school year began on Oct. 1, we now anticipate great opportunities to disciple students and build up the body of Christ. This will be our first school year while living in Poland and devoting almost all of our time to the Bible school ministry.

Besides now living in Poland, the big change for us this year is expanding the Bible school to include a weekend extension course. There has been a great demand for Bible teaching from those who work, have families and/or live far away. So we have developed a Saturday Bible school, which meets every other Saturday for 10 or more hours of class. This is a two-year program in which students will study the Scriptures from Genesis through Revelation.

We were hesitant to plan so many hours, but the response has been overwhelming. People are hun-

gry to study God's Word. Last week, as we held student interviews, we were pleasantly overwhelmed with 18 applicants for the course, and we expect six more before school. Praise the Lord!

We are really thankful for the opportunity to expand the direction of Bible school here since lack of adult education is so prominent in the Lutheran church of Poland. The students are not just young adults, but also retirees, several from the Czech Republic, a seminary student and many who have families and work full-time. We asked one young lady why she wants to go to Bible school and she replied that in her opinion everyone should go to Bible school, for we all need the foundation of God's Word. Amen!

At the same time, the weekly Bible school will be continuing as

usual in its fourth year of existence. There are five students who are in the program this year, with one young lady from the Czech Republic. We give thanks to the Lord for every one of them and look forward to mentoring them and seeing the Lord work in their lives this year.

Please pray for us as this year will be an intense one and we know that Satan will not leave us alone. And pray for our students even more so. So many people want to grow through the study of God's Word — may no stumbling blocks stand in their way. God has opened a door of ministry for us and we pray that we would be faithful to that opportunity.

— **Tim Hinrichs**
Dziegielew, Poland



Sixth in a series on
“women of excellence”

WOMEN IN SERVICE FOR HIM

Mary: Giving God the glory

When I was a student at Plymouth Middle School, each year ended with various awards. Students voted for “cutest smile,” “best dressed,” plus a few “duds,” such as “most industrious” (the one I claimed). I have always been a worker. Like most women, I have several projects going with just as many planned. Like us, Mary must have had many ideas for her future. She was anticipating life with Joseph when Gabriel explained God’s plan for her.

Mary surrendered her life to become the mother of Jesus. She was not promised that Joseph would understand and accept her as his wife. Gabriel did not say he would explain everything to her parents. There would be no sign of purity on her forehead to silence those watching her expanding abdomen with curiosity and scorn.

With God’s strength, Mary’s response to Gabriel’s incredible announcement was, “Behold, the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). Mary knew who she was. Mary understood the truth of Ephesians 2:10 before it was written, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Because of this, Mary was able to focus on the coming Messiah instead of her plans or reputation.

Mary allowed the Holy Spirit to have her life and fill her with praise. She spoke these words after traveling to Elizabeth’s house — after she had time to ponder her circumstance: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for

He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on, all generations will call me blessed, For the Mighty One has done great things for me — Holy is his name” (Luke 1:46-48)

Like Mary, I marvel at the goodness of God. He wanted to accomplish His plan through Mary, and He lovingly cared for her. How she must have needed the confirmation she received through Elizabeth. “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Luke 1:41-42).

We, too, must choose whether we will surrender to the will of our loving God. Will we glorify Him or serve ourselves? Mary was able to see beyond her comfort to God’s plan and His provision. If her focus had been on herself, she would have despaired, not praised. What a reminder that is. If I desire to glorify God, my eyes need to be fixed on Him. My own agendas can leave Him no room.

In comparison to Mary, our opportunities to glorify the Lord may seem very unimportant. However, glorifying God does not depend on what we do, but whether or not we reflect God through it. According to *Zondervan’s Bible Dictionary*, we glorify God when we manifest god-like qualities, such as wisdom and

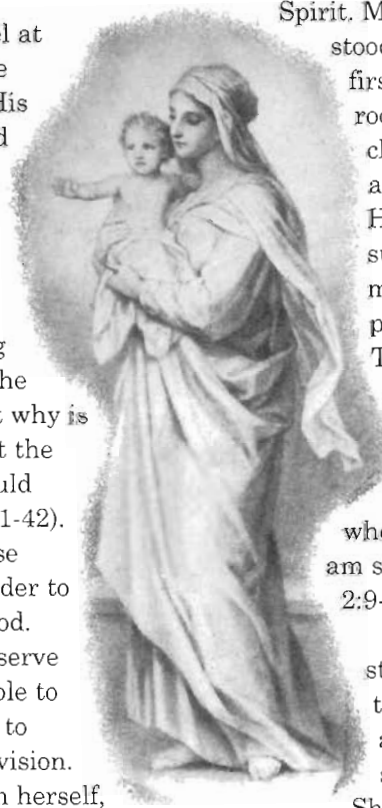
self-control. The NKJV of Luke 1:45 uses “magnify” instead of “glorify.” We glorify God when others examine us and find Jesus. This can only be accomplished by the strength of the

Spirit. Mary must have understood this. She was the first mortal to make room for the Christ child. Her humility allowed God to display His power. “My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest in me. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (II Corinthians 2:9-10).

God provided strength for Mary throughout her life. As a young woman she surrendered to God.

She must have relied on God for wisdom to raise Jesus, a child unlike any other. She watched the unthinkable, the crucifixion of her son. Mary’s life glorified God because she lived as His workmanship, His servant. Like Mary, we must recognize our dependence on God’s strength so that we can point others to Him, not ourselves. By His power may we glorify Him.

— Gwen Berge
Medicine Lake Lutheran
Plymouth, Minn.





Dan Mundfrom, Greeley, Colo., gives a report at the AFLC's All Boards meeting Sept. 24 at the ARC in Osceola, Wis. Mundfrom was named chairman of the AFLBS/AFLTS Board of Trustees. He replaces David Borg, who stepped down.

Pastor Eugene Enderlein, World Missions director, announced that he would retire by June 2002. The World Missions Committee is actively seeking a new director and is interviewing candidates as suggested by members of the Missions Corporation. World Missions has set a prayer goal to have a replacement by spring and an installation at the annual conference in June.



Enderlein

Myrtle Saukerson, 102, died Sept. 14. Saukerson was the widow of AFLC licensed pastor Otto Saukerson. They served churches in Beloit, Wis., Eben Junction, Mich., Dalton, Minn., and Tioga, N.D. Her funeral was Sept. 25 in Pukwana, S.D.

St. James Lutheran Church, Garden City, Kan., voted Sept. 16 to join the AFLC. The Coordinating Committee accepted the congregation on Sept. 24. Pastor Richard Frederick, Bryant, Ark., accepted an interim call from the congregation and will begin serving in mid-October. His new

address will be 1104 Melanie Lane, Garden City, KS 67846.

Pastor William Goodman is serving as interim pastor of Hope Lutheran Church, Northome, Minn., and Bethesda Lutheran Church, Mizpah, Minn.

Abiding Word Lutheran Church, Melbourne, Fla., decided to disband and will hold its last service on Oct. 28. Pastor David Barnhart has served the mission congregation.

Pastor Kevin Olson, Youth Ministries director, has accepted a call to work one-quarter time with AFLBS as a professor of the youth track with the Ministry Training Institute.

Lavon Bohling, director of FLAPS, has accepted a call to serve as the director of resource management for both World and Home Missions. He will coordinate mission needs with volunteers who can fulfill those needs.

Pastor Lyle and Alda Twite, Bagley, Minn., will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary from 2 to 5 p.m. Nov. 10 at Grace Lutheran Church, Bagley.



Pastor Richard Larson (right) was installed at Faith Lutheran Church, Fairbury, Neb., on Aug. 19 by Pastor Jerome Nikunen (left), who serves at Abiding Word Lutheran Church, Deshler, Neb. Larson, his wife, Deanna, and their family began their ministry in the Fairbury area on Aug. 1 after serving Bethany Lutheran Church, Abercrombie, N.D., and United Lutheran Church of McLeod, N.D., since 1990. Faith was served by Nikunen as an interim pastor.

ARC to host a Fall Family Retreat

The Fall Family Retreat, Dare 2 DV8, will be Oct. 26-28 at the ARC, Osceola, Wis. Registration begins at 6:30 p.m. Friday. Guest speaker is Pastor Jeff Swanson, Helmar Lutheran Church, Newark, Ill. There will be a special program by comedian and illusionist Allen Skogerboe. Dress like a Bible character for a costume party. For more information, call 1-888-748-3969.

Lombardo to speak at evangelistic meetings

Fall Harvest Evangelistic Meetings will be Oct. 20-24 at Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Minn. A time of prayer begins at 6:30 p.m. each day, with the meetings beginning at 7 p.m. Guest speaker will be Dr. Steven Lombardo.

PIMO offers mission opportunities to Mexico

Partners in Mission Outreach, a ministry through which many lay people can actively participate in short-term mission trips, announced two two-week trips to northern and central Mexico. Plans are to depart Jan. 14 and again Feb. 8, 2002, for Agrarista and Jerez, Mexico. The

group has some drivers, however, there is a need for more drivers.

For more information on how to participate in this life-changing experience, contact Pastor Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, Mont., at (406) 752-2481; Pastor George Knapp, Willmar, Minn., at (320) 231-3167;

Laverne Hagen, Badger, Minn., at (218) 528-3523; Vernon Russum, Grafton, N.D., at (701) 352-1762; Clark Berg, Kalispell, Mont., at (406) 755-4160; Gene and Rose Finstrom, Buxton, N.D., at (701) 856-3368; or Kenneth Sletton, Duluth, Minn., at (218) 525-7455.



New members were accepted at Maranatha Free Lutheran Church, Glyndon, Minn., on March 25. Pictured with the new members is Pastor Dale Finstrom (right front).

Wayne Pederson selected as NRB president and COO

National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) Chairman Wayne Pederson has been chosen as the new president and chief operating officer of the association. Following the loss of Dr. E. Brandt Gustavson, who died of cancer in May, the NRB executive committee unanimously approved Pederson's selection and recommended him to the board of directors, which recently ratified his selection.

Pederson, who is currently executive vice president at Northwestern Radio in St. Paul, Minn., began his work with NRB on a part-time schedule Oct. 1, and will relocate to Manassas, Va., to begin full-time work by Jan. 1.

The 54-year-old brings a mix of ministry and broadcast experience to NRB. He has spent his entire career in Christian broadcasting, starting as an announcer at KTIS-AM/FM in 1967 while attending the University of Minnesota, where he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and broadcasting. Later, he earned a master of theology degree from Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, Minneapolis.

NRB is an association of more than 1,400 Christian communicators that fosters electronic media access for the gospel; promotes standards of excellence, integrity and accountability; and provides networking and fellowship opportunities for its members.

Nebraska congregation organizes

Would be sixth church from state to join AFLC

Faith Free Lutheran Church, Bertrand, Neb., has been accepted as an AFLC Home Missions, non-subsidized congregation.

Located in south central Nebraska, the congregation has received encouragement from members of Abiding Word Lutheran Church, Deshler, Neb., located 120 miles to the east of Bertrand. Pastor Jerome Nikunen is currently serving both churches. Members of Faith Lutheran Church, Fairbury, Neb., have also taken a role as a sister congregation.

Members of the Bertrand church first organized a year ago, meeting with Dr. Howard and Gertrude Franzen, Hastings, Neb., and Pastor Don Voorhees, Dannebrog, Neb. The members now meet for worship at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, a Missouri Synod church in Bertrand. The congregation has started Sunday school classes, mid-week Bible instruction and confirmation classes. It is the sixth church in Nebraska to affiliate with the AFLC and is a part of the Nebraska/Colorado District.



Ministry Training Institute student Elizabeth Komarnicki, Willingford, Pa., returned to the AFLBS campus this fall not knowing where she would call home. A record enrollment has made space tight in the dorms, forcing three and even four students in a room.

"Similar to how the Israelites' shoes never wore out on their exodus from Egypt, the space in 'room eight' hasn't run out either," wrote Komarnicki of her room, a former prayer closet. "The Lord provides, and as for a place to serve in missions, He will make that clear for me as well."

Komarnicki has compensated for a lack of closet space by hanging her clothes on ropes hung from the walls.

AFLC Memorial Gifts — September

Department given to ...

In memory of ...

Home Missions

Clarence Bjorkland

Irene Smedberg

AFLBS

Alfred Voxland

Palmer Bungum

Ruth Kager

Vision 2004

Elaine Leitz

Thomas Amb

Darlene Carter

Lester Davidson

AFLTS

Lester Davidson

Clare Madsen

Lorraine Dohrmann

Evangelism

Lester Davidson

Arthur Tollefson

Arnold Haas

General Fund

Opal Gemmill

Harry Johnson

In honor of ...

Rev. John Dennis

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (9 months) – January 1 - September 30, 2001

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN SEPTEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$267,241.00	\$16,960.38	\$199,619.19	75
Seminary	126,462.00	11,988.23	100,125.77	79
Bible School	162,545.00	15,786.47	161,179.46	99
Home Missions	242,838.00	29,823.15	200,296.56	82
World Missions	206,762.00	16,840.39	139,553.36	67
Capital Investment	9,490.00	305.62	4,490.30	47
Parish Education	78,302.00	11,379.18	56,780.74	73
Church Extension	26,119.00	1,091.76	16,265.18	62
Youth Ministries	48,375.00	5,330.53	23,674.74	49
TOTALS	\$1,168,134.00	\$109,505.71	\$901,985.30	77
TOTALS 2000	\$1,147,510.00	\$80,304.21	\$749,610.31	65
Goal 75%				
September Evangelism	\$5,679.12			

(2000 figures do not include Youth Ministries)

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/s/ Ellis L. Bloomfield, Printer

A time to remember what matters

Many people coming down the stairs, trying to escape the World Trade Center towers after the terrorist attack, met firefighters and rescue workers going up. They were heading into the burning buildings to try to rescue people. That's what people in those professions do. They put their lives on the line to save others.

As they were heading up those stairs, I am sure they were quite focused. Things that had been occupying their attention, that seemed important earlier, mattered very little right then. People were in danger. They needed to be found and brought to safety.

I doubt that any firefighters became engaged that moment in long and serious discussions about the color they should paint the firehouse or the type of carpet to install.

As you read testimonies of those who were there that day, you don't hear them say their thoughts were about promotions that were granted to someone else before them.

I can't imagine rescue workers heading up those stairs, complaining about the breakfast their partner cooked that morning.

Some had most likely been in traffic jams while heading to work. As they were in those buildings, they knew there are things far worse than going bumper-to-bumper down a freeway.

In many respects firefighters are underpaid for the important and hazardous work they do. Many of the people working in the Trade Center towers were probably a little overpaid by some standards. But in those moments after the terrorists' attack, those with high salaries were not thinking, "At least I'm making six figures a year." Those with lower salaries were not hoping to get a raise as much as they were just hoping to survive. As one reporter said, "Who can look at the extraordinary sacrifices made by the firefighters and policemen of New York City and still believe that making a million dollars is the meaning of life?"

Missions is rescue work. It's about finding people who are hurting and in danger and leading them to safety. It's about pulling people from death to life. And it calls for and merits the same type of dedication, determination and focus that the workers involved in rescue efforts on Sept. 11 had.

After the planes crashed into the towers, a fire

command post was established at the base of the towers. The collapse of the towers was not anticipated at all. Setting up the command post at that site is now seen as a tragic miscalculation. But it is also an inevitable consequence of the way firefighters do their jobs. As one report said, "Commanders don't give orders from a safe spot down the block, or send their men into danger they're not prepared to face themselves."

Imagine if rescue workers had stayed in a safe spot a few miles away and had a meeting among themselves. They might have discussed how those people shouldn't have been in the towers in the first place. "I hope they find their way to join us, and if they do, we'll welcome them in." If the workers had

adopted that kind of attitude, many more lives would have been lost.

Sometimes we Christians meet with one another in our safe, secure churches. We talk about how foolish and sinful those people are who are outside. We take an offering for missions. We hope others happen to find us, and we promise to welcome them if they do. And then we sit and think we are evangelistic and mission-minded.

Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations ..." (Matthew 28:19, NIV). We are to be His witnesses not just in the supposed safe zone of the church but "... in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NIV). We go searching after those in need of rescue.

The tragedy that has struck our nation should heighten our sense of urgency at the importance of getting out the good news of Jesus Christ. Too often in the church we waste time on trivial matters. We let personal preferences and issues of taste and style occupy our time and dominate our discussions, while people are wandering through life without knowing the Savior who loves them and died for them. Many are rushing toward an eternity separated from God without hearing and seeing Christians live out the good news that Jesus took our sin upon Himself, died in our place and then rose again from the dead.

Jesus wants to rescue people. In this scary world, safety and security can be found in Him. People need to hear that good news, and we who know Him get to share it.

— *Pastor Craig Johnson*

**'Missions is
rescue work. ...
It's about pulling
people from
death to life.'**

THE ASSOCIATION RETREAT CENTER

Have things changed?

Change. When we put a new coat of paint on a wall it looks fresh. When we move furniture in a room, it makes us more aware of the surroundings and things feel different. When the Holy Spirit enters into the heart of a person, there is change. God changes the heart and mind of the person who believes in Him. A Christian looks fresh, is more aware of the spiritual surroundings and is different.

At the ARC we have witnessed many changed lives. One such example was a student who came to the SIDE by SIDE retreat. His appearance was worldly: punk hair, baggy pants, chains. His demeanor was tough. His eyes were empty. He came with friends.

He didn't come to the ARC to change. He didn't come to hear any spiritual truths. He came to have

fun. He came to get away. However, while he sat through the sessions, the Holy Spirit slowly peeled off the layers of toughness. He heard God's truths from the Bible and testimonies from Christian young people. He became more aware of his sinfulness.

"We all have sinned and fall

short of the glory of God," says Romans 3:23. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," says Romans 6:23. He asked Jesus to be the Lord and Savior of his life that weekend. He became fresh and new. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old is gone, the new has come," says II

Corinthians 5:17. There was a change in this young man.

When he returned home, his younger brother saw a difference in him. He was no longer swearing, fighting and using drugs. The

younger brother was amazed at what happened. His brother told him about Jesus and the difference it made in his life. The younger brother then signed up for Junior Camp at the ARC. When he came, he heard the salvation message through the songs and Bible studies. During the testimony time that week, he shared how he asked Jesus to be Lord of his life. He shared how if something that great and powerful could change his brother's life, he wanted that, too. John 4:42 says, "We no longer believe just because of what you said, now we have heard for ourselves and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

The ARC invites you to bring a friend to hear about Jesus. We invite you to come and hear the change He can make in your life, the change that can make you fresh, more aware and different. We challenge you in that difference, with the words of a familiar song, "I will dare to live the difference Jesus made in my life. He has changed my heart forever. We can change the world together, if we live the difference in our lives."

— Pam Olson
ARC Program Coordinator

