

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

SEPTEMBER 2009

FIRMLY
FLY, 2009
PLANTED
PSALM 1:1-3



Cracked

BY SUSAN WHITEHEAD



pots

The whole earth is full of God's glory!" It is? Where is it?

As I mindlessly sang those words and read them in Isaiah 6:3, I assumed God's glory referred to His creation. But then I read about Moses begging to see God's glory. If God's glory resided in creation, all Moses had to do was glance around.

Decades ago I read a comment in one of my psychology books that went something like this: "Light can only shine through cracked pots." That brought a chuckle from the class. The cracked pots in class that day were sure they had an edge on the rest of the perfect and un-cracked world.

The clay vessel of Moses, longing to see God's glory, had about as many cracks as one man could. Mark Buchanan, in his book, *The Holy Wild*, pointed out that when God tucked Moses into that crevice high on the mountain and passed by him, He, God Himself, described His glory. "... I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD" (Exodus 33:19).

Who does God have in mind to display His goodness in the grocery store, proclaim His name in the workplace, and therefore manifest His glory? You? Me?

Oh no. I'm not up to that. I don't glow. Worse, there are times I feel my only illumination is a hazard light flashing a warning: Look out! Lord, I can't show your glory. It's too much to expect.

"But wait," as the late TV gadget salesman Billy Mays would shout, "there's more!"

The "more" is that we don't have to produce God's glory in us. We can't. But, unbelievably, II Corinthians 3:18 tells us that we, with our unveiled faces, are being transformed into the likeness of

Jesus, with ever-increasing glory.

Oswald Chambers, in his devotional book, *My Utmost For His Highest*, writes, "You can always tell when someone has been beholding the glory of the Lord, because your inner spirit senses that he mirrors the Lord's own character."

Further along in II Corinthians Paul writes, "We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

In A.D. 258, Laurence, a deacon, was known for giving a great deal of money to the poor. The emperor at the time, Valerian, gave Laurence an ultimatum: turn over the treasure of the church or be killed. Laurence went into the streets and collected the poor, the homeless, the crippled, the blind. He brought them to the palace and told Valerian, "Here is the treasure of the church."

Perhaps there was at least one true statement in that old psychology book. And just maybe the cracks in you and in me not only allow God's healing light to shine in, but those same cracks permit the glory of God to spill out, filling the whole earth.

Susan Whitehead is a member of Vision of Glory Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Minn.

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From the 2009 Free Lutheran Youth convention

You will never know what God can do unless you trust Him.

—Nick Vujcic

Friday evening speaker

The Bible gets the last word on everything.

—Pastor Tom Brock

Wednesday evening speaker

[Most kids are hurting a whole lot more than they are willing to let on to the adults in their world. ... More importantly—most kids are hurting a whole lot more than we want to know. ... Most hurting kids usually care more about our heart than they care about our education or qualifications.]

—Phil Biteler

Elective speaker

“Helping Hurting Kids”

I am a follower of Jesus Christ. My faith in Him is rock solid ... because it rests on the written Word of God and not on my feelings. ... My convictions are unbreakable. My God is unfathomable. My salvation is undeniable. And I am not alone!

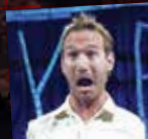
—Pastor Bob Lee

FLY '09 Rocky Mountain Rant

Thursday evening speaker



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FIRMLY

TO FLY, 2009

ESTES PARK, CO

PSALM 1:1-3

ESTES



What do you get when you have 1,864 people gathered in one place for a Free Lutheran Youth national convention? You get a lot of energy and activity. From the opening service on Monday, July 6, until the closing concert on Friday, July 10, a lot was happening at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colo.

A lot of worship happened at the FLY convention. A big portion of that worship was music. Each morning before the Bible study sessions and each evening at the worship services teams led in singing choruses and hymns of praise to the Lord. The convention closed with a musical concert put on by the group 33 Miles.

The evening worship services also included messages centered on the convention theme of "Firmly Planted," taken from Psalm 1:1-3. Pastor Wade Mobley from Sioux Falls, S.D., shared the first evening about the two halves of his life. For his first 18 years he did not know Christ, but at the FLY convention 18 years ago he began a relationship with Jesus. He called on students to be sure they also knew Christ.

On Tuesday evening Eric and Leslie Ludy shared. They are husband and wife and both authors and speakers. They took turns sharing about relationships and about "when God writes your love story," the theme of many of their books.

Pastor Tom Brock of Minneapolis, Minn., addressed two questions on Wednesday evening: "What will Bible reading do for you?" and "How should I read the Bible?" He then invited students to come to the microphones and ask questions related to the Bible. He spent the last part of his message answering a broad range of questions.

Pastor Robert Lee, a teacher at the AFLC Schools, spoke on Thursday evening. He encouraged the students to have a faith that is firmly planted, grounded in facts and not just feelings.

International evangelist Nick Vujicic spoke on Friday evening. Nick was born with no arms or legs. He now heads up a ministry called Life without Limbs and travels around the world, sharing the good news of Jesus. With much humor, he shared with the students how we are each born the way we are for a reason. We need to trust that God has a plan. He challenged the students: "Don't ask God to change your circumstances. Ask Him to change you. ... You don't need arms and legs to be the hands and feet of God."

At the end of his message Nick invited the students to come forward to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior, to recommit their lives to Christ or talk with a counselor. The area in front of the platform was full as students streamed forward. Afterward they had the opportunity to visit with a counselor.

After the service ended Nick stayed in the back of the Longhouse building where the services were held and any who wanted to could give him a hug and have their picture taken with him. The line to meet him was quite long.

Mornings at the FLY convention included Bible studies for the junior and senior high students on the book of Colossians. Small group electives were offered on topics such as apologetics, evangelism, relationships and numerous others. Forty different workshops in all were offered. One of the electives involved leaving the YMCA and going into the community of Estes Park to evangelize.

Afternoons were opportunities for recreation. Some went on mountain hikes, since the YMCA is located next to Rocky Mountain National Park. Others played volleyball or basketball, miniature golf or ultimate Frisbee. Movies were shown. A talent show was held. A chalk art presentation was made. The Association Free Lutheran Bible School's Ambassador and Majesty teams joined together to put on a concert. The opportunities were many and varied.

Instead of just asking: What do you get when you have 1,864 people gathered in one place for a FLY convention?, it may be more appropriate to ask: What happens when a group of people gather to seek the Lord? Jesus said, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20, NIV). The Lord was present at the FLY convention, and lives were changed. Some students were wrestling with serious, complex issues. Experienced counselors were available throughout the week to meet with students who had special needs.

A lot of things happened in the Rocky Mountains July 6-10. Some made new friends. They enjoyed the beauty of God's creation. They sang, they played, they learned. Some got answers to questions they had struggled with. Some found encouragement to face the challenges that exist back home. Some left as changed people, heading a new direction. Most of all, they went to the mountains and they met with Jesus.

**FIRMLY
PLANTED**
FLY 2009
PSALM 1:1-3



BY PASTOR CRAIG JOHNSON
EDITOR





BY PASTOR NICK DYRUD

TRUE

The prayer room was beginning to fill. Counselors were pairing up with youths to huddle in prayer. They were responding to a movement of the Holy Spirit. The message was clear: surrender! As I sat down with one young man, he faced me and said quietly with tears coming down his face, "I want to surrender my whole life to Christ!"

I was overjoyed. We began to pray for God's forgiveness and restoration on his life. He is 14 years old, a church kid who knows about Jesus but was never willing to give up his life. He told me he had been putting on an act for years in front of his parents. He knew in his heart he needed God's forgiveness. That night he accepted Christ into his heart for the very first time.

Like many other young people that evening, God was doing work that could not be described in mere words. The preacher proclaimed the gospel and presented a testimony of what God had done in his own life. Then the Spirit swept over hundreds of youths, opening their eyes to Jesus.

It's called revival. The restoring of lives that were dead in sin, headed for eternal damnation. Just as the psalmist cries out in Psalm 85:4, 6, "Restore us again, O God of our salvation ... revive us again." Oh how we need revival.

In the midst of the moral decline of our world, we need restoration. From the moral decline of the evangelical church, we need to be revived. Are you thinking what I'm thinking? We need revival, and it always starts in prayer and repentance, when people turn away from sin to God.

During the early years of the Christian church, the Holy Spirit was working mightily. Hundreds of people were being converted daily. From region to region, the apostles preached the Word of God, and many responded in surrender to Jesus Christ. Even then it was hard to describe in words. How were so many skeptical of the message one moment and in the next moment begging for forgiveness? How could many who were angry and furious at the message of the gospel now pray to receive the truth?

The answer is God's Spirit reigning over the hearts of the people. But God often works in our lives through a process. In fact, Acts 3 speaks of this process when Peter proclaimed

to the crowd, "Repent, therefore, and turn again." It sounds like a popular book title: Two easy steps to faith in God. It's not.

Repentance—confessing and turning away from your sins to God—is the place we must be led to by the Spirit in order to experience a real change of heart and to receive God's wonderful promise. What promise? Peter continues by explaining in Acts 3:19-20 that we receive three extraordinary blessings when we repent and turn to Him.

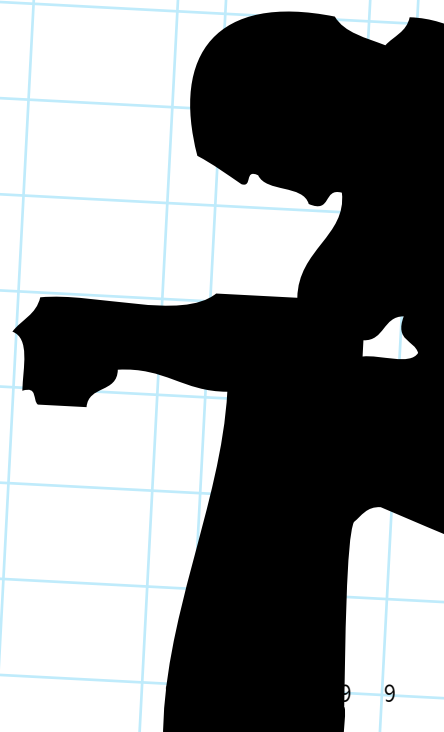
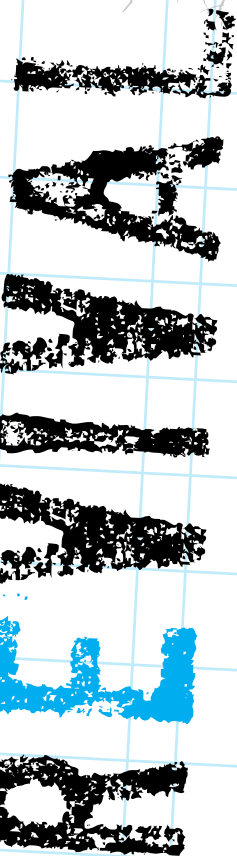
The first blessing is the obliteration of our sins. Verse 19 says, "... that your sins may be blotted out." Gone forever! That's forgiveness God's way. Every time we repent and turn back to Him, He forgives eternally.

The second blessing, Peter reminds us, is that we receive times of refreshing from God's presence when we repent and turn from sin. Real refreshment comes from Christ's work on Calvary. When Jesus met the woman at the well, He promised her "living water" (John 4). Repentance brings spiritual refreshment to our lives, lives that are now filled with the Holy Spirit.

The third blessing is the second coming of Christ. When revival hits the land, souls are saved and there is rejoicing in heaven. But that is only the beginning of what God is doing in His sovereign plan for mankind. Ultimately, revival leads to the final victory Christ will have over Satan and evil, the day when Christ will come. Those who have died in Christ will meet Him in the air, the final homecoming. Revival is exciting!

Are you excited? Do you want to be a part of God's moving in people's lives? Is it something that you are praying for in your own heart and for others? As you ponder revival, consider this: we should not be waiting around for it. It isn't in the distant future. It has already begun. Something is happening in our AFLC. I saw it at FLY. God is doing a work in the hearts of His people. It's happening with our youths, and with people of all ages. It's happening on the mission field. It's my prayer that it's continuing to happen in you and me.

Dyrud serves Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn.



THE CHANGE

BY HEATHER VOGT

Change is something that God has been continually pressing on my life and mind over the past year. There were lots of changes as I finished up my second year at AFLBS this spring. Metamorphosis, the transforming change, was the theme of the yearbook I was hurrying to finish. There was change in my family as Jesus called my aunt Marian home after a lifelong illness. My summer plans changed when God called me to serve on the Joshua summer team. Now I face a change this fall as I follow God's call to Northwestern College. I can't escape it, I can't stop it, and all too often I don't want it.

I began to fear change, even hate it. I knew that God was shaping me into the person He wanted me to be, but all too often I found that change taking me in places I didn't want to go—places I didn't feel ready to face.

But change isn't always bad, and that was what I was reminded of when my summer team spent a week at the Free Lutheran Youth Convention in Estes Park, Colo. While there, visiting with my friends, enjoying the beauty of the Rocky Mountains, and praising Jesus in worship, I found myself remembering the last time I was at FLY.

In 2007, I arrived at the YMCA of the Rockies an angry, lost young woman. I believed myself a Christian, but the desire to control my own life kept me far from God. Three unexpected deaths and a year at a liberal community college had left me confused and questioning my own salvation. And it wasn't a question I could answer.

A best friend's love—and stubbornness—had brought me to FLY that year. I didn't want to go. A part of me thought I was a Christian and therefore didn't need to go to a youth convention. The other part of me was furious with God for my life, what had happened to me, and how it seemed to be going nowhere. But it was there that God brought me back to Him, showing me that my lust for control and freedom were keeping me from the true freedom I could only find in giving my heart completely to Him. Galatians 5:1, FLY 2007's theme verse, became my life verse that

summer. I truly realized that "it is for freedom that Christ has set [me] free," and realized that I needed to "stand firm, then, and do not let [myself] be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

I knew that the only way I could do that was by turning everything, all of me, completely over to Him for the first time. I did and felt truly free for the first time in my life. I decided to wait patiently for God to reveal His will to me.

I didn't have to wait long. The next morning as I walked into the Longhouse at the YMCA of the Rockies, I glimpsed the AFLBS display, and God told me that I was going to Bible school. I fought Him, but in the end I knew that I had to trust Him with my life, come what may, no matter where He would lead me. Even to a Bible school two states away from home, to live with people I had never met, to study a Bible I thought I knew front to back.

Two years later, I found myself remembering that sad, lost girl who had been dragged to FLY kicking and screaming—and realizing just how much I had changed. This time, I was excited to go to FLY, ecstatic at the chance to see other kids changed the way I had been. Instead of questioning my salvation and being angry at God, I knew I was a Christian, saved by the grace and blood of Jesus, trusting God's plan for life even though I didn't know where it might lead.

When I left FLY this time, I wasn't debating a call to Bible school—I was a graduate, preparing to use everything I had learned over the past two years in whatever God called me to. I had changed so much, thanks to God, and even more changes are on the way. And I found myself realizing something very important. Even though changes are going to come, good and bad, I can handle them, and in the midst of all of it, He will be guiding me.

And I wouldn't have it any other way.

Vogt, a 2009 graduate of AFLBS, is from Sheridan, Ill. She served on the Joshua summer ministry team.

MAKER



FIRMLY

FLY 2009

PLANTED

PSALM 1:1-3

I just recently graduated from Moorhead High. I had a bunch of friends. I was part of the dance team, but one thing nobody knew was that when I was in tenth grade I was in an abusive relationship for a whole year.

I never knew Christ and I wasn't very close to anyone, so I never had anyone to turn to. Finally, my parents started seeing signs of the abuse both physically and emotionally and ended the relationship, making sure he would never see me again.

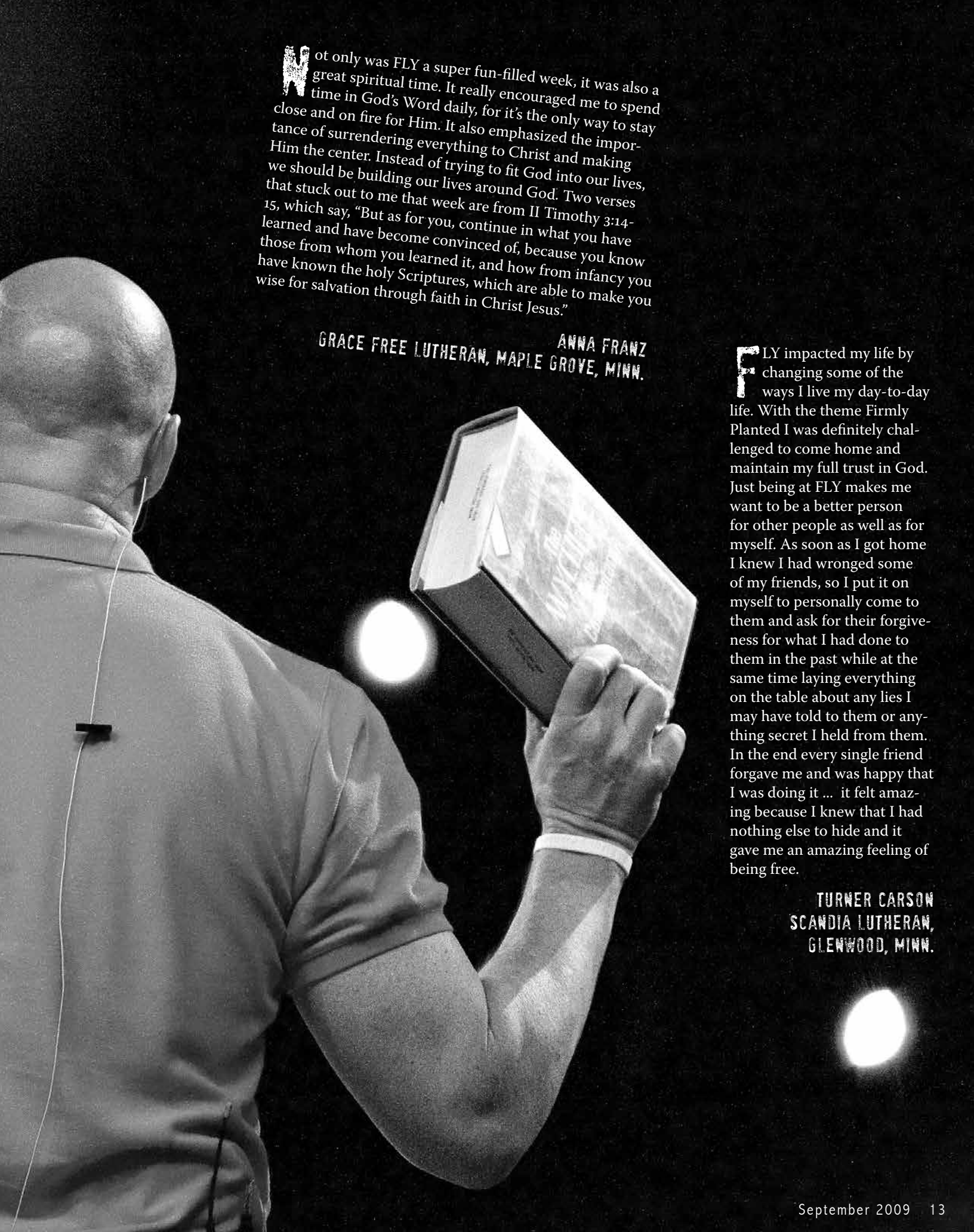
I always blamed the abuse on myself and felt like I could never be forgiven. That changed when I made a new friend who showed me that it wasn't my fault and that Jesus Christ loves me and I can be forgiven for my sins. After that point I began to grow closer to Jesus and I have never been so happy and content.

STEPHANIE DRESSER
MOORHEAD, MINN.

One of the things that impacted me the most was when Nick V. began to speak Friday night. He shared my favorite verse from Jeremiah 29:11, "I know the plans I have for you ..." It was at that moment that I knew the Friday night service was going to be special. That verse has always been special to me because it assures me that even though it may not always seem like my plans are being fulfilled, I can know that God's are.

BEN ANENSON
EMMAUS LUTHERAN,
BLOOMINGTON MINN.





Not only was FLY a super fun-filled week, it was also a great spiritual time. It really encouraged me to spend time in God's Word daily, for it's the only way to stay close and on fire for Him. It also emphasized the importance of surrendering everything to Christ and making Him the center. Instead of trying to fit God into our lives, we should be building our lives around God. Two verses that stuck out to me that week are from II Timothy 3:14-15, which say, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

ANNA FRANZ
GRACE FREE LUTHERAN, MAPLE GROVE, MINN.

FLY impacted my life by changing some of the ways I live my day-to-day life. With the theme Firmly Planted I was definitely challenged to come home and maintain my full trust in God. Just being at FLY makes me want to be a better person for other people as well as for myself. As soon as I got home I knew I had wronged some of my friends, so I put it on myself to personally come to them and ask for their forgiveness for what I had done to them in the past while at the same time laying everything on the table about any lies I may have told to them or anything secret I held from them. In the end every single friend forgave me and was happy that I was doing it ... it felt amazing because I knew that I had nothing else to hide and it gave me an amazing feeling of being free.

TURNER CARSON
SCANDIA LUTHERAN,
GLENWOOD, MINN.

CREATION & EVOLUTION: SCIENCE OR PHILOSOPHY?

CRITICAL



THEIR WORDS

BY RYAN PATENAUDE

Both science and religion make truth claims about the universe. Many modern thinkers believe that science and religion are noble pursuits, but they ought never cross paths. Science has the job of making assertions about the natural world whereas religion is to make assertions about the immaterial or supernatural. But a religion where the supernatural never intersects the natural is useless. To say that the two never cross paths is essentially the same as denying the supernatural altogether. This is where most of the scientific community is today—a total denial of the supernatural.

As a result of this departure from the supernatural, most scientists believe that creationism is simply not an option. Mountains of evidence for creation could be gathered, but the explanation would still be deemed unscientific and impossible. People tend to see what they believe. If God is, creation is not problematic. If God is not, evolution is the only explanation we have. People's beliefs on the origin of the universe are directly tied to their beliefs about God, and these beliefs are not easily influenced.

There once was a man convinced that he was dead. His wife and kids were exasperated and kept telling him he wasn't. He continued to insist that he was, in fact, dead. The family took him to the doctor. After pouring over medical textbooks, watching videos, and demonstrations, the doctor had convinced the man that dead people do not bleed. The doctor then takes the man's hand and pokes the end of his finger with a needle. As the man began to bleed, he jumped up and exclaimed, "Oh my! Dead people *do* bleed!" Dedicated adherence to atheistic presuppositions, not scientific evidence, is our biggest enemy.

Current scientific philosophy rejects all supernatural explanations because they are not testable, repeatable, or falsifiable.

Ultimately, scientists deny any supernatural explanation because they refuse to acknowledge its existence. This leads some supposed Bible believers to seek naturalistic explanations for miraculous events in the Bible. You don't have to look far to find natural explanations of fire from heaven, the parting of the Red Sea, and the resurrection of Jesus. They have "a form of godliness but [are] denying its power" (II Timothy 3:5).

True religion and true science should lead to the same place. Truth, by definition, is a statement about reality and, therefore, cannot conflict with itself—it is mutually exclusive. Some well-meaning individuals taken captive by evolution yet determined to uphold the inerrancy of Scripture have tried to fit evolution into Genesis 1. This amalgamation, called theistic evolution, asserts that God used evolution as a means to create. Interpreting the seven days in Genesis 1 as seven "ages" allows the time necessary for evolution to take place. There is no room for the day-age theory in the language of Genesis 1, and it completely undermines the doctrine of sin and death. Death is an essential tenet of evolution through natural selection. If man was created through evolution, we are left with millions of years of death prior to sin entering the world. If the connection between sin and death is nonexistent, Christ's victory over sin does not lead to victory over death. Theistic evolution denies Christ of his power to save.

Paul, in I Corinthians 15, argued that if Christ has not been raised, his preaching is useless, as is the faith of the Corinthians. If Genesis 1 is not an accurate account of creation, our preaching as well as our faith is also in vain. Part of what makes the Bible so remarkable is the unity in history, message, and purpose of all 66 books written over a span of more than 1,400 years. The truths of the Bible are so interwoven that they hold

one another up. To undermine a portion of Scripture is to undermine the entirety of it.

I Peter 3:15 calls us to "be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." Our hope is tied to the truths of Genesis, and we are called to defend it. I am happy to report that it is not as difficult as it used to be. An increasing number of scientists are acknowledging the impossibility of evolution. Evidence pointing toward creation is being amassed at remarkable rates. Organizations like the Institute for Creation Research and Answers in Genesis are doing great work equipping the saints. By Darwin's own standards, evolution has failed as a theory—the fossil record is woefully inadequate and evolution cannot explain the intricacies of life.

I challenge you to equip yourselves. The issue of origins is of immense importance. The organizations mentioned previously as well as countless others have a plethora of resources available, many at no cost. Be prepared, but remember that this debate has more to do with the heart than the mind. In essence, we are arguing for the existence of God more than whether or not He created the universe. In our defense, we must care more for the salvation of their souls than the changing of their minds. This battle is to be fought more with prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit than the persuasiveness of words.

True science and true religion do lead to the same conclusion, a magnificent Creator.

Patenaude, first vice president for the FLY 2009 Board, is a youth leader at Peace Lutheran, Canal Winchester, Ohio. He presented this topic as an elective at FLY.



This is Bible camp

BY PASTOR CAL WILLARD

Forty young people between the ages 13 and 18 sit on rough pews in the wooden chapel as Pastor Nick Dyrud speaks on II Timothy 3. The theme, "A Different Life!" is from Romans 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." The final gusts of wind and rain rattles on the metal roof as tonight's storm passes by the worshipers in the chapel at Galilee Bible Camp at Lake Bronson, Minn.

The call to a different life is given: "repent and believe the good news." Two young boys come forward and receive Jesus as their Savior. Other young people, already saved, grapple with the reality that to be a Christian means living a life different from the world. Still others not yet saved wrestle with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

In the morning, Bible study leader Pastor Dennis Gray examines I John for more guidance from God on what it means to live a different life and how God gives us the power to do it. He speaks with good humor and asks some hard questions. There are some almost-hidden tears. In the evening, Pastor Leroy Peterson builds the campfire and members of the AFLBS Barnabas team lead the youths in praise and worship. Finally, as the sparks fly up toward the now-clear sky, the question is asked, "How is God working in your life?" There are no takers the first and second night, but six testimonies the third night. On Friday and Saturday night the testimonies and tears and hugs go on until the camp dean calls for a prayerful close to meet the 11 p.m. curfew.

This is Bible camp. Not soccer camp, not scout camp, not adventure camp. This is Bible camp, where we seek to come into a closer relationship with God through Bible study, prayer, songs of praise, hearing the Word preached, and yes, by fun times in organized recreation.

Serious planning for the camp begins in January. The dean prayerfully selects the camp theme and submits it to the Northwest Minnesota District pastors for approval. Calls begin to go out for an evening speaker, Bible study pastor, volunteer nurses, counselors, an AFLBS summer team, and camp cooks.

By April the staff and speakers are mostly confirmed. Prayers go out for the dean and camp board members as they try to fill the last few jobs. Lyle and Corrine Mattson burn the evening lamps making the last of the phone calls. By May we are ready. Now comes the real prayer effort.

Several years ago, things were getting out of hand at Bible camp. Discipline problems discouraged some of the staff and some rebellious behavior had to be dealt with. For the last several years, the Northwest District pastors and congregations begin earnest and daily prayer for the camp and the campers in May. "Oh God prepare the young hearts. Oh God prepare the staff and speakers. Oh God, bless this camp with spiritual life and safety."

How God has answered prayers! Each of these past many years Galilee Bible Camp has enjoyed a spirit of joy and tranquility, and peace. God be praised! And we thank God for raising up men like Joel Mattson (recreation leader) and women like Tina Erickson and April Rugland (camp nurses), and the AFLBS Barnabas team. God called them to bring the law and the gospel to a new generation. And so another generation will remember receiving their Savior at Bible camp. He calls us all to live a different life: A new and eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Willard serves the Roseau/Norland Parish in Roseau, Minn. He also serves as the Galilee Bible Camp dean.



FIRMLY PLANTED

More than just a bunch of statistics

BY KAYLA RUSSUM

It's hard to know what people want to hear about when they ask, "Hey, how was FLY?" It most often seems to be a statistics game, with questions about how many kids from your area attended, how many were at the camp all together, and it's always exciting to talk about how many kids put their faith in Jesus for the first time in their lives. You can get a lot of information from the statistics.

But everyone who was there knows how much deeper the FLY Convention really went. Before camp, many people are praying for the campers, the leadership, the speakers, and all the details. And on the way there everyone is filled with anticipation, hoping for great things. At camp, you experience days packed with all kinds of activities and emotions. The days seem long, but the time in Estes Park flies by. Before you know it, you're home spouting off statistics.

There is no easy way to explain how God answers prayer—how He moves in people's lives in that short amount of time. For many of us, the impact is greatest when we get home. That's when the lessons learned are applied. The theme this year was Firmly Planted from Psalm 1. Many of the kids from our group returned to church a week later and shared with our congregation about their desire to be firmly planted in the Word of God. Everyone said their lives were changed during their time at FLY. Teens spoke about what they learned in the amazing electives that were offered, what they gathered from the morning and evening speakers, and the way their hearts were touched by opening up and sharing life with one another.

Some had powerful testimonies of immediate results from being in the Word the week after we returned. Some returned to heart-breaking loss, with the death of a close family friend in our community. There were students who didn't say much about what it was like to come home because FLY was a safe place for them and home isn't. During the week of camp many of the kids in our group opened up and talked about their home life and the fighting with their parents, the divorces they were dealing with, the rape they were recovering from, the pressures they were facing, the burdens they were carrying ... the list goes on and on. FLY was important to them because they could get away and spend time with Jesus.

There is no statistic for stories like that, and every single person who attended FLY has a story. One thing is certain—every person who attended FLY 2009 had some kind of encounter with our living Savior. He was glorified through the speakers, the worship, the relationships that were built, and through the time spent in His Word. That is the greatest thing about FLY—there is no way to avoid Jesus. Everything that happens during those five days points to Him. FLY 2009 was a time to encounter Jesus.

Now we are home, back in the real world. We are just beginning to find out the impact of FLY. Now is the time to pray for our youths more than ever. How will we encounter Jesus now?

Russum, a youth worker at Elim Lutheran, Lake Stevens, Wash., is a member of the AFLC Youth Board.



All the world

A great task, and a greater commission

BY PASTOR RICHARD GUNDERSON

In the Great Commission, Jesus says to go into the *entire* world. Are we or aren't we carrying out this command?

In a featured survey titled, "GodSpace09: Surveying All He Loves" in *Mission Maker Magazine 2009* we are given a glimpse of the progress we've made. The article gives a diverse picture of the reached and unreached people groups in the world. There are 6.8 billion people in the world. But rather than focusing on population figures, which may be too difficult to grasp due to their enormity, let's look at percentages.

The first result featured in the survey is very disturbing: 67 percent of the world's population is non-Christian. That's two-thirds of the world's population. Of that 67 percent, 38 percent are evangelized non-Christians. That means Christians are seeking to evangelize just 38 percent of the world's population who declare themselves non-Christian. Praise God for those who have gone and are going to those people! But it is most sobering to learn that 29 percent of the world's population has no clue who Jesus is. They are the unevangelized non-Christians.

So are we reaching the entire world? Yes ... but no! While efforts continue to reach the non-Christian world, in fact, we are losing ground. The number of unreached, unevangelized people groups is growing.

You may say, "The task is far too great to be accomplished." Or, "It is far too difficult to even get into those countries." Or, "We have people right here at home who need the gospel." You might be right, but we are still told to go, disciple, baptize and teach the people in the *entire* world.

The survey succinctly and correctly states, "Great Commission Christians are not only saved, born-again believers of

Jesus Christ, but they also know the implications of Christ's Great Commission, accept its challenge, attempt to obey His command, and seek to influence the church to implement it."

The task is great, but the Commission is greater!

One of the goals of AFLC World Missions is to reach an unreached people group. Members of the World Missions Committee have considered the Madiga people of India (also called the Adi Andhra people). Upon further study by Pastor Kevin Olson, developer of the Ambassador Institute's distance education ministry, we have discovered that our churches in the Pilar district of India are located in the midst of this unreached people group! They are being reached by the most effective means, individuals of that community who are Christians. There is, according to Pastor Olson, "... an amendment that is going through the Andhra Pradesh government that would allow Christians to have the same governmental right as Hindus. Previously, those who converted to Christianity would lose many of their governmental rights and privileges. ... if this amendment passes ... there will be a great turning to Christ among the Adi Andhra peoples."

Will you pray for the passage of this amendment? Will you pray that Christians will reach out with the Great Commission message? Will you pray that God would raise up missionaries to go to the Adi Andhra peoples as co-laborers?

Gunderson, Cambridge, Minn., serves on the AFLC World Missions Board. He is also the assistant to AFLC President Pastor Elden Nelson.

School time

Bringing Jesus to my children

BY PRISCILLA HORN

I have often heard a mother say, "I'm honestly glad September is here so I can send my kids back to school!" I must admit, as well, that as a homeschool mom I have *wished* that I could say that! But then I recall why I began this home schooling journey nearly 12 years ago. More than anything else, I wanted to be faithful to bring Jesus to my children.

Jesus said in Mark 10: 14 and 16, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands upon them." Jesus loves children and He wants to bless them. By finding opportunities to bring Jesus to my children, I am helping them to experience this blessing.

How do I bring Jesus to my children? First, I bring them God's Word. The reading of God's Word and the telling of Bible stories began when they were very young, but as they matured I trained and encouraged them in having their own devotional time. We memorized the Word together as a family, hoping that my example would motivate them to treasure His Word. We used God's Word as a tool by which to measure the things that we read. Is this statement true according to Scripture? Is it right? Does it bring glory to God? In making their relationship with Jesus personal and practical, it enabled them to take Jesus with them throughout their lives.

Second, I bring them God's people. One special memory I have is of an elderly gentleman

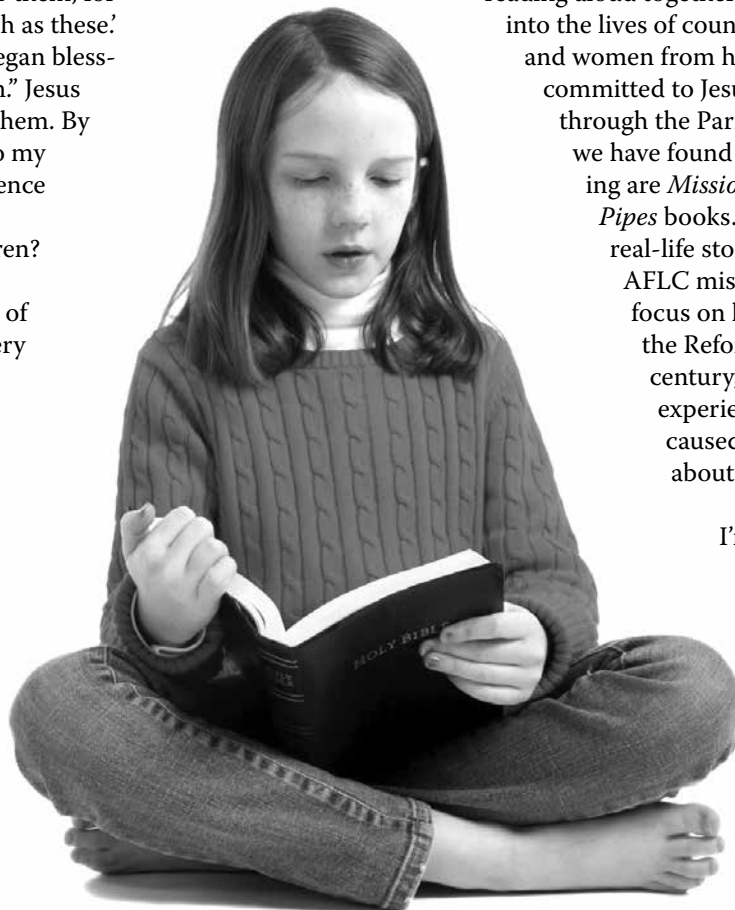
from the church my husband served in Astoria, Ore. When my son, Andrew, was only 3 and 4 years old, "Grandpa Chris" would come to our door and ask if he could take him for a walk. They would walk and talk together along the railroad tracks. Andrew saw a kind, gentle, caring man of God in action. There are many like Chris in the places that we have lived, men and women who can inspire our children to walk with Jesus.

A favorite homeschool activity for us has been reading aloud together. In this way, we have entered into the lives of countless numbers of godly men and women from history who have been wholly committed to Jesus. Two resources available through the Parish Education Department that we have found delightful as well as challenging are *Missionary Chronicles* and the *Mr. Pipes* books. *Missionary Chronicles* shares real-life stories from the lives of our own AFLC missionaries. The *Mr. Pipes* books focus on hymn writers from the time of the Reformation and on into the 19th century, sharing the hardships and experiences in their lives that have caused them to write amazing hymns about our faithful God.

September is here again and I'm very much aware of the need my children have for Jesus.

The urgency to be faithful to this need still speaks to my heart. And so while other mothers may be sending their children off to school, let's remember to bring Him home, also.

Horn is a member of Emmanuel and Hauge Lutheran, Kenyon, Minn.



Faith Free Lutheran celebrates 100 years

Members and friends of Faith Free Lutheran, Minneapolis, Minn., will celebrate the centennial anniversary of the congregation in October. The first service was held Oct. 20, 1909, in a chapel at 41st Street and Pillsbury Avenue as a mission outreach of the Lutheran Free Church. Pastor Claus Morgan conducted the worship. Professors and students from Augsburg College assisted.

The congregation was organized as Pillsbury Avenue Lutheran Church in June 1911. Eventually, a basement church was built on the corner lot at 44th Street West and Pillsbury Avenue, the congregation's present location. It was dedicated in 1918. The congregation was renamed Rosedale Lutheran Church as the neighborhood was then known. The current building was added in the early 1920s. Over the years, several pastors served the congregation. One in particular, Pastor James Gronseth, had a long ministry (nearly five decades), including a popular radio broadcast.

At first, primarily Norwegian Lutherans comprised the membership. Gradually, as the neighborhood changed, the congregation became more diverse. When the Lutheran Free Church joined the American Lutheran Church (later becoming the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), several congregations decided to form the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations in 1962. Rosedale Lutheran joined this affiliation in time.

When another AFLC congregation in Minneapolis (Faith Free Lutheran) realized it could not maintain its building, the members decided to merge with Rosedale Lutheran. A vote was taken to relocate their programs but retain their name, since Rosedale no longer described the neighborhood. Pastor Ralph Rokke, who was shepherding both flocks, continued as the pastor for the joint congregation. This took place in the 1980s.

A parsonage had been attached to the church early on so that the pastor's family would have a place to live. In recent decades, it became an apartment for married students (several from foreign countries) of the Free Lutheran Seminary in Plymouth. It is now being remodeled for office and meeting spaces.

A special service of thanksgiving will be offered at 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 25. Pastor Robert Lee, former president of the AFLC, will preach the sermon. Pastor Lester Dahlen, a 92-year-old son of



the congregation now retired from mission work, will also bring greetings. A fellowship dinner will be served after the service. All are invited to join the celebration. Those with personal ties to the congregation are encouraged to send remembrances to be included in a memory book of the occasion. Letters may be sent to the church at 140 West 44th St., Minneapolis, MN 55409. E-mails may be sent to Pastor Greg Lenz at gregoryplenz@msn.com.

AFLC congregations mark anniversaries with celebratory worship services

Members of Slim Buttes Free Lutheran Church, Reva, S.D., will celebrate the congregation's centennial anniversary on Sept. 27. Sunday school will begin at 10 a.m., worship service at 11 a.m., followed by dinner and a 2:30 p.m. service with Pastor Elden Nelson, president of the AFLC, as the speaker. All are invited.

Members of Hauge Lutheran, Kenyon, Minn., will celebrate the congregation's 150th anniversary on Sept. 20 with a service at 10:30 a.m. Pastor Ken Moland, who served the congregation from 1970 to '75, will speak with the theme, "From Generation to Generation, We Will Recount Thy Praise." All are welcome.

Members of Skrefsrud Lutheran, Beresford, S.D., will celebrate the congregation's centennial on Sept. 13.

Members of St. Olaf Lutheran, Chamberlain, S.D., and Pukwana Lutheran, Pukwana, S.D., will celebrate the parish's 100th anniversary on Sept. 27 with Pastor Elden Nelson as special guest speaker.



Living Word building complete

Members of Living Word Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D., held their first service in the newly-constructed church building on Aug. 9. A grand opening and dedication service has been scheduled for September 12-13. The multipurpose sanctuary, with about 18,800 square feet, holds about 400. The building also has a large narthex/entry (above) and education space. Living Word Free Lutheran began in October 2002 as a plant from Abiding Savior Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls. The congregation is dedicated to proclaiming the living Word and serving the living God in southwest Sioux Falls. For more information on the congregation, visit the church Web site at livingwordfreelutheran.org.



Quanbeck, Forness installed at Glyndon

Pastors Lloyd Quanbeck (second from right) and Seth Forness (center) were installed June 14 at Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glyndon, Minn., with Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president, officiating.



Stockman installed at Madison, S.D.

Pastor Tony Stockman (above, center) was installed as pastor of Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Madison, S.D., on July 26 by AFLC Home Missions Director Pastor Paul Nash. Pictured at right are Pastor Tony and Rita Stockman.



AFLC memorials: July

All funds

Harry Aslagson

AFLBS

Bob & Dorothy Grinsing
Grant Christopherson (3)
Lois Hautamaki
Randy Strand

AFLTS

Hilda Dickel
Paul Riedesel
Robert Stanke

Distance Education

Ruth Solberg

Evangelism

Glen Doe
Harold Kiefert

Home Missions

Beulah Nelson

Parish Education

Glen Doe
Grant Christopherson
Pastor John Strand

Vision

Lois Hautamaki
Jack Leedahl

World Missions

Noel Lofthus
Gordon Olson
... in honor of

AFLTS

Virgel Asland

People and Places

Members of the AFLC Coordinating Committee have chosen the theme for the **2010 annual conference** from Nehemiah 8:10b, "The Joy of the Lord is my Strength." The conference will convene June 15-18 at the campus of the AFLC schools in Plymouth, Minn.

Mavis Tenneboe, the wife of the late Norman Tenneboe, an AFLC pastor, died July 30. Her service was at Calvary Free Lutheran, Arlington, S.D.

Pastor Palmer Sevig, 82, a former AFLC pastor, died July 10 at Willmar, Minn. He was married to Shirley Lee, who preceded him in death. He served Calvary Free Lutheran, Wallace, S.D. The funeral service was July 17 at Evangelical Free Church of Willmar.

An official count has been reached on those who attended the annual conference of the AFLC in June at Fergus Falls, Minn. Registered attendees numbered 558.

Pastor Mark Richardson was installed Aug. 9 at Bethany Free Lutheran, Abercrombie, N.D. Pastor Elden Nelson, president of the AFLC, officiated.

Licensed Pastor Brian Ricke was installed Sept. 6 at Calvary Free Lutheran, Arlington, S.D., by Pastor Elden Nelson.

Pastor Steve Carlson will be installed at Ruthfred Evangelical Free Lutheran, Bethel Park, Pa., on Sept. 13 by Pastor Elden Nelson.

Members of **King of Glory Free Lutheran**, Eden Prairie, Minn., celebrated the congregation's 40th anniversary on Aug. 16.

Ben Webb has accepted a call to serve as the director of youth and children's ministry at Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn.



More than 70 people registered and attended the 2009 Summer Institute of Theology held Aug. 3-7 on the campus of the AFLC Schools, Plymouth, Minn.

Upcoming retreats at the ARC

Classics Retreat

Sept. 18-20

Led by AFLC President Pastor Elden and Faith Nelson and Pastor John and Barb Skeie. If you are age 55 or older, join us for this time of relaxation, studying God's Word and spending time with friends. Extra activities include a hayride, scenic boat tour, etc.

Chosen Child Conference

Nov. 6-8

A time of renewal for adoptive

families, featuring sessions led by Beth Thomas, Pastor Jerry and Kristi Nelson and Pastor Paul and Laurie Nash.

Silent Prayer Retreat

Dec. 4-6

Ask your church for our brochures/bulletin inserts or for more information on these events, visit the ARC's Web site at www.arc-aflc.org, or call (800) 294-2877. Scholarships are available.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1- July 31, 2009

| FUND | TOTAL (subsidy) | REC'D IN JULY | TOTAL REC'D TO DATE | % TOTAL |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|---------|
| General Fund | \$434,087 | \$27,684 | \$186,901 | 43 |
| Evangelism | 112,642 | 10,310 | 52,914 | 47 |
| Youth Ministries | 78,909 | 11,017 | 53,586 | 68 |
| Parish Education | 135,207 | 7,359 | 61,783 | 46 |
| Seminary | 244,110 | 13,477 | 105,979 | 43 |
| Bible School | 398,910 | 37,779 | 232,353 | 58 |
| Home Missions | 375,908 | 24,302 | 181,361 | 48 |
| World Missions | 327,017 | 17,075 | 137,185 | 42 |
| Personal Support | 435,500 | 34,022 | 230,072 | 53 |
| TOTALS | \$2,542,290 | \$183,025 | \$1,242,134 | 49 |
| TOTALS 2008 | \$2,307,821 | \$216,715 | \$1,305,367 | 57 |

Goal 58%

These are the Annual Conference-approved budgets but do not reflect all the financial needs of the departments. Contact the individual departments for further information.

A student for a week

I was supposed to be a role model and example at the Free Lutheran Youth national convention as I brought a group of youths from our congregation to Estes Park, Colo. Hopefully, by the grace of God, I was to some extent, but I was also a student for the week, learning from the example of many of the youths who were there.

The apostle Paul instructed his son in the faith, Timothy: “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity” (I Timothy 4:12,



Pastor Craig Johnson

NIV). Many good examples were set July 6-10 in the Rocky Mountains.

At the conclusion of his message at one evening service, Pastor Tom Brock invited students to come to one of the microphones and ask him a Bible question. Students quickly lined up and filled the available time with questions. The nature of the questions made clear the students had been reading the Bible and thinking about what it says. They asked good, serious questions like: Can you lose your faith? How did the inspiration of Scripture work? Are there verses that were relevant to the original culture and not relevant today? What is the relationship between predestination and our responsibility?

Too often adults stop asking questions. We think we have all the answers. It would be wise of us to be lifelong students, always asking questions with a longing to grow.

I appreciated examples of honesty that were set by students. A lot of them have suffered as their parents have gotten divorced. Some are heartbroken over a loved one who abuses alcohol or other drugs. Some have known friends who committed suicide or been tempted to do it themselves.

Some shared testimonies where they pulled back the curtain and put their hearts out on display for people to see. That kind of refreshing honesty can help the one who is hurting to heal and be an encouragement for others who are facing similar challenges.

People at FLY were an example in their desire to be there. For most AFLC congregations it is a long and expensive journey to get to Estes Park. Some spend many hours sitting on a bus. Others work hard throughout the year to raise money for plane tickets. For most of us, it is not convenient to go to the Rockies, but people come.

This year 1,139 students came to FLY and 277 people served as counselors. There were 364 other adults present, including the staff. Also in attendance were 84 children for a total of 1,864.

People took time off work, they paid the price, they put up with the hassles of travel, because they were convinced: this is important and I need to be there. They believed it was going to be good for them, their families and their congregations.

I wish more people had that same kind of attitude toward our annual conferences. We’ve thought conferences need to be centrally located and the schedule such so that less people have to take time off work to attend. FLY conventions aren’t either of those things and yet, not only the youth, but also more adults and children attend the conventions than our annual conferences. For many people FLY conventions are something they just would not think of missing. For the health of our church body

Too often adults stop asking questions. We think we have all the answers. It would be wise of us to be lifelong students, always asking questions with a longing to grow.

we should prayerfully consider what can be done to encourage more to see annual conferences as can’t-miss events.

I left the Rockies encouraged and hopeful about the future of our congregations. The students of today are setting good examples in their commitment to God’s Word, their passion for worship, their love for one another, their willingness to serve and their desire to grow closer to Christ. God has begun a good work and He has promised to “carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6). I look forward to seeing the wonderful ways God is going to use this next generation in His service.

something to share

Where is Jesus?

BY KANDY BAUDER

I try to use our family's daily situations as learning opportunities for my children. Often I learn something from my children as I teach them about God and His love for each one of us. Since we spend a lot of time in the car driving to various activities, I use this time where my children's attention isn't distracted by toys and television to have "important" discussions. We also use our car time as a time of prayer and thanksgiving to God. Every morning as I drive to school, the children and I spend time in prayer in preparation for the day.

Recently, Analiese asked me to pray in the car. I used the opportunity to encourage her to pray. Typically she responds, "I don't know the words." So we do a prayer that she repeats after me. However, on this particular occasion, she simply folded her hands and started to pray.

"Dear Jesus," Analiese said, "Thank you for living in our hearts. That way we always know where to find You. In God's name I pray, Amen."

I got teary eyed as I was driving. How can the words of a child be so profound yet so simple?

During difficult situations people often ask, "Where is Jesus?" I am also guilty of asking this question when it is hard if not impossible to see the good in a situation.

Our world and lives encounter tragedy, illness, natural

disasters, physical disabilities and other types of sadness on a daily basis. Sometimes it is easy to get overwhelmed and maybe even a little depressed by hardships that we are facing. Even Christians struggle with situations that cause one to stop and ask, "Where is God or Jesus in this situation?" Many people spend hours, days and sometimes even years angry or frustrated with God, using the excuse that they cannot find Him. And here, a 3-year-old little girl reminded me just exactly where I can find Jesus.

I love the word picture that Analiese painted when she prayed and thanked Jesus for living in our hearts. She is right when she says that we can always know where to find Jesus.

Do you know where to find Jesus? I love the word picture that Analiese painted when she prayed and thanked Jesus for living in our hearts. She is right when she says that we can always know where to find Jesus. When we turn our lives over to God and accept Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for our sins, we, too, have Jesus in our hearts. The Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 31:6, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for

the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you."

The innocent and accurate words of a prayer offered to God by my daughter reminded me that Jesus is right here.

Bauder is a member of Living Word Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D. Reprinted with permission by Living Stone News (livingstone-news.com).