

THE LUTHERAN 

SEPTEMBER 2012

AMBASSADOR

YOUTH

Hungering and thirsting

BY RACHELLE KLEMMER

It is said North America is a land of plenty, but recently youth—as well as adults—have been captivated by *The Hunger Games*. In this story, the young protagonist hunts for a living in a poor geographical district and is then forced by the wealthy dystopian government to fight other kids for limited resources. Her mind is constantly on food and hunger.

In society in general, food metaphors are everywhere. For instance, the United States is generally described as a “consumerist” culture getting its satisfaction from meaningless things.

In more extreme examples, people who abuse, exploit or bully others are referred to as “predators,” “parasites,” or “sharks.” Victims on the receiving end are “prey” or “fodder” and may describe their experiences as being “eaten alive.” Pop culture is filled with references to blood-sucking vampires and brain-eating zombies. Even Satan is described as “a roaring lion ... seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Even in a church context, sadly, people may look for a place to be spiritually fed only to discover they themselves are the ones on the menu—for spiritual abusers and “inwardly ... ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

When reading passages in Scripture, one often hears about the need to take it in its context—the gritty reality of life in the ancient Mediterranean world, not just life applications for people in the present day Western Church. One doesn’t have to be a historian to realize food was harder to acquire and starvation was a



much more real threat in the original setting.

So when Scripture refers to hunger—either literal or metaphorical—it is not about craving steak over chicken, or eating lunch a couple hours later than usual. To the original audiences of the Gospels, references to hunger and food—even in the metaphorical sense—were not some kind of floaty spiritual thing, but a powerful, viscerally felt need and basic requirement for survival.

When the Scriptures speak of metaphorical hunger, they are in no way diminishing literal, physical hunger. In fact, these concerns should go hand-in-hand (James 2:15-17).

Our incarnate Savior is not just a pale-skinned cartoon figure flitting about in the clouds, giving vague airy encouragement and being irrelevant to the physical world. He is true God and true man, sustaining us through His real body and blood in, with and under the bread and wine.

But Jesus, when faced with a hungry crowd of thousands and only a few loaves and fishes, did not act like *The Hunger Games’* capitol officials and say, “May the odds be ever in your favor.” He freely satisfied their hunger, and in other instances proclaimed that He is “the bread of life” (John 6:35) and will fill those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6). Everyone who participates gets a trophy they didn’t earn—and that is part of the scandal of grace.

Klemmer is from Wadena, Minn., and attends Zion Free Lutheran Church.

September 2012 >> THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR vol. 50, no. 9

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The Lutheran Ambassador (USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413) is published monthly by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. AFLC headquarters and publications office is at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441. Phone (763) 545-5631; fax 763-545-0079.

For subscription changes and information: The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441. 763-545-5631 or e-mail at luthamb@aflc.org.

Subscription rates:
\$19 a year, Group Rate, U.S.
\$20 a year, Individual, U.S.
\$22 a year, International
Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, MN, and additional mailing office.

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

The arrogance of age must submit to be taught by youth.

—Edmund Burke

The devil and temptations also do give occasion unto us somewhat to learn and understand the Scriptures by experience and practice. Without trials and temptations we should never understand anything thereof; no, not although we diligently read and heard the same. The Holy Spirit must be the only master and tutor to teach us therein, and let youth and scholars not be ashamed to learn of this tutor. When I find myself in temptation, then I quickly lay hold and fasten on some text in the Bible which Christ Jesus layeth before me, namely, that he died for me, from whence I have and receive comfort.

—Martin Luther

When I was young, I was sure of many things; now there are only two things of which I am sure: one is, that I am a miserable sinner; and the other, that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour. He is well-taught who learns these two lessons.

—John Newton

When we are out of sympathy with the young, then I think that our work in this world is over.

—George MacDonald

To fall in love with God is the greatest romance; to seek Him the greatest adventure; to find Him, the greatest achievement.

—Augustine of Hippo





By Daniel Prachar
Christian Free Lutheran
Wheatland, Iowa

TRAINING FOR MINISTRY

I attended FLY Beyond at the Association Retreat Center July 16-20. Those five days have had a great impact on both my life and my faith. Through the speakers at FLY Beyond, God strengthened my relationship with Him.

Monday night was the first in a series of sessions taught by Pastor Jason Holt. The title of this series was "Ministry Training." When I first read the title, I thought it was going to be another session on how to do street evangelism or something similar. But that's not what it was. It was different. It was more important to my ministry. Instead, Pastor Holt discussed a few verses about being imitators of God, teaching others, and guiding God's sheep. He also asked a few questions about where we want God to work in our lives and why.

The question that really got the wheels turning in my head was this: "When you think of being one imitated for your faith in Jesus, what is your first thought?" My first thought was that my words are a ministry, and so is how I carry out my faith in the way I live. If someone is imitating me for my faith, that is an open door for me to show them who they truly should be imitating instead of me.

Over the next two days Pastor Holt talked about studying God's Word and praying with expectancy. On day two he talked about digging deep into the Word, studying it thoroughly, and making it the focus of my life. On day three he talked about prayer and how we should be persistent in our prayers and not lose heart. This affirmed for me how prayer and studying God's Word go hand in hand. Through Scripture and prayer, God works in many ways in my life and in others' lives as part of my ministry.

On the last day of the series Pastor Holt talked about sharing the gospel. The passage he used was Acts 8:26-35, which is the story of Philip ministering to the Ethiopian eunuch. This passage and teaching had the biggest impact on me from the whole week. Philip without question and without hesitation followed God without knowing where he was going or how his needs would be met. Out of faith he followed Christ. This convicted me of the many times I have failed to follow Christ out of faith. One of the many lessons I learned at FLY Beyond was that sometimes all it takes is faith and the willingness to follow God wherever He may lead me.

After the sessions I came away with a few things that I learned: the power of my relationship with Christ, how studying the Bible is my foundation, the power of prayer, and serving God through faith. FLY Beyond was a wonderful experience for me and I would highly recommend it to anyone. It's an experience that will change your life for the better if you let it.

Thank you to all of those who made it possible to have FLY Beyond this year.

See more
pictures from
FLY Beyond
on page 20.

THE RELIABILITY OF SCRIPTURE

In I Peter 3:15, Paul tells Christians, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” This commission is important when it comes to evangelism and apologetics. During the week of FLY Beyond, Pastor Jason Gudim helped students and listeners fulfill this commission.

During four morning sessions, students were taught about the reliability of Scripture, with a particular emphasis on the trustworthiness of the New Testament. Pastor Gudim presented some very interesting, and even surprising facts that support the hope that Christians already have in their faith.

There are multiple tests to put ancient manuscripts through to check their reliability. Naturally, most Christians are curious about how our doctrine stacks up. When put to the same tests that all other ancient manuscripts are put through, the New Testament passes with flying colors.

Three questions that must be asked when checking for manuscript integrity are:

- How many ancient manuscripts have been found?
- How early are the manuscripts?
- How accurate are the manuscripts?

The number of New Testament manuscripts that have been discovered is very compelling, especially when it is compared to the number of manuscripts of other famous ancient documents. FLY Beyond students found out that seven manuscripts of Plato’s writings have been discovered, and ten manuscripts of Caesar’s writings have been discovered. The most numerous amount of writing by one ancient secular author were the writings of Homer, who wrote the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. A whopping 643 manuscripts of Homer’s writings have been discovered. Compared to the average amount of ancient manuscripts—10—this is very impressive. Not so much, though, when this number is compared to the amount of New Testament manuscripts discovered—24,663.

The next question asks, how early are the manuscripts? Or, what amount of time passed between the writing of the autograph and the date of the earliest known manuscript? The New Testament manuscripts once again prove to be extremely impressive. The earliest manuscripts of Herodotus’ writings were written 1,350 years after the original copy was written. The earliest known manuscript of the New Testament was written 15 years after the original copy. Herodotus is known as “The Father of History,” and he definitely deserves this title, but many FLY Beyond students started to wonder at this point in the lessons why Herodotus’ writings are considered to be more scientific than the New Testament.

The last question to research when testing for manuscript integrity asks about distortion rate. Other holy books, such as the Hindu *Mahabharata*, are not very accurate. The *Mahabharata* is 10 percent distorted. That is, 10 percent of the original meaning is lost. The New Testament, though, has a distortion rate of 1/5 of 1 percent, or .2 percent. This supports the beliefs of those who claim the Bible is inerrant. It’s important to note that none of the distortion has any affect on Christian theology.

As a student at FLY Beyond, I found Pastor Gudim’s sessions very interesting. They upheld and encouraged my faith. The truths we learned will help us give a reason for the hope that we have.



By Abrie Ades
Emmanuel Lutheran
Kenyon, Minn.





By Pastor Eric Rasmussen
Calvary Free Lutheran
Fergus Falls, Minn.

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST IN ME

The popularity of Sherlock Holmes has seen a spike in the last few years with two major motion pictures, a BBC series and a new series scheduled to start this fall on CBS. It seems everybody loves a good mystery. Sherlock Holmes is famous for solving mysteries using deductive reasoning. He could deduce some fact from every little piece of evidence and then solve the mystery at hand. I wonder if Sherlock Holmes could solve the mystery presented in the Book of Colossians.

“Mystery” is one of the secondary themes of the Book of Colossians. The apostle Paul liked to use this word “mystery” to describe the things of God—I counted 21 times that it is used in Paul’s letters. Paul, through the inspiration of the Spirit, uses this word to refer to speaking in tongues and our resurrection. However, the majority of the time Paul uses the word “mystery” to refer to the person and work of Christ.

The Book of Colossians presents this mystery of Christ in similar fashion to Paul’s other writings, but Colossians is more intently focused on who Christ is and what He has done. The theme of the entire Book of Colossians is the supremacy of Christ. Jesus Christ is a mystery that we cannot fully understand on this side of eternity.

Colossians 1:15-20 gives us a taste of the mystery of Jesus. Jesus’ dual nature of full deity and full humanity is a big part of this mystery (Colossians 1:15).

- We cannot fully comprehend how Jesus could be the creator of the universe (1:15-16).

- We cannot understand completely how he holds all things together in our universe (1:17).
- We cannot totally grasp Jesus’ relationship to His Bride, the Church (1:18).
- It is very difficult to appreciate the death of Christ and all that His death means for us (1:18).
- Finally, it is hard to get a handle on the concrete objective facts of forgiveness, grace, and salvation (etc.) that were accomplished by Jesus’ death on the cross (1:19-20).

But the hardest part of the mystery for me to personally comprehend is the mystery of Christ in me. “... God chose to make known ... this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27, ESV). I believe I can partially grasp some of the objective facts of who Christ is, but I cannot really understand the subjective, personal nature of what Christ has done.

The Book of Colossians says that apart from Christ, you and I are “alienated and hostile” toward God (1:21, ESV). It says we were “dead” in our sins (2:13). I am reminded of the horrifying truth of these facts on a daily basis. How could Christ love me, die for me, and desire to have a relationship with me? If we go to Sherlock Holmes’ toolbox of deduction and reason, I’m afraid we come up empty. I praise God that He has chosen to reveal to us, at least partially, the mystery of Christ in His Word.





By Dan Antal
Victory Free Lutheran
Park River, N.D.

VOCATION: IT'S WHAT YOU DO

"God doesn't need your good works, but your neighbor does"
(*Luther on Vocation*, Gustaf Wingren).

One of the great contributions of the Reformation is the Lutheran doctrine of *vocation*, which puts good works and love toward your neighbor in the proper context. Vocation (literally, "calling") has to do with loving our neighbors in the various stations we have in life.

Naturally, vocation has a lot to do with the law (God's commands of what we should or should not do). The law defines the duties of our vocations, but the place to start is actually with the gospel. When we start with the gospel, the doctrine of vocation becomes a very freeing doctrine. By His perfect life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has fulfilled the law and set us free from it. Remember, "God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does."

Some of us are parents, some are grandparents, and all of us are, or have been, children. Some of us are employers, and some are employees. Some of us are pastors, and some are parishioners. Many of us are siblings, and all of us are friends to someone. Some of us are public servants, and all are citizens. There are also farmers, factory workers, bankers, teachers, truck drivers, nurses, construction workers, Sunday school teachers, etc. All of these are callings from God. Every station of life we find ourselves in (so long as it is not inherently

evil) contains a calling from God to love our neighbors as ourselves.

In all of these, God is working behind the scenes, in the Church and in the world, to provide for our spiritual and physical needs. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights ..." (James 1:17). On the outside, some aspects of life look like nothing more than economics, government, and society, but God is hidden in all them to provide us with our daily needs and to use us to provide good gifts to others.

According to Martin Luther, God Himself milks the cows through the milkmaid. God is really the one feeding us through the economic system of agriculture, so you can say, "God fed me." When you go to the doctor and come away healed, you can say, "God healed me." Through the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments (the vocation of your pastor), God is forgiving your sins. It may look like your pastor is doing these things, but God is the one forgiving your sins through him.

Even though our sin constantly taints our vocations, and we can often see the effects, God is providentially working to bring good out of them and accomplish His purpose. From farmers, to doctors, to pastors, and everything in between, God is giving us food, healing, forgiveness, and every good gift.

Thank God for mangos

BY SETH SKOGERBOE

Haiti. I'm sprawled on a thin air mattress in the cool of night, atop a concrete roof, looking at the sky. It's bigger than usual. I'm higher than most of the trees. Far away, I can see a mountain covered in hovels, each with a lantern or bulb of some sort shining. They are not nearly bright enough to put out the stars, like the lights back in the U.S.

The rainy season is past, and the humidity stays low. Precipitation is rare, but lightning storms are common. One such storm occurs tonight, and fire-fingers play the clouds like piano keys above me. Their light reveals the dark below—tents and broken buildings, windows cracked by the earth's shifting. The people upon it, at 4:35 p.m. on an evening not long enough ago to be forgotten, had their solidity picked up and shaken like a child's blanket. A blan-

ket that, when finally settled, could never look the same.

But in the midst of brokenness, I found beauty. In a cement orphanage, in the shade of a mango tree, lives Malu, a boy who would nip at my arm with his teeth if I wasn't careful, looked extremely tired, and needed Jesus' love because *he didn't have anything else*. Or Gsinze, with the squeaky voice that stuck in my ears like his hands did around my waist.

Then there are the community woman's eyes as we gave her a mango tree—and, consequently, shade, food, and hope that her children might live to go to school. Possibly with mangos in their lunch bags. (Do Haitians pack lunch bags?) Or a seven-toothed smile from a Haitian worker at the orphanage. And soccer goals spray painted on cinder block walls.

Lying on that roof, watching stars twinkle (Did you know that stars actually twinkle? They really do. The Haitian ones, at least.) and lightning streak the sky, drowning out the barking of street dogs with the loudest light I've ever seen, I was amazed. Not at the deprivation, as I'd expected when I left, but by the hope that filled my mind like the lightning did the sky above.

I did not question God for the earthquake, or the broken buildings and people left in its wake. I thanked Him for crooked smiles, shaved parent-less heads, and mangos. Thank God for mangos.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17 ESV).

Skogerboe, from Plymouth, Minn., is a member of Living Hope Church, St. Michael, Minn.



They need our love

BY CORY ALT

The children at the orphanage were so excited when they heard the bus pull up. We were mobbed when we stepped through the gate. They needed our love so we just loved them for the afternoon by holding them, playing games, and teaching each other words in our own languages. ...

[One] morning we went to where the new orphanage is being built. The first day we passed buckets of concrete to help finish the top layer of one section of the wall that goes around the orphanage. We also carried rocks for the base of the wall. Then we met and played with some of the kids from the surrounding community. Later in the week we shared a vacation Bible school with those kids. Two kids accepted God into their lives ...

The next day we invited the community to the new church that will be built on the site of the new orphanage, offered to pray with and for them, and planted a tree in their yard as a gift. Thirteen people we visited accepted God into their lives that day. It was a great experience to see what God does in people's lives.

[On] our last day at the worksite, we passed rocks and buckets of concrete along our "bucket line" again. It was amazing what so many people can do in such little time. At the end of our day we passed out shoes which we had brought with us as donations to the children and also the Haitian workers who are also working on the orphanage. ...

The sad part came when we had to say goodbye to the children we had grown to love at the orphanage. I think everyone in the group shed a tear that afternoon. We prayed for each other before we left.

Alt is a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran in Beulah, N.D.

Two churches. Two teams. Eight days. Here's a brief look at their short-term mission trip experience in Haiti. Among their many goals for the trip, the teams from Living Hope Church in St. Michael, Minn., and Prince of Peace Lutheran in Beulah, N.D., wanted to spend time playing with orphans, help build a wall, host a vacation Bible school, and plant trees. They came away changed by those they met and the God they serve, who continues to work in lives ravaged by an earthquake more than two and a half years ago.

Photos by Seth Skogerboe



LIVING OUT THE GOSPEL

BY KATHY OSTHUS

As the youth director at Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran in Lakeville, Minn., I had been discussing the possibility of a mission trip exchange with Matt Rienients, youth director at Zion Free Lutheran in Tioga, N.D., since last year. The idea was that we would visit each other's churches and take part in ministry there. As our plans progressed and summer drew near, we discovered that both of our congregations had planned week-long vacation Bible school events back to back. That presented us with the opportunity to take two consecutive weeks to do a joint mission trip.

For the first week, July 16-20, six members of the youth group from Zion Free Lutheran traveled to Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran to take part in our VBS. The following week, July 23-27, six members of the youth group from Minnesota Valley went up to Zion to help out with their VBS.

"I get the privilege, as a youth pastor, of being used to disciple teens into a lasting faith with Christ," said Rienients. "As a part of that, I see the need to put them into ministry. They need to *be* the gospel to their neighbors, and these missions opportunities were a good way for us to teach what it means to put others ahead of yourself. I figure if Jesus sent out His disciples when they were still students of His, why shouldn't I? I think He knew what He was doing. These missions opportunities are a part of how we seek to see our teens grow in maturity in Christ. By the way, they were successful!"

Through both weeks of VBS our two groups had many chances to work hard and laugh hard together, to have fun and to be challenged. Our ministries were not limited to the VBS programs; we also took part in local area ministries such as helping out with a kids' club and preparing lunch at the Marie Sandvik Center in Minneapolis, listening to testimonies of God's grace and healing at the New Hope Center in Minneapolis, and taking part with other churches to do flood cleanup in Minot, N.D. It was such a blessing for each group to see how another church in another community had its own unique way of doing ministry, and also to have the chance to take part in the ministry of the larger Body of Christ.

This experience gave us new connections with fellow Christians seeking to serve the Lord and spread the gospel. It also served as a reminder that each church's own community is always a mission field. A Christian does not have to travel thousands of miles, or even hundreds of miles to be a witness for our Savior.

Here's some thoughts from one of our students, Jenni Redepenning:

Vacation Bible school is always fun and awesome. I was very surprised at how different VBS was in Tioga than at Minnesota Valley. Even though VBS is aimed toward little kids, I always find myself learning new things.

Monday was probably my favorite day because we got to go to Minot, N.D., to help clean up from the recent flood. Just knowing that I was able to help someone who couldn't do the work herself made me work harder. The woman whose house we worked at asked us to dig up an old rose bush. The roots were very deep and the women said, "This one's going to be a headache." Of course, being my regular self, I took that as a challenge, and with the help of my friends

Scott, Michael, Emily, and Kelsey, we got the bush out of the ground with time to spare! It was a great feeling.

As for the future? We'll have to see. Perhaps we will continue doing this exchange and build a stronger bond between these two churches and communities. Maybe this will be an opportunity for our groups to multiply ministry by each team repeating the exchange with a new youth group in the years to come (i.e., next year four churches would be involved, the next year eight, etc ...). Maybe God has something totally different planned. We're looking forward to finding out.

Osthus is the youth director at Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran, Lakeville, Minn.





Changes and
challenges
for today's
Bible camps

Happy campers

By Pat Flanders



It's

the summer of 1979. Jimmy Carter is president of the United States. Gasoline is 86 cents per gallon. A first class stamp costs 15 cents. Cassettes are the medium for saving sound to play later. Computers used by businesses to help manage information take up whole floors of buildings. Phone receivers have cords attached to them. Cell phones and the internet are just dreams. This is also the time when the AFLC approves the purchase of a de-commissioned Air Force radar base near Osceola, Wis., to become a Bible camp and retreat center ministry.

Fast forward 33 years to 2012. Gas is \$3.50 per gallon and stamps costs 45 cents. DVDs and compact discs hold our information—audio, video, etc. That computer from 1979 now fits easily in a shirt pocket. Cell and satellite phones allow us to speak to people around the world, and software—like Skype—allow us to

see the person we're talking to, whether near or far. And that camp the AFLC established—the Association Retreat Center (ARC)—now offers a full-service camping ministry.

Just as the conveniences of the world have changed and been dramatically influenced by technology, so has the Christian camp experience. "Going to camp" doesn't necessarily mean "roughing it." Along with the vast variety of choices is the dependence upon technology. In 1979, worshipers were given paper handouts or maybe they read the music on an overhead projector. Today, wireless internet availability for group and personal use is a frequent expectation. Speakers and youth leaders rely on the capability to show a YouTube or DVD video to solidify a point or grab attention. Technology has become a major player in today's worship and meeting times.

The technology boom has created an exponential increase in access to information through various media. This media growth has spawned an increasing desire to be entertained and made comfortable. Thus, even Bible camps are not exempt from needing to provide more attractive recreation options for our high-energy culture.

When the ARC was founded, air conditioning wasn't available. But the current expectation for approximately 90 percent of our summer retreat inquiries is that air conditioning will be provided.

It is a challenge to attract groups and meet their expectations for technology, recreation and accommodations. It is a balancing act for all ministries—not just Bible camps—to provide optimal services (including updated facilities) while keeping costs affordable. Even with detailed budgets and well-thought-out plans, Christian camps can be and are significantly affected by a downturn in the economy. Added competition in the camping market exacerbates the challenge. There are academic camps, art camps, music camps, sports camps, leadership camps ... and the list goes on. There are camps for just about any activity you can conceive, all vying for the same groups or individuals. The affluence of American society is reflected in the manner in which we market ourselves to Christian and non-Christian groups alike.

Changing family dynamics also create challenges. Statistically, Christian families aren't significantly different from their secular counterparts in regards to divorce rates. This results in many single-parent or blended families. Even the traditional family faces additional stress as both parents work to make ends meet. Ultimately, the challenges we observe in society also impact our churches and Bible camps.

Consider Isaiah 40:6-8:

A voice says, "Cry out."
And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."

Our lives, although beautiful, is temporary and weak. It will thrive only for a season. What a stark contrast when compared to the Word of our God, which will endure forever. Such a promise gives hope to our fragile lives and faithfulness. God has not changed. Praise His name! He knows the challenges of our ever-changing world. While it can be difficult to experience the struggles of the Christian camp ministry, it is comforting to know God is in control.

Please pray for the ARC and other Christian camping ministries. The ARC averages 500 or more people per year accepting Christ as Lord and Savior. It is evident that God reveals Himself and works in powerful and unique ways at camp. Perhaps it's time again for you to come away and rest awhile.

Flanders is the director of the Association Retreat Center, located near Osceola, Wis.



BY PASTOR JASON HOLT

When you have lost heart

Have you ever lost heart? After ten years of organized football, I began playing intercollegiate athletics. I found the need for preparation and for teamwork engaging. After a red-shirt year and a season as a backup, I gladly embraced time on the field. Then my right shoulder was badly dislocated during the conference opener. As the raw pain swelled in my muscles, I sensed my brain move to the conclusion, “Game over.” The struggle for physical recovery was one effort, but overcoming discouragement was truly another area to address.

What does it look like to lose heart?

It can be hard to categorize such a situation because it is more than merely losing a game, being carelessly overlooked by a friend, or having a particularly bad day. Losing heart is a deep valley where the struggle becomes consuming.

Disappointment is inevitable in this life because of our sin, our lost world, and the activity of the enemy of our souls. Losing heart is much farther along the road than one disappointment. It comes after a multiplication of disappointments. It is a stage of struggle in the soul that especially comes through taking your eyes off Jesus and putting your eyes on the wave of discouragement.

In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus teaches the disciples about prayer. His warning in verse one is to “not lose heart.” The parable that follows pictures a godless judge who holds off a widow’s request for justice. After multiple requests from the widow, the judge finally

grants her desired answer simply to get her off his back.

The Lord Almighty is in stark contrast to the judge in the parable. Our Heavenly Father is the One who is justice. He will answer our requests with perfect righteousness. When our struggles mount, Jesus invites us to seek Him in prayer. Our Heavenly Father is also the One who is all-powerful. He will speedily respond to His children’s needs. When we are tempted to lose heart, Jesus points to His willing nature to meet us in the valley. At each turn in our struggle, the Lord reminds us that He is faithful.

At the FLY Convention in July 2013, we anticipate we will see both teenagers and adults dealing with the brokenness of losing heart. We are grateful to be able to address this need with the Savior King who was broken on a tree for our sin. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are the antidote for the one who has lost heart.

Our Savior King acknowledges that from the human condition the answers to our prayers may seem to be distant both in our view of God’s timing and God’s closeness. Jesus’ activity reminds us that He is good, He is just, and He will respond. In the depth of brokenness comes a gentle reminder from the King of your heart: Keep coming to Him. Jesus will answer!

Holt, the director of AFLC Youth Ministries, is a member of Living Hope, St. Michael, Minn. (Photo by Rachel Menge)



SEPTEMBER 10 WATERS IN THE WILDERNESS

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25).

Among the many friends of Jesus, perhaps few were closer than the family at Bethany. Christ often went to the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

Sadness came to that family. Lazarus passed away. His sisters sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was ill. When Jesus arrived Lazarus had passed on; the burial had taken place four days earlier.

As Jesus approaches Bethany, Martha went to meet Him. The Lord brought her a word of comfort, saying, “Thy brother shall rise again ... I am the resurrection and life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

To whom was this promise made? To them who believe in

Jesus Christ. He who repents of sin and believes in Jesus Christ, the Savior, shall live and never die. For the body there is the promise of a blessed resurrection; for the soul, the promise of eternal life.

The death of believers is not really death, but rather—according to Jesus—death is a “sleep” and a natural departure from the land of the dying to the land of the living. The life of faith is eternal: “shall never die.” Death is the entrance of the soul into the glorious presence of God in heaven. What a blessed hope we have in the crucified and risen Savior, Jesus Christ!

Pastor Julius Hermunsleie, now deceased, was an early AFLC leader and served as the first chairman of the Coordinating Committee.

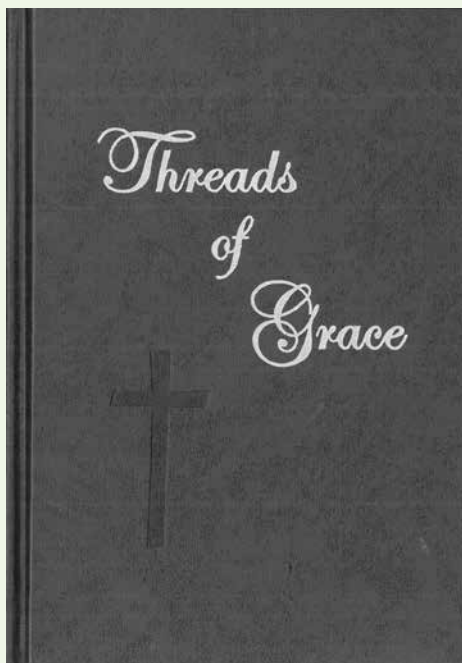
Waters in the Wilderness is a daily devotional published by the AFLC Board of Parish Education in 1971 with Dr. Iver Olson, editor. All 365 meditations were contributed by AFLC members from many walks of life. “Here, they offer each a glass of cool and refreshing water each day to thirsting souls,” wrote Olson in the preface. Reprinted by permission. The volume is out of print.

Ambassador Publications releases new daily devotional book

The daily fabric of our lives is woven with threads of expectations and commitments, laughter and tears, joy and discouragement, mundane routine and unpredictable events. In the midst of all this, the unbroken thread entwined throughout the life of the believer is the thread of God's grace given to us in Christ. This devotional book, *Threads of Grace*, is designed to turn our eyes toward Jesus each day.

Written by people of the AFLC, these daily meditations are designed to encourage you to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (II Peter 3:18).

For a limited time (through Sept. 30) copies of this new daily devotional book can be purchased at a discount. A limited edition leather-bound devotional, normally \$25, can be purchased for \$22.50. Paperback volumes can be purchased for \$13 through Sept. 30 (normally \$15). Both editions can be purchased in bulk for at a discounted price (\$22, leather; \$12, paperback).



For more information or to place an order, contact Ambassador Publications, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, Minn., 55441. Call 763-545-5631 or e-mail parished@aflc.org.

South Central District hosts family camp

The South Central District will be holding its fifth annual AFLC family camp and retreat Oct. 5-7 at the Riverbend Retreat Center in scenic Glen Rose, Texas. All AFLC families and their guests are cordially invited to join other AFLC families for a weekend of spiritual enrichment, mutual fellowship, encouragement, family fun, rest and relaxation.

Sitting high atop a majestic horseshoe bluff that overlooks the magnificent Brazos River, we will gather this fall for Bible teaching, singing, Sunday worship, campfires, food, and recreation. There will be fun for the whole family. Activities include paddle boats, fishing in a private lake (no license required), indoor and outdoor basketball, volleyball, covered-pavilion ping pong, Frisbee golf, softball, horseshoes, hiking trails, zip lines, potluck meals, fellowship, and much more. Campfire devotions will be held at a spectacularly situated amphitheater each evening. Come early and visit the nearby Creation Evidence Museum or the Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant facility.

A district pastors get-together begins at 1 p.m. on Oct. 5, with the family camp and retreat beginning at 5 p.m. The retreat concludes at 2 p.m. on Oct. 7. For more information call Richard at (817) 517-5618 or Ray at (254) 797-5414.

Worship conference rescheduled

Pastors, worship leaders, worship teams, and AFLC church members are invited to join us for ADORATION: A worship leadership conference October 26-27 at Emmaus Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Minn.

Ignite your passion for God. Break free of the routine. Be remade. Equip your team. Facilitate powerful worship in your home church. Build a biblical philosophy of worship. Learn real-world tools for worship ministry. Adore God again.

We welcome everyone to join us Friday night at 7 p.m. for a night of worship led by local AFLC worship leaders and a full worship team, including organ and brass players. Joshua Skogerboe, worship leader at Living Hope Church, St. Michael, Minn., will bring a message focusing on a life-changing encounter with God. Saturday will feature main sessions, times of worship, and elective workshops that will equip attendees for worship ministry in local congregations, regardless of style or size.

Friday night is open to everybody; a free-will offering will be taken. Saturday's registration fee is \$30. Pastors are welcome to attend free of charge. For more information or to register for the Saturday workshops, visit our web site at www.adorationconference.com. Or e-mail with questions to info@adorationconference.com.



Mercy & Truth publishes book on call to ministry

Mercy and Truth Publishers has a new book out titled *Call to the Ministry*. The book features 26 men who have served and are serving in the AFLC. This includes missionaries Alvin Grothe, George Knapp and John Abel. The book is available for \$10 plus \$2 postage.

Also recently reprinted by Mercy and Truth Publishers is Pastor Trygve Dahle's book *A Pioneer Church Family*. This book is available for a contribution of \$10 plus \$2 postage.

For more information or to order from Mercy and Truth Publishers, write to 19594 350th Street NW, Newfolden, MN 56738.



In the eye of the storm

BY PASTOR CONNELLY DYRUD

*“My eyes will be on the faithful in the land ...”
(Psalm 101:6).*

As AFLC missionaries, my wife, Carolyn, and I lived about a mile out of Campo Mourão, Parana, Brazil, on the Bible school campus. Directly below our campus was a poor housing zone. There were several streets of shacks that led down to the river. It seemed as though we heard dogs barking down there all night, and shots could be heard coming from that area regularly.

Though Carolyn and I were loaded down with normal missionary work, we were told by a local medical doctor named Garcia that in the land of the blind, a man with one eye is king. By local standards, we were those kings. He told us that we would have to help the poor people in our village with medical assistance. Garcia showed us how to give muscular injections—Carolyn assisting the women and children, leaving the men and boys to my care.

So this became another part of our missionary work. Little did we know that as we gave injections both mornings and evenings, and as we prayed for the villagers, the Lord was working in their hearts. We saw people experiencing conversions and coming to our Lar Parana church.

I was often asked by the men in the poor housing zone to take them to the local midwife so that we could bring her back to their homes to help their wives give birth to their children. It seemed

like the births always came between midnight and 5 a.m. But little did I know that some of these men were involved in drug gangs.

As the years went by, these poor families moved out from the village into Campo Mourão or beyond. But two of the last of the villagers were a couple who did not have children. They were elderly and the man of the house was bedridden with a stroke. His wife came to our house carrying with her the doctor's prescriptions for all the supplies she had to buy at the drugstore. She showed us their retirement check—it wasn't enough to pay for all of their monthly bills and living expenses. Carolyn and I said we would help her each month. She looked at us and started to cry.

“Are you trying to make a beggar out of me?” she asked. “No, I just want to wash Carolyn's sidewalks and work these bills off.”

Each month Carolyn gave her money and food as she did small chores for us.

One day the woman told us that she was one of the oldest in the village, most had moved away. Then she told us how the people of the village rallied around us to protect us from outside gangsters. She told us that we were living in the eye of the storm. But the people of the village loved us for helping them. “God has watched over you” she said.

Dyrud, and AFLC missionary-at-large, previously served as an AFLC missionary to Brazil. He now lives in Maple Grove, Minn., where he is a member of Grace Free Lutheran.

AFLC youth ministries hosts FLY Beyond



TOP: Students meet in discussion groups following a session on Colossians taught by Pastor Eric Rasmussen.

MIDDLE: Two students dig for clues during an exercise in Pastor Jason Gudim's class on the reliability of Scripture.

ABOVE: Pastor Micah Hjermsstad asks a student for a response following a discussion session.
BOTTOM LEFT: A group of students and leaders meet after a session on vocation.

The strength of the Lord

BY CHARLOTTE QUANBECK

"I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me"
(Philippians 4:13).

We need the strength of the Lord in our everyday lives. God did not always call the high and mighty, but rather those who were being faithful in their little corners. Let us think of David, the shepherd boy, caring for his sheep, and the boy Samuel, diligently doing humble tasks in the temple. As mothers, may we be faithful in the endless little duties before us each day. May Christ give us strength and wisdom as we give guidance to our children. Perhaps in our homes there is a David or Samuel who someday may be a servant of the Lord.

We need the strength of the Lord to meet the pressure of today's society. Is the Lord really pleased with our hectic schedules of activity? Man has advanced scientifically in marvelous ways since the days of the pioneers. Yet surely there is much to learn from them. We must admire their courage and perseverance; their dependence upon God and their wonderful family spirit are something to be almost envied. This is something rather hard to achieve in our day. How can there be family togetherness when sometimes Mother or Dad has to go out every evening of the week to some worthwhile organization in church, community or school?

We have become over-organized. Most of us who are Christian parents try to cram family devotion into our busy day. Yet even that must be rushed in order to get ready for something else. Surely the Lord must be grieved when He looks down upon us as we hurry and scurry about. Jesus said, "One thing is needful." Like Mary, we need to spend time at Jesus' feet, but like Martha, we are busy with many things. In fact, this organized life of ours today demands that we be Marthas. We need to spend time alone with God and time with our children while they are young and open to instruction.

We need the strength of the Lord in bearing our sorrows. How can those who live apart from God cope with the grief that comes into their lives? As Christians we are truly blessed when



we experience the loving arms of Jesus holding us up, giving us strength and calmness of spirit during times of sorrow.

We need the strength of the Lord to do special tasks. Perhaps we are asked to be a leader, to give a Bible study, or do some job beyond our usual duties. Here, too, the Lord will provide the needed strength if we but rely on Him. Just for an example, I felt very inadequate when asked to write [this] article, but God heard my prayers, and guided my thoughts.

Yes, God can provide strength for each day. As humans, we err in trying to see our future. It is hard to wait patiently upon the Lord. But He has promised to lead us one step at a time. In Deuteronomy 33:25, we are told, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." As we look ahead, may this little chorus be a reminder to us:

I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me,
Day by day, hour by hour,
I am kept in His power.
I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.

Quanbeck is from McVile, N.D. This article was originally printed in the Feb. 17, 1970, issue of The Lutheran Ambassador.

AFLC memorials: July

AFLBS

Jeremy Erickson, Ruth Claus, Barbara Schmidt, Pastor Laurel Udden (11), Lucile Landby, Ruth Hodnefield (7)

AFLT

Phyllis Peterson
Pastor Laurel Udden (15)
Doris Nesland (2)

Ambassador Institute

Pastor Laurel Udden

Parish Education

Pastor John Strand

Evangelism

Pastor Laurel Udden
Jeremy Erickson

Home Missions

Ernie Miedema
Aaron, Allison and Brielle Deutcher
Skip Milton

World Missions

Dorothy Presteng
Pastor Lowell Sheldahl

... in honor of

AFLBS

Barbara Long

ARC hosts Classics Retreat

The Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis., will host a Classics Retreat Sept. 14-16 for those ages 55 and older. The cost is \$75/person or \$130 couple. Pastor Tom Parrish, Hope Lutheran, Minneapolis, will speak on Real Hope. Pastor Roger and Rose David will lead praise and worship.

For more information on this retreat, contact the ARC by e-mail at arcregistration@centurytel.net or call 800-294-2877. You can also visit the ARC Web site at www.arc-aflc.org for more information.

ARC seeks volunteer coordinator

Members of the ARC Board have been meeting and praying together almost every other week for the last year. The board has been blessed with several men with accounting and business backgrounds to help steer the decisions in fiscal matters. After researching other camps comparable to the size and ministry of the ARC—and recognizing the current economic condition of the region—members of the board have come to several decisions.

The first decision is to continue to depend on the Lord to move in the hearts of believers to pray and give to this ministry. The second decision is to cut back on some full-time staff while still operating at the same level of campers. In order to continue on this path, the ARC is opening up a position to coordinate volunteers. This is a volunteer position. However, the ARC would be able to provide housing and some meals. The position, which is open to either a single person or a couple interested in supporting the ARC ministry, would require a very flexible schedule.

For more information or to apply, please call the ARC and talk to Pat Flanders (director) at (800) 294-2877. Members of the ARC board are confident that the ARC is on solid ground and will be around for many more years, continuing with the focus of being a place where people can come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Submitted by Eric Westlake, ARC Board member

People and Places

Jerry D. Nelson was installed as assistant pastor on July 15 at Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Cokato, Minn., with Pastor Elden Nelson officiating. Jerry D. Nelson was also accepted onto the licensed pastor roster by members of the AFLC Coordinating Committee.

Pastor Michael Brandt is serving as interim pastor at Helmar Lutheran, rural Newark, Ill.

Pastor Tom Reagan, Blackduck, Minn., has been placed on the AFLC fellowship roster by members of the AFLC Coordinating Committee.

Matthew Petschl, Maple Grove, Minn., has been hired as the food services director for the AFLC Schools. Petschl is a member of Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn. Kyle Dunham stepped down from the position after eight years of service.

Pastor Dana Coyle has accepted a call from Faith Lutheran, Ottawa, Ill., which he is serving together with Freedom Lutheran, rural Ottawa.

Pastor Dennis Norby has accepted a call to serve Hope Lutheran, Enderlin, N.D., an AFLC Home Missions congregation.



Michael Losse (left) is pictured with Lay Pastor Irvin Schmitke at Norland Free Lutheran, Salol, Minn. Losse was challenged by Pastor Schmitke to take \$5 and multiply it for the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourão, Brazil. Losse raised \$160, which was matched by the Ladies Aid for a total of \$320, which was sent to the infant home.

Generations

"One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts" (Psalm 145:4).

The passing of time became powerfully apparent to me in a new way last year when meeting a prospective Bible school student from a congregation where I once served. The names of her parents were not familiar to me, but when she told me the name of her grandparents, I realized that I had baptized her mother ... and, to add to my awakening, that I had conducted a funeral service

for her great-great grandmother!



Pastor Robert Lee

We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord,

and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. For He has established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God but keep His commandments (Psalm 78:4-7).

Our calling is clear, as it was to the people of Israel. It is a calling to preach, teach and follow the Word of God, and to pass it on to the coming generations. Our mission is a generational one, and it is vital that we are faithful in fulfilling it. It is a great encouragement to me as a grandfather to know families in which as many as

five generations have followed the Lord. Perhaps this is a touch of what Paul felt when he wrote to Timothy about the sincere faith of his grandmother and mother (II Timothy 1:5).

The AFLC is a fellowship of local congregations who seek to respond to this generational calling. Our children are brought to the Lord in baptism, and we seek through prayerful teaching and witness that each one might come to a personal faith in Jesus Christ. The evangelization of the baptized, as it was at the time of the Reformation, is surely one of the greatest challenges of our day. The excellent materials supplied for congregations by our parish education ministry, the work of area Bible camps, as well as the resources and events of AFLC Youth Ministries, are all tools that the Spirit of God is using to reach and establish a new generation in the faith "once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3).

The heart of our response to this challenge, of course, is the family. There was a Fathers' Day service in one congregation many years ago where an elderly man told of his faith in Christ and of God's faithfulness to him for so many years. Then his adult son spoke of the impact of his father's life and witness which were central to his coming to personal faith. Finally, the young father's little boy spoke, saying that he did not understand everything that his grandpa and dad were talking about ... but he knew that he would someday. Yes!

Fathers and mothers share the privilege of raising their children in the "chastening and admonition of the Lord," as they promise during the baptismal service. But grandparents are an important element in this generational process, as well. The Bible teaches that it is a special blessing to see your children's children (Psalm 128:6) and those who have been so blessed share in the privilege of passing on the faith.

O God, You have taught me from my youth, and I still declare Your wondrous deeds. And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to all who are to come (Psalm 71:17-18).

The heart of our response to this challenge, of course, is the family.

The children for whom we are responsible are not only our biological ones. There are many special servants of God who do not have children yet, or who may never have children, yet they share in the privilege of nurturing the little ones entrusted by God to our congregations. Some of our readers will quickly recall a Sunday school teacher, perhaps, a pastor or a camp counselor, who cared about their souls and pointed them to Christ. Even the apostle Paul used family terms (Galatians 4:19, II Timothy 1:2 and I Thessalonians 2:11, for example) when writing to the congregations where he had ministered.

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Speaking of generations, one of my grandsons is a writer and photographer for this issue. Thank you, Lord.

something to share

The annual conference

BY PASTOR RAYNARD HUGLEN

As a young boy in Saskatchewan I first heard that there was something called an annual conference. My parents often talked with each other in their native Norwegian. In the late spring I would hear the word *aarsmøte* being mentioned. Little did I know what it meant. I just knew that my pastor father, R. J. Huglen, would be going on a trip. He wouldn't miss the annual meeting. The Lutheran Free Church would host annual conferences in such places as Minneapolis, Willmar, Minn., Duluth, Minn., Thief River Falls, Minn., and La Crosse, Wis. From 1953, the year of my ordination, I've missed only one conference in my church body.

Annual conferences are where people from congregations which are in fellowship meet once a year to talk about the work which is too big for them to do alone, but can be accomplished together. There are preaching services at these conferences and prayer times. Those who attend come away blessed and encouraged.

The first regular conference of the AFLC was held in June 1963, almost eight months after the historic organizing conference in Thief River Falls. It was held at St. Paul's Lutheran, Fargo, N.D., the first property owned by an AFLC group, the foreign missions department as it was called at that time. Pastor John Strand was elected to his first three-year term as president. In an optimistic and forward-looking spirit, delegates authorized the establishment of a theological seminary in 1964. And at a time of racial ferment, they declared support for equal opportunity for all American citizens. Let us look at some highlights of succeeding conferences.

At the 1964 conference in Valley City, N.D., Pastor John and Ruby Abel and Pastor Alvin and Frances Grothe were consecrated as our first missionaries. They would go to Brazil.

At the 1965 conference in Minneapolis, property purchased

from the Hauge Innermission Society at Medicine Lake was dedicated. This conference can be said to have closed the merger phase of the fellowship and the commenced the forward phase of ministry.

Back in Thief River Falls in 1966, the conference concurred with the Board of Trustees to begin a two-year Bible school. In Fargo in 1967, approval was given to build a dormitory at the school at Medicine Lake for a cost of approximately \$200,000. The first graduating class of the seminary (four men) was ordained.

Six men were ordained at the conference in Cloquet, Minn., in 1968, when congregations were encouraged to hold a series of evangelistic meetings each year. Six more men were ordained during the 1969 conference at the AFLC headquarters in Minneapolis. That same year, a committee was asked to study further the locating of a retirement home at the headquarters property. Also, the Budget Analysis Committee was set up.

Back in Cloquet in 1971, the conference rejected Pastor Strand's resignation by a vote of 250 to 9. The conference also adopted a subsidy goal of \$252,563 and approved the selection of Pastor Richard Snipstead and Pastor Amos Dyrud as deans of the Bible school and seminary, respectively. The conference also recommended that the Lord's Supper be reserved only for the confirmed, and ordination only for men.

During the 1972 conference at Medicine Lake, it was reported that 121 congregations were affiliated with the AFLC. Also, there were more first-time attendees at conference than in any previous year. The 1973 conference was held in Ferndale, Wash., the first one in the Pacific Northwest, but not the last.

Huglen, founding editor of The Lutheran Ambassador, lives in Newfolden, Minn.