

THE LUTHERAN 

AUGUST 2011

AMBASSADOR

GENERATIONS WALKING TOGETHER

THE AFLC ANNUAL CONFERENCE



No more erasers

BY KAYLA PAIGE

Looking back in my journal, I almost regret something I wrote a few days ago. My flesh would very much like to get out an eraser, destroy the evidence, and continue life my way. I had a wonderful plan for my summer—earn enough college credits to become a junior, help with church outreach, attend the Free Lutheran Youth Convention, and enjoy the lake. Why did I ever say, “I will trust the purposes of You, the God who calls”? Just a simple sentence, but it gave God permission to throw all of those plans in the dust.

I should have expected this. After all, the Bible explains over and over again that “the heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps” (Proverbs 16:9). Lately, this has been very evident. Last year I wanted to go on a missions trip to Eastern Europe. I filled out my application and obtained my passport. Then all peace about the trip got up and left while a shortage of girls caused me to join a Bible school summer team, teaching the Bible in the Midwest instead.

Fast forward to plans for this summer. God kept on nudging me to go to Russia and I kept on pushing the thought away; He persisted and I surrendered. I went. I returned. After more than 24 hours of airports and planes, my parents greeted me with the news that due to exceptional circumstances, one summer team lacked a girl. Would I serve on that team? Now I’m packing and planning to join up with them less than a week after I arrived back in the States, two weeks into their summer. Crazy, right? I’d say so.

Many times, we watch events unfold and wonder at His purpose or even doubt that these things will work together for good. What good did a passport do me when I wasn’t traveling further

than North Dakota? Why do I have to cram summer team ministry into months already full? At this point in time, I know the answer to the first question, although it confounded me for so long. Now the second question still puzzles me, yet I know that I can trust His purposes.

It’s not as if the Lord chuckles maliciously every time He sends something unexpected our way: “She’ll never suspect this! It’ll throw her completely off-kilter.” No! Psalms 37:23 explains, “The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in His way.” God does not try to make us stumble or leave us to wander in the dark; He wants to establish our steps and He does so as long as we walk in step with the Spirit. Yet sometimes He leads us to wild places where we can only cling to His hand and let Him guide us along—places where we come to depend on His character more than on what meets our eye. As II Corinthians 5:7 proclaims, “We walk by faith, not by sight.”

Away goes my eraser. I place my hand in His and boldly repeat those words: “I will trust the purposes of You, the God who calls.”

Paige is an AFLC Home Missions parish builder serving Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Madison, S.D.



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From the 2011 AFLC Annual Conference

We must allow the footprint of His Word to mark our personal lives as well as the life and ministry of our church. It is that sure foundation upon which we build.

—Pastor Elden Nelson
AFLC President

At our Seminary and Bible School, young men and women come to study God's Word, building on the foundation that Jesus laid in their hearts through his death and resurrection, preparing to serve Him as pastors, missionaries, and lay people in our AFLC congregations. It is an awesome responsibility that God has placed on our Schools, our faculty and staff, to teach, train, and guide these individuals as they build upon that foundation and prepare for a life of service to Christ.

— Dr. Dan Mundfrom
Chairman, AFLC Schools Board of Trustees

May we not neglect the children and youth from unchurched, nontraditional families or from broken or dysfunctional homes in our communities but seek to bring them into relationship with Christ so that a new generation may begin to pass on this vital legacy of faith in Christ.

—Marian Christopherson
Director of Publications and Parish Education

We cannot grow weary in the task of reaching, leading, and training the next generation in the Body of Christ. If we do not place a priority on the youths of our Association, then what can we expect to happen in a generation? The thought should drive us to our knees in prayer for youths and for guidance to proceed.

—Pastor Jason Holt
Director of Youth Ministries

ANNUAL CONFERENCE





GENERATIONS WALKING TOGETHER

GENERATIONS WALKING TOGETHER

was the theme of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregation's 49th Annual Conference held June 14-17 in Sioux Falls, S.D. Christians serving the Lord together, sharing together and building each other up was the core of what the conference was about.



Sharing together and building each other up started the day before the beginning of the conference, on June 13, with the “Rekindle the Fire” event for pastors and wives, put on by the AFLC Commission on Evangelism. Dr. H. B. London was the guest speaker for the event, which included two afternoon sessions and an evening banquet. Dr. London pastored churches for a number of years and for the last 20 years has served as a “pastor to pastors” with the Focus on the Family ministry. He recently stepped down from that position.

Dr. London encouraged pastors and their wives to build people up by letting them know God loves them. “If people come to the realization they’re loved, they’ll be able to cope with whatever the world throws at them,” he said. He also encouraged pastors to rejoice, relax and rest; to root for one another, support one another and protect one another. Dr. London was also the speaker for the opening service of the conference on June 14.

The conference schedule included business sessions during the day and worship services in the evening. The business sessions were broken up, however, by scheduled times of prayer before the noon break, Scripture reading and prayer that began each session and other times of prayer throughout the sessions.

One of the times of prayer was in response to a resolution presented to the conference which resolved to “pray earnestly for the protection of our Armed Forces, the healing of those who are wounded, the comfort of those who have lost loved ones, and strength and peace for family members of those who are separated because



of deployments.” Many shared names of ones who are serving in the Armed Forces. Those at the conference then spent time in prayer.

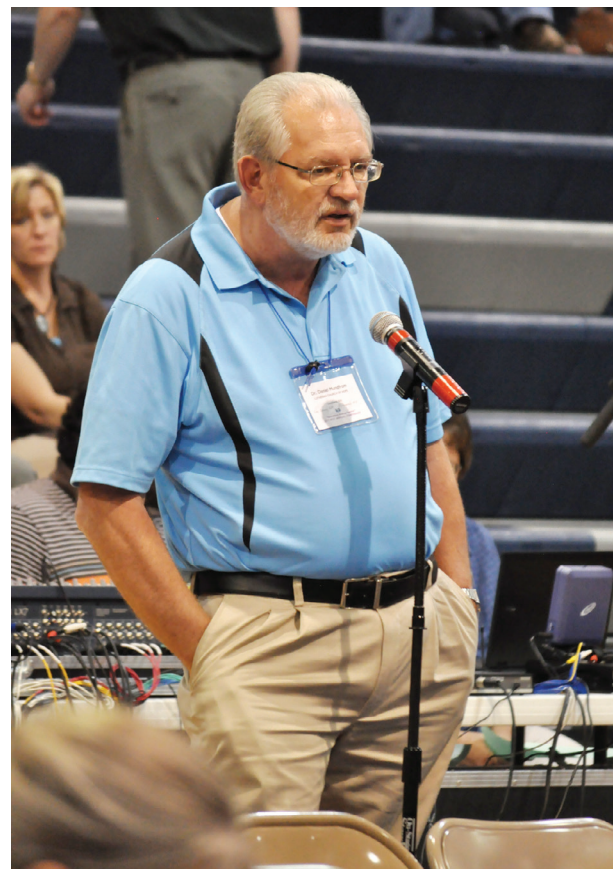
The conference was encouraged by the report that 13 congregations were added to the AFLC congregational roster during the past year. Another new addition to the AFLC that was discussed at the conference was the recent hire of Pastor Tonnes Pollestad as the new director of Development. The conference resolved to “encourage individuals and congregations to make use of his services” and “uphold him and that ministry in prayer.”

In the area of finances members of the Budget Analysis Committee reported: “Looking back at the finances from 2010 we were very grateful for God’s generous provision for the works of the AFLC. Support for the common works increased by [more than] six percent and all of the ministries took care to stay within their means, even though the actual giving only reached 92 percent of the 2010 approved subsidy level.” The committee did express concern over the budgets of some departments that were based on desired subsidy receipts that were more than 20 percent higher than the actual receipts for 2010. The committee encouraged the conference “to give sober and prayerful consideration before approving the budgets here presented.”

During the time of discussion about the AFLC Schools, those in attendance were asked to stand if they had been impacted by going to Association Free Lutheran Bible School. A large number stood and many gave testimony to the difference attending AFLBS



Pictured (clockwise, from top left): Children attending the conference took part in vacation Bible school, with Steve and Faith Treague leading the opening. Carol Hoops, Mary and Jerry Stay, Shakopee, Minn., and Pastor Lee Hoops, Kindred, N.D., talk during a conference break. Nearly 500 people attended the conference, held in Sioux Falls, S.D. Pastor H. B. London, who most recently work with Focus on the Family, was the keynote speaker for the opening service. Each morning, the conference agenda called for a time of devotions and prayer..



TOP: Pastor Andy and Monica Coyle (center) and Justo and Tricia Pillman (right) are commissioned as AFLC missionaries by Pastor Del Palmer, director of AFLC World Missions. The Coyles left for work in Odessa, Ukraine, under East European Mission Network. The Pillmans hope to work in Ecuador beginning early in 2012. ABOVE: Pastor Daniil Sobolev from Russia (left) talks with Pastor Don Richman (center) and Pastor Kevin Olson. RIGHT: Dr. Dan Mundfrom, chairman of the AFLC Schools Board, addresses the conference floor on a resolution supporting expansion of the schools.

made in their life. During the time of sharing a challenge was issued to see at least one student from each AFLC congregation attend AFLBS. Time was spent praying for that goal to be reached.

Discussion was held about the Schools Corporation's proposal to add a dormitory and a gymnasium/auditorium building to the campus. The conference resolved to prayerfully support the continuation of the process. Part of the resolution stated "that current building debts of chapel renovation be paid in full before ground is broken on any new building."

The Women's Missionary Federation conducted the Mission Festival Service on June 15. Pastor Jonathan Abel, missionary to Brazil who is currently on furlough, spoke. Pre-recorded video greetings were shared by other AFLC missionaries. The service also included the commissioning of new missionaries. Pastor Andy and Monica Coyle and family will serve as missionaries in Ukraine. Justo and Patricia Pillman were commissioned for service in Ecuador. Pastor Coyle and Justo Pillman both shared words of thanksgiving and requests for prayer following the commissioning.

Thursday evening of the conference included two events: a laymen's worship service and a pastors' banquet. The banquet for pastors and their wives took place at the Great Plains Zoo and Delbridge Museum of Natural History in Sioux Falls. Dr. David Menton of the ministry Answers in Genesis spoke at the banquet and also taught a seminar held in Sioux Falls on the Saturday morning following the conference.

The conference concluded with an ordination service. David Franz, who has accepted the call to serve as pastor of Salem Lutheran in Radcliffe, Iowa, and St. Paul's Lutheran, Jewell, Iowa, was ordained. His father, Pastor Peter Franz, shared the message. Franz is a third-generation AFLC pastor. His grandfather, the late Pastor Herb Franz, served for many years as a pastor in the AFLC.

Re-elected to one-year terms were Pastor Michael Brandt as AFLC vice president and Pastor Brian Davidson as AFLC secretary. Pastor Elden Nelson, who was re-elected at the 2010 annual conference to a three-year term as president, chaired the conference business sessions.

The ordination service was hosted by Living Word Lutheran of Sioux Falls. Members of both Living Word and Abiding Savior Lutheran, Sioux Falls, hosted the

conference. The majority of conference events were held at Sioux Falls Christian School. There were 497 people registered for the conference.

Next year's conference will mark the 50th anniversary of the AFLC. It will be held June 12-15 at the site of the 1962 organizing conference of the AFLC: Thief River Falls, Minn.

By Pastor Craig Johnson, editor, who serves Bethany Lutheran, Astoria, Ore.



Wilma Herr, Tripp, S.D., holds Josiah Coyle during the WMF banquet.

NEW CONGREGATIONS

The following congregations joined the AFLC roster in the last year:

Christ Lutheran, Shingleton, Mich.
First American Lutheran, Tripp, S.D.
Our Savior's Lutheran, Cannon Falls, Minn.
Christ Lutheran, Stover, Mo.
Our Savior's Lutheran, Dillon, Mont.
Hope Lutheran, Delmont, S.D.
Abiding Word Lutheran, Felch, Mich.
Singsaas Evangelical Lutheran, Hendricks, Minn.
St. Peter Lutheran, Armour, S.D.
First Lutheran, Ellendale, Minn.
True Vine Lutheran, Mora, Minn.
Living Faith Lutheran, Boyertown, Penn.
New Hope Free Lutheran, Jamestown, N.D.

Vice President

Pastor Michael Brandt, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Secretary

Pastor Brian Davidson, Dickinson, N.D.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Coordinating Committee

(Layman, 5-year term)

Dan Mundfrom, Richmond, Ken.

(Pastor, 5-year term)

Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, Minn.

World Missions Committee

(Layman, 5-year term)

Scott Erickson, Badger, Minn.

Home Missions Committee

(Pastor, 5-year term)

Pastor Richard Long, Arlington, Wash.

Bay Broadcasting Board

(Layman, 3-year term)

Eldwyn VanBruggen, Valley City, N.D.

FLAPS Board of Managers

(Layman, 5-year term)

Joel Forness, Wahpeton, N.D.

(Pastor, 5-year term)

Pastor Henry Mohagen, Reva, S.D.

AFLC Schools Board of Trustees

(Layman, 5-year term)

Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn.

(Pastor, 5-year term)

Pastor Martin Horn, Kenyon, Minn.

Board of Publications and Parish Education

(Pastor, 5-year term)

Pastor Sam Wellumson, East Grand Forks, Minn.

Stewardship Board

(Layman, 5-year term)

Roland Meyer, Paxton, Ill.

Youth Board

(Layman, 5-year term)

Sharon Rykhus, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Benefits Board

(Pastor, 5-year term)

Pastor Tom Gilman, Lakeville, Minn.

(Layman, 1-year term)

Arlyn Smith, Oldham, S.D.

Commission on Evangelism

(Pastor, 5-year term)

Pastor Tim Johnson, Pipestone, Minn.

(Layman, 5-year term)

Michael Lynnes, Leonard, N.D.

Budget Analysis Committee

(Layman, 3-year term)

Kevin O'Neil, Marshall, Minn.

(Layman, 3-year term)

Rodney Kjersten, Roseau, Minn.

Colloquy Committee

(1-year terms)

Pastor Ted Berkas, Bloomington, Minn.

Pastor James Johnson, Fergus Falls, Minn.

Pastor Kirk Flaa, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Pastor Shane McLoughlin, Minot, N.D.

Pastor Jon Wellumson, Williston, N.D.



LEFT: Pastor Tom Olson, Golden Valley, N.D., counts ballots during a conference election.

RIGHT: Pastor Mark Olson, Farmington, Minn., hands out ballots on the conference floor.

*The ARC Corporation did not have a quorum during the annual conference. Election results will be published as soon as they are available.

CORPORATIONS

AFLC Schools Corporation

(5-year terms)

John Amdahl, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Larry Behne, Lowden, Iowa
Jon Dryburgh, Grafton, N.D.
Lyle Forde, Arlington, Wash.
David Fugleberg, Lakeville, Minn.
Pastor Earl Korhonen, Radcliffe, Iowa
Pastor Terry Olson, Grafton, N.D.
Pastor Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, Mont.
Doug Swanson, Burtrum, Minn.
John Talley, Newark, Ill.

Missions Corporation

(5-year terms)

Pastor Jim Fugleberg, Moorhead, Minn.
Don Berge, Fargo, N.D.
Glen Mork, Buffalo, Minn.
Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D.
Pastor Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City
Pastor Al Monson, Mesa, Ariz.
Scott Erickson, Badger, Minn.
Carl Busse, Humbolt, Tenn.
Jeremy Zeltinger, Litchville, N.D.
Robert Dietsche, Oseola, Wis.
Pastor Lynn Kinneberg, McVile, N.D.
Pastor Dale Mellgren, McIntosh, Minn.
Lois Grothe, Astoria, Ore.
Tim Erhardt, Lake Stevens, Wash.
Pastor Robert Lee, Naknek, Alaska
Pastor Jeremy Crowell, Naknek
Glenn Espe, Thief River Falls, Minn.
Peter Slayton, Newark, Ill.
Eldwyn VanBruggen, Valley City, N.D.
Pastor Steve Mundfrom, Valley City

(3-year terms)

Pastor Marlin Harris, Woodbury, Minn.
Karen Hart, Fairbury, Neb.

(1-year terms)

David Mattson, Sioux Falls, S.D.
David Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa

2012 COMMITTEES

Committee No. 1

(Administration)

Pastor Les Galland, Shakopee, Minn.
Dr. Robert Kohl, Brookings, S.D.
Darin Dykstra, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Pastor Terry Olson, Grafton, N.D.
Karen Hart, Fairbury, Neb.

Committee No. 2

(AFLC Schools)

Amy Dalager, Argyle, Minn.
Larry Behne, Lowden, Iowa
Pastor Tim Hinrichs, Mankato, Minn.
Paul Kylo, Byron, Minn.
Gary Stegman, Crookston, Minn.

Committee No. 3

(Missions and Evangelism)

Mike Coyle, Nicolett, Minn.
Roger Tollefson, Crookston, Minn.
Matt Olson, Minneapolis, Minn.
Pastor Karl Anderson, Bagley, Minn.
Pastor Ray Ballmann, Glen Rose, Texas

Committee No. 4

(Publications and Parish Education)

Kristin Tanner, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Jan Strand, Kenyon, Minn.
Kevin Olson, Eden Prairie, Minn.
Pastor Eric Rasmussen, Fergus Falls, Minn.
Pastor Joe Faldet, Saint James, Minn.

Committee No. 5

(Stewardship and Benefits)

Scott Schauer, Oklahoma City
Bill Buck, Sinai, S.D.
Layne Hoops, Republic, Kan.
Pastor Lee Hoops, Kindred, N.D.
Phil Johnson, Esko, Minn.



2012 Nominating Committee

Central Tri State: Paul Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa
Eastern: James Taylor, Bethel Park, Pa.
Eastern North Dakota: Gene Finstrom, Buxton, N.D.
Illinois: Pastor Dennis Norby, Newark
Lake Superior: Phil Johnson, Esko, Minn.
Minneapolis: Pastor Robert Lee, Crystal, Minn.
Nebraska/Kansas/Colorado: Pastor Ken Hart, Fairbury, Neb.
North Central Minnesota: Pastor Alan Arneson, Fosston, Minn.
Northern Michigan: Pastor Micah Hjermstad, Ishpeming, Mich.
Northwestern Minnesota: Joel Erickson, Oslo, Minn.
Pacific Northwest: Pastor Craig Johnson, Astoria, Ore.
South Central: Pastor Craig Scavo, Durant, Okla.
South Dakota: Pastor Wayne Olson, Faith, S.D.
Southwest Central Minnesota: Dr. Steve Johnson, Upsala, Minn.
Southwestern: Pastor Al Monson, Mesa, Ariz.
Western North Dakota/Eastern Montana: Brian Rice, Williston, N.D.



CLOCKWISE (from top left): Arlys Jorenby, Brookings, S.D., led a workshop at the WMF convention. Christie Ballmann, Plymouth, Minn., presented a chalk talk at the WMF banquet. Marlene Eidsmoe presented a biographical monologue on Corrie ten Boom. Beth Talley, Newark, Ill., and Emily Slayton, Aurora, Ill. Women attending the convention respond during a workshop. Pastor Jonathan Abel was the keynote speaker at the Mission Festival Service.

Trust, delight, commit

WMF Day was a wonderful time in which we were challenged to “Trust, Delight and Commit” from our theme verse found in Psalm 37:3-5. The day began with nearly 200 women registering to enjoy the blessings God had for all of us. The host ladies made us feel warmly welcomed and did a wonderful job of organizing everything. Devotions were led by Joy Peterson on Proverbs 4:20-23. She challenged us to focus on our inward appearance rather than spending so much time on our outward appearance. Our theme song for the day was “Trust and Obey.”

Candice Johnson led us in our Bible study under the theme, “Trust.” She encouraged us to trust God like Joseph’s example in Genesis. Likening our lives to a jigsaw puzzle, we are to trust God with the corner pieces of our lives (salvation), the border pieces of our lives (when we are surrounded by God’s Word), and the inner pieces—whether you are young or old, when God’s timing is different than ours, when you are outside your comfort zone, whether in poverty or in power, when you’ve obeyed, and when you could get even.

Praise and worship was led by Grace Alone, a local group of ladies accompanied by Erika DeWitt. LaNaye Volk gave a flute solo during the offertory.

Dee Berkas led us in the memorial service with several names being mentioned of dear ladies who have passed on to glory this past year.

During the business meeting, Phyllis Peterson gave the secretary’s report, Lois Grothe gave the treasurer’s report and Karen Pederson read the president’s report in the absence of Lorilee Mundfrom. All were approved. Nominations were presented, and Lori Willard was elected as our second vice president and Lois Grothe was re-elected as our treasurer. The meeting resumed after lunch. Resolutions were presented by Molly Wiesen in the absence of resolution committee members. Motions were made and approved to accept the resolutions. The business meeting finished with a discussion on the women’s outreach coordinator position. It was stated by Karen Pederson that the board continues to evaluate this position and will present a decision next year. New business included the naming of our new committees for 2012 and acceptance of the budget as presented.

The afternoon continued with three workshops. Amy Skogerboe spoke on the word “delight,” and encouraged us to delight in the Lord with three points. First, she shared that to delight in the Lord is wise; it is God’s command. Then, she talked about

how delighting in the Lord is an act of worship. Last, Amy related how delighting in the Lord can be a tool used in spiritual warfare.

Arlys Jorenby led the second workshop on the word “commit.” She shared about her life and encouraged us to commit our lives to the Lord. She challenged and encouraged us to think of an area that we need to commit to God and areas that we have already committed to God. She also encouraged us to make a mission statement for ourselves and explained how to write one.

We enjoyed an inspiring monologue about Corrie ten Boom given by Marlene Eidsmoe, who set the scene with a traditional Dutch costume and accent.

The banquet began with Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president, conducting the installation of our newly elected officers. The Ambassadors summer team from AFLBS blessed us with special music. Missionary Tamba Abel, serving in Brazil, gave us a greeting and other missionaries and short term assistants were acknowledged, as well. Christie Ballmann presented a chalk talk to finish our evening, focusing on the life of missionary Darlene Rose, whose story is in the book *Evidence Not Seen*.

A leadership breakfast was held the following morning. Using verses from Titus 2:3-5, Molly Wiesen, the second vice president of the WMF, shared on the theme, “Equipping by Example.” Those present were encouraged to lead reverent lives as leaders in their congregation so that “no one maligns the Word of God.” Bible studies, prayer, support through a servant heart and fellowship events were ways that were discussed to increase involvement of more women in local churches. Small group brainstorming was done to create ideas for women’s gatherings.

Our Mission Festival Service later that evening was led by Karen Pederson in the absence of Lorilee Mundfrom. The night began with praise and worship being led by members of Abiding Savior Free Lutheran and Living Word Free Lutheran congregations. Pastor Jonathan Abel, AFLC missionary to Brazil, gave the message. A video greeting was presented from our missionaries throughout the world. Pastor Del Palmer, director of AFLC World Missions, led the commissioning service for Pastor Andy and Monica Coyle (AFLC missionaries on loan to EEMN who begin work in Ukraine) and Justo and Patricia Pillman (new AFLC missionaries to Ecuador). A reception followed the service in honor of our newly commissioned missionaries.

Submitted by the Women’s Missionary Federation.

Topics of importance

Lessons learned from Christian scientist, author & teacher Dr. David Menton

By Thomas Asfeldt

During the 2011 AFLC annual conference I had the opportunity to attend a variety of worship services, a corporation meeting and educational sessions. Each was a blessing in its own way, and provided evidence of the scriptural foundation of our Free Lutheran congregations. As a Christian with a vocation and calling in healthcare, as well as teenagers in the public school system, Dr. David Menton's educational sessions offered immediately following the conference were of particular interest. If you are unfamiliar with Menton and the organization he represents, explore www.answersingenesis.org. He is a man of God's Word and a well-respected expert in human anatomy and cell biology.

Menton's session on "Three Ways to Make an Apeman" provided a scientific understanding of how evolutionists create an ape-human being in order to support Darwin's theory. These methods include three steps. First, they take a human skull and declare that it is ape-like. Second, they take an ape skull and declare that it is human-like. And third, they mix human and ape fossil bones together. During his presentation Menton demonstrated the accepted scientific method of examining a skull to determine the species of origin. Without exception, there is no evidence to support one species (ape) becoming another species (human), nor is there evidence that either is "like" the other. It is important, however, to affirm that variation within a species is common and consistent with both creation and scientific understanding.

His session "The Hearing Ear and Seeing Eye" provided a fascinating look at the details of the human eye and human ear. Using scientific tools and instruments like the electron microscope, we are able to see the complexity of these two amazing sensory organs in the human body at an intimately detailed level. For example, the skin cells in the ear canal are shed horizontally rather than vertically like the rest of the body. As they move from the ear drum to the outside, they take along the ear wax and dust particles. If these skin



cells had not been created this way, the ear canal would be plugged with dead cells, dirt and wax, making us unable to hear. Without doubt, the evidence points to a creator of extreme intelligence and a creation that can in no way be the result of random chance and just plain dumb luck.

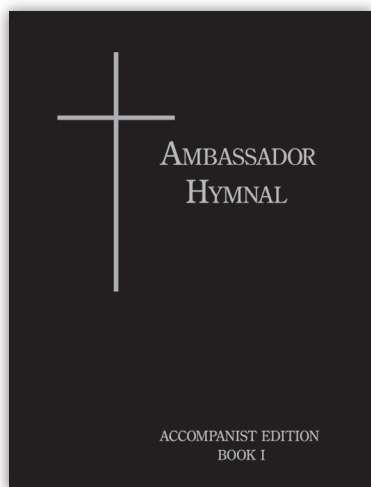
These topics are of great importance to all Christians. The first chapter of Genesis provides the details of how God created the earth, heavens and all living things. This account has been given to us so that we might declare God as the only God—the creator of all that is good—and see the evidence of His existence in all of creation. Creation is also completely incompatible with the theory of evolution, and completely supported by scientific evidence. As believers of the holy, inspired, infallible Word of God, we must only accept the truth of creation, and reject the secular theory of evolution. Menton provides the scientific evidence, scriptural knowledge and encouragement that enables us to do both.

Asfeldt is a member of Living Word Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D.

New resources now available

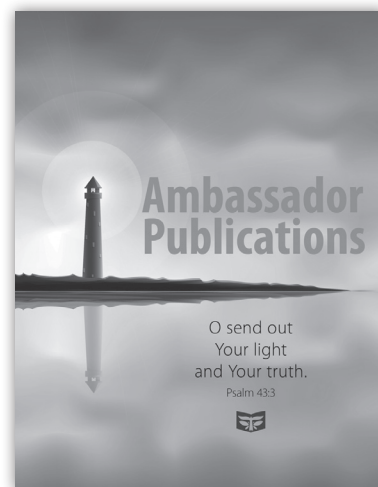
Ambassador Hymnal accompanist edition now available

The AFLC Coordinating Committee recently produced a new two-volume spiral bound hardcover accompanist edition of the *Ambassador Hymnal*. This edition replaces the original softbound volume. The two-volume set sells for \$70 and can be ordered from Ambassador Publications.



New Ambassador Publications catalog

Two copies of the new Ambassador Publications catalog were mailed to each AFLC congregation in July, addressed to the pastor and Sunday school superintendent. Additional free copies can be requested by individuals or congregations by contacting Ambassador Publications.



AFLC Heritage Series Volume III introduced at Annual Conference

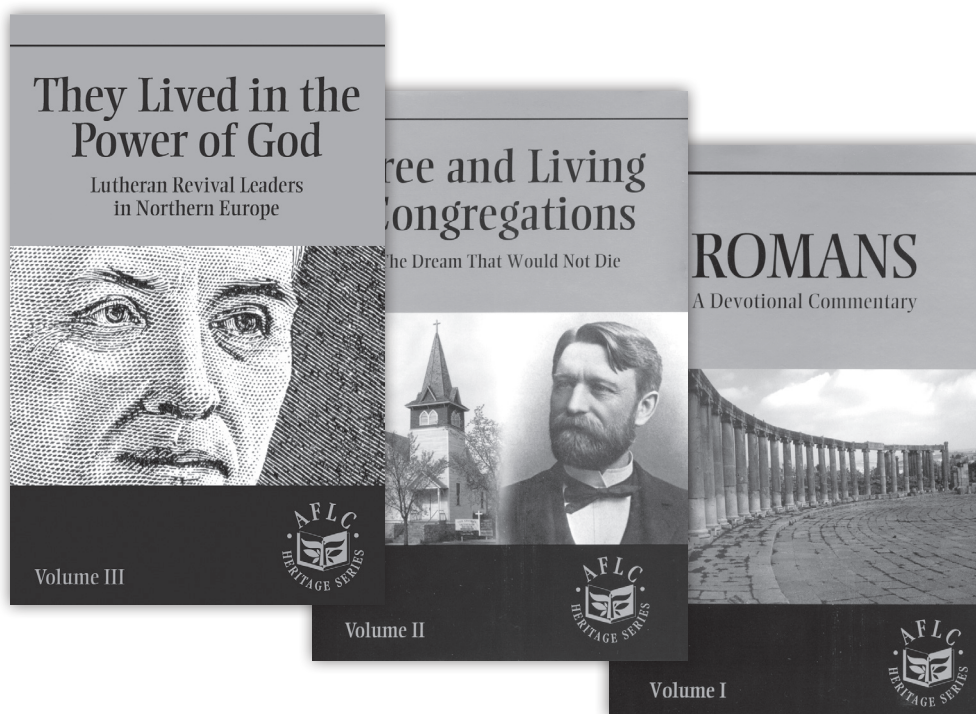
They Lived in the Power of God: Lutheran Revival Leaders in Northern Europe

Translated from Finnish, this collection of biographical writings by Dr. Uuras Saarnivaara on Lutheran pietists from Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland includes chapters on Johann Arndt, Jakob Spener, C. O. Rosenius, Hans Nielsen Hauge, Ole Hallesby, and many others, as well as maps and informative, historical introductions to give context to each biography. Available for \$22 from Ambassador Publications.

Also available for \$20 each:

Volume I – *Romans: A Devotional Commentary*

Volume II – *Free and Living Congregations: The Dream That Would Not Die*



For more information or to order any of these resources, contact Ambassador Publications by calling 763-545-5631 or e-mail parished@afcl.org.

Shiloh: Peaceful One

“And He said to them, ‘Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while’” (Mark 6:31a).

By Pastor Michael Brandt

When Erwin and Lorraine Brandt said “yes” to Jesus, little did they know what God had in store for them. As renters of a farm just outside of Garretson, S.D., they simply desired to obey and were willing to leave a place they loved to serve a Savior they loved even more.

Mom and Dad faithfully served Jesus in four parishes. Moved by my parent’s faith, the two elderly single sisters who owned the farm sold it to my grandfather. However, there was a condition. Out of respect for my parents, the farm was to be deeded over to them upon their retirement. Who but God could work such a miracle?

They left as renters and would return as owners.

My sisters and I were thankful God had provided for my parent’s retirement. God was bringing His peace to their future—a place to live, a yearly

rental income and, if needed, the sale of the farm would cover the costs of long-term care. However, like my parents, little did we know what God had in store for their future.

The gift of returning to the farm increased their devotion to Shiloh, the peaceful One. Though retired, they remained engaged in ministry. Dad provided interim service for several congregations and helped found Abiding Savior Free Lutheran in Sioux Falls. In addition, using their woodworking and painting skills, they established a craft ministry. In honor of their Provider, they named it Shiloh Woodworking.

The Good Shepherd had in mind far more than we could have imagined. Long-term care was not intended for my parents, but for all of God’s shepherds. Neither Mom nor Dad needed extended nursing care. After only a few days in a hospice center, Mom passed into glory. A little more than nine months later, while receiving in-home hospice care, Dad joined her. Once again, God graciously provided a peaceful journey from earthly life to life eternal.

My sisters and I had never considered that our parents, people of humble means, would leave us an earthly estate. The legacy of their faith was already an undeserved, priceless inheritance. Who could wish for more? Yet, the miracle lived on.

On Nov. 10, 2010, the farm was sold at auction. In amazement, we listened as the auctioneer received the bids. As the final and third call came, the miracle continued. The per-acre price and the fact that there would not be any state or federal inheritance taxes, was further evidence of God’s goodness. From expecting nothing to recognizing God was expecting something, my wife, Colleen, and I prayerfully knew that Christ, our Shiloh, had a greater vision.

In joy, we began the process of seeking His will. As many of you know, in 2006 Christ gave me peace to establish Shepherding the Shepherds, a ministry designed to offer shepherding care to pastors, lay-leaders, and their ministries. Believing this is His will, God has given us peace to further enhance our ministry by establishing a shepherding site in the Black Hills of South Dakota (my folks’ favorite vacation spot). On a four-acre, wooded parcel, a cabin named Shiloh will provide a peaceful place where pastors, lay-leaders, and leadership committees can gather for rest, renewal, mentoring, and vision casting.

Like our present model of ministry, this will be a faith-based venture. As we have freely received, we will freely give. Though operational costs will be incurred, we know God will provide through those who share our vision.

Presently, Colleen and I are in the process of selling our house in Sioux Falls. We have purchased four acres in the Black Hills and plans have been drawn for our house and the shepherding cabin. As I write, construction has begun. We now own a septic tank! In truth, God owns it. By His grace, we’ll care for it. Our builder has set early November as a tentative completion date. Upon completion, an availability schedule will be mailed to each pastor in our AFLC. Shiloh’s opportunity will be in addition to our current leadership and congregational on-site ministry. Shepherding’s present ministry of assessment, renewal/revival, mentoring, equipping, strategic planning, vision casting, and intervention will still be available.

Brandt, vice president of the AFLC, will open up the new Shepherding the Shepherds ministry site in the Black Hills of South Dakota later this year.

Shepherding the Shepherds

Phone: 605.351.1159

Email:
pastorbrandt@knowingthesavior.org

Web:
shepherdingtheshepherds.com



Imprisoned



BY PASTOR TOM BAKER

While serving as a pastor in Wisconsin, I visited a few young men in jail. But it was not until I was called to serve Christ Lutheran in Tulia, Texas, that I became more active in doing volunteer prison ministry. With the congregation's support, I visited the county jail two to three times a week. The church also provided me with large-print Bibles to give to the inmates, which were popular and well used. On return visits I would find these new Bibles looking very worn because passages were underlined from start to finish. The inmates' questions were always related to the text they were reading. Several inmates visited me at the parsonage upon their release. Two became fairly regular attendees. Praise God!

Later, the chaplain at the state prison (himself a volunteer) asked me to join the preaching rotation and lead the worship service every six to eight weeks. That was my introduction to preaching in the "big house."

When our church membership dwindled and could no longer afford to pay a pastor, I applied for the chaplaincy at the state prison in Plainview. I was not selected, but was hired as a drug and alcohol counselor. Since prisoners spend much of their time studying the staff, it was no secret that I was a pastor. The opportunities to witness to inmates about Christ were limitless. When the program was discontinued because of a financial crisis, I found myself transferred to the mail department in one of the largest and most dangerous prisons in western Texas. Like Joseph imprisoned in Egypt, I wondered, "Lord, just what am I doing here?"

I had some of the most rewarding ministry opportunities there since I graduated from the Free Lutheran Seminary. I delivered mail to the high-security section of the prison. Many of

the offenders there were extremely violent, guilty of crimes like murder, rape, and assault, and had sentences ranging from 20 years to life.

Because the inmates always listened when they could to staff conversations, they heard me daily ask the guards about their relationships with Christ. Many of the inmates would then ask me questions. One man gave me details about his violent past. One day, while listening to a Christian radio broadcast, he gave his heart to Christ. He said the hatred and violence in his soul were gone.

Three chaplains serve a prison population of 3,714 inmates. Without a dedicated handful of Christian volunteers who go cell to cell, most of these men would have no Christian witness. Many inmates request Bible studies. Some do so because they want certificates of completion to show the parole board. Others request them because they are truly seeking God. In either case, the Word of God will not return empty without accomplishing God's purpose.

I have had inmates tell me that they want to read the Bible but do not know where to start or how to understand what they read. When Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch if he understood what he was reading, the Eunuch replied, "How can I, unless someone explains it to me?" (Acts 8:31). I have heard that cry from too many inmates. We need volunteers—both lay and ordained—who are willing to visit and teach the least of these the only way to find forgiveness of sins. Prayerfully consider whether Christ would use you as one of those volunteers.

Baker is employed by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in Plainview, Texas.

Difficult circumstances

BY PASTOR TODD SCHIERKOLK

This past February, Adri was diagnosed with cancer. Originally from Venezuela, she'd had a hard life full of sad circumstances, bad decisions and their tragic consequences. In God's love and providence the next two months following the diagnosis served to force her to confront some of the faith and life issues that she had been content to let linger. As the possibility of death grew more real, the reality of who her Savior was and what He had done for her grew more precious.

Throughout those months our family had many special times of prayer and reading from God's Word with Adri and her girls before we left for our time of deputation. It was very hard to say good-bye. The news that I received just two weeks after arriving in the United States was not good, and yet God was still doing good things. There had been many things we'd heard from the doctors, some very hopeful and some very bad. We had been forcefully keeping our eyes on Jesus, remembering that even if the doctors are right in their diagnosis, God always has the last word. We also know that if He has the power to raise a dead man from his tomb (Lazarus), He also has the power to cleanse a body from cancer no matter how bad it looks. Then we received the news that Adri's cancer had spread into her lungs. She had been in great pain. She made it through two chemotherapy sessions, but one doctor said there really wasn't any point in attempting a third. By that point Adri just wanted to go to heaven.

In our absence, praise God, the church responded. They organized a prayer chain to fast and pray for Adri, knowing that with God nothing is impossible. God used Adri's dire circumstances to pull the individuals of the church together and care for her family. In the middle of much suffering, God accomplished a lot in the hearts of Adri and her three daughters. It was at the same time difficult and precious to watch them grow through this and fix their eyes on Jesus. It was wonderful to see precious answers to prayer and to see them grow from misconceptions about what faith is to a firm trust in God, His love, His power, His mercy and His wisdom and plan, whether He said "yes" to their petition to heal their mother here on earth or whether He said "no" and called her



Pictured (from left) are Adri's oldest daughter, Stefanie, her little boy Kleyberth, Adri (now deceased), Sofia (14), and Georgina (13).

home to heaven to experience His healing there. So we continued to pray persistently with the church, and they were encouraged to know that so many others in the States were praying for them, as well.

Adri passed away about three weeks after we returned to the U.S. Her daughters have no family in Mexico, and their adopted legal father has harmed them in the past. It is exceedingly difficult for us to be far from her family under these circumstances. Yet, we know that God is in control of our times. Her two youngest girls are doing amazingly well, from what we understand, with a firm faith that trusts in God even when He does not grant us the desire of our hearts. We look forward to seeing them again and are prayerfully planning on returning to our ministry in Mexico after our time of deputation in about a year. Please continue to pray for Adri's daughters. May God alone be glorified!

The Schierkolks are AFLC missionaries serving in Jerez, Mexico. They are currently on furlough in the U.S. and plan to return to Mexico next year.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE



ABOVE: Dr. Robert Kohl, Brookings, S.D., addresses the conference audience as he speaks to a resolution.



TOP LEFT: Pastor Michael Johnson, Brandon, Minn., listens to a comment from a conference attendee.

ABOVE: Children attending the conference had a full schedule of events planned. Steve and Faith Treague, members of host church Abiding Savior Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, presented a program of illusions featuring Burnnie the bunny to open up the vacation Bible school program. For more information on the Treagues, visit www.burnnie.org.

MIDDLE LEFT: Cheryl Skordahl, Pipestone, Minn., and Faith Nelson, Rockford, Minn., catch up during a break.



ABOVE: More than 500 people were present during the opening service of the conference, which featured Dr. H. B. London.



LEFT: Pastor Elden Nelson (right), AFLC president, ordains David Franz, a 2011 AFLTS graduate, during the closing service.

TOP LEFT: Children of conference attendees attended vacation Bible school each morning.

TOP RIGHT: Pastor Jon Benson, Upsala, Minn., addresses a resolution.

MIDDLE RIGHT: VBS programming included crafts, a Bible lesson and games.

MIDDLE LEFT: Pastor David Nelson, Ontonagon, Mich., led the daily prayer hour.

ABOVE: Justo and Tricia Pillman, Woodville, Wis., were together with their family.

LEFT: Pastor Brian Davidson (right) AFLC secretary, addresses the conference floor.

AFLC memorials: June

AFLBS

Ruth Claus
Jack O'Neil
Lillian Bergstedt
Barb Dibble
Margaret Sahalberg

AFLTS

Mark Hoops
Lyla Hunter
Pastor Stephen Odegaard
Kenneth Hanson
Lillian Bergstedt (2)
Myron Banks

All departments

Earl Hartsoch

Evangelism

Lillian Bergstedt
Pastor Merle Knutson

General Fund

Pastor Orville Olson

Home Missions

Russell Eckstrom

World Missions

Ludwig Lund
Pastor Orville Olson
Pastor Merle Knutson

Youth Ministries

Lillian Bergstedt

... in honor of

AFLBS

Judy Dyrud

Knutson was missionary to Madagascar, pastor

Pastor Merle Knutson, 87, of Slayton, Minn., died June 16 at Golden Living Center, Slayton. Born Dec. 17, 1923, in Lakefield, Minn., he was the son of Andrew and Thea (Trondson) Knutson. He married Ardys Eggen June 1, 1946, in Lakefield. She preceded him in death in June 2003.

He grew up in Lakefield and graduated from Lakefield High School in 1942. Following their marriage they briefly farmed near Lakefield before moving to Minneapolis to attend the Lutheran Bible Institute. He attended Augsburg College in Minneapolis, graduating in 1951. Merle then went on to attend Luther Theological Seminary, graduating in 1954. They served as missionaries to Madagascar under the Evangelical Lutheran Church from 1955 to 1966. In 1966 they returned to the United States and he served as pastor at churches in Montpelier and Ypsilanti, N.D., Newfolden, Minn., Boscobel, Wis., and Ishpeming, Mich. Following his retirement, he served as an interim pastor in Pipestone, and Rollog, Minn. In 2005 he moved to Slayton. He was a member of Christ Lutheran Church, Slayton. Many people experienced the love of Jesus through Merle's witnessing, love, caring, and strong faith in his Lord.

Surviving are four children, Michael Knutson, Saginaw, Mich., Lorrie (James) O'Meara, Robbinsdale, Minn., Lynn Knutson, Slayton, and Marc Knutson, Lake Park, Minn.; two sisters, Ora Kennedy of California and Lois Mix of Wisconsin; 10 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren.

The service was June 21 at Christ Lutheran, Slayton, with Pastor Craig Nissen officiating. Burial was in Lakefield City Cemetery in Lakefield.

Olson left farming to join pastorate

Pastor Orville Olson, 89, of Fargo, N.D., died June 3. Born Sept. 28, 1921, near Clarion, Iowa, he was the son of Ole and Anna (Huus) Olson. He married Shirley Carlson March 13, 1942. She preceded him in death on Sept. 12, 2008.

He was baptized and confirmed at Holmes Lutheran Church, Holmes, Iowa. He attended country school through eighth grade. After his marriage, they farmed northwest of Clarion until 1960, when they moved to Fergus Falls, Minn., where he attended Lutheran Brethren Seminary. After completing his diploma program, they moved with their two youngest sons to Japan, where they were house parents at the Lutheran Brethren mission school for two years. After returning from Japan, he served a seven-church parish in Greenbush, Minn., where he was ordained in 1966, a three-church parish in McIntosh, Minn., and a church in Hatton, N.D. He founded a part-time chaplaincy program at the Tri-County Home while living in Hatton. They moved to Arizona in 1981 upon his retirement. They later returned to Minnesota, and then to Fargo.

Surviving are four sons, David (Margaret) Olson, Reston, Va., Dennis Olson, Hastings, Minn., Joseph Olson, Minneapolis, and James (Linda) Olson, Fargo; five brothers, Stanley Olson, Mason City, Iowa, Arnold Olson, Clarion, Luther (Beverly) Olson, Webster City, Iowa, Donald Olson, Dawn, Mo., and Philip (Connie) Olson, Urbandale, Iowa; two sisters, Signora (Kenneth) Stolhammer, Hibbing, Minn., Selma Lee, Bloomer, Wis.; six grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

The service was held June 7 at Holmes Lutheran, Holmes, Iowa, with Pastor Joel Rolf officiating. Burial was in Holmes Lutheran Cemetery.

ARC hosts Classic Retreat in Sept.

Classics' Retreat

Dates: Sept. 9-11

Ages 55 +

Leaders: Jim and Cindy Lilly, Hope Lutheran, Minneapolis

Theme: Saying Yes to God

For more information on camps and retreats, 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.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1-June 30, 2011

FUND	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$27,317	\$144,924	\$161,870
Evangelism	11,597	55,835	69,305
Youth Ministries	7,095	65,800	75,960
Parish Education	9,158	60,705	58,972
Seminary	19,357	111,887	103,465
Bible School	36,046	237,479	231,159
Home Missions	34,682	225,345	256,501
World Missions	29,628	226,585	139,636
Personal Support	24,599	182,315	152,883
TOTALS	\$199,482	\$1,310,875	\$1,249,750

Contact the individual departments for further information about specific financial needs.

Get in the game

A basketball game had just ended and I was sitting in the stands watching some kids and adults having fun and shooting baskets. The friend I was with said, “Why don’t you go out and join them?” That was just the suggestion I had been waiting for. Watching was fun, but I wanted to get out of the stands and on the court.

It is more fun to get in the game in sports—and in the life of the congregation. A lot of people, though, do more watching than playing when it comes to sports and in many congregations. Some people are merely spectators and are missing out on the joy of being in the game and serving the Lord.



Pastor Craig Johnson

At our recent annual conference, Dr. Dan Mundfrom shared his last report as chairman of the AFLC Schools Board of Trustees. Dr. Mundfrom has served two five-year terms on the board and was not eligible for re-election. He shared about the privilege and rewarding experience it has been to serve on the board. He expressed thanks to those he had served with and to the Lord for letting him serve in this capacity. It was an encouraging testimony from someone who was thankful for the opportunity to enter the game.

Members of the nominating committee of the annual conference faced some challenges this year. The corporations and committees of our AFLC are supposed to be made up of a majority of lay people. Coming up with the necessary number of lay people for all of our corporations and committees was particularly challenging.

It is difficult for a lot of lay people, es-

pecially if they have families and Monday to Friday jobs, to find the time and money to attend the annual conference. Our past experience, however, with conference scheduled through a Saturday, found little to no increase in lay attendance on Saturday. I don’t know what the answer is, but we do need to keep working at it, maybe trying new things, and praying for increased lay attendance and involvement at our annual conferences.

It is crucial for the future of our church body that more people become participants rather than just spectators.

First of all, we want them to be participants in the life of their congregation.

That is the primary place where the work of God’s kingdom goes on. We also, though, need more people to catch a vision for the work of the wider church body. There are some things—like planting new congregations around the world, training future pastors and other ministries—that an individual

congregation can’t do on its own. We need one another. But for those ministries to be effective we need people to get out of the stands and get in the game.

It is much more enjoyable and interesting to be in the game. It is a gift from God. The apostle Paul viewed serving as an undeserved privilege God gave him: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service”

(I Timothy 1:12, NIV). Paul endured much suffering and persecution. Still, he viewed serving God and sharing the good news of Jesus as something he got to do; not just something he had to do.

We should not try to coerce people into service by laying a guilt trip on them. Instead, we should let people know, with our words and our lives, what a joy and honor it is to be appointed to God’s service. We get to serve the One who loves us and gave His life for us.

God has a place of service for each one who has faith in Jesus. We get to be on

Instead, we should let people know, with our words and our lives, what a joy and honor it is to be appointed to God’s service. We get to serve the One who loves us and gave His life for us.

God’s team. We get to share the greatest news of all. We get to tell people about Jesus, crucified and risen again. We don’t have to just sit in the stands and watch. We can join in the greatest adventure of all: serving the Lord, sharing His love and impacting lives for Christ.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Periodicals

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

building the base

Recalculating

BY PASTOR BRETT BOE

Before we moved to Dalton, Minn., my wife, Theresa, gave me a very useful gift for my graduation from seminary: a GPS. She knew that I would have trouble navigating around all of the lakes and winding roads near our new home. One of the most terrifying, and at the same time most comforting, things the British-accented GPS voice says is, “Recalculating.”

I hear this every time I have veered off the course the GPS has selected for me to get from point A to point B. For a brief moment after I hear this word, I fear that I have lost my way. But in the few seconds following my mistake, the GPS loads a new set of directions. This fresh set of directions begins from the point at which I have steered off course. I don’t have to think, “Now how am I going to get there from here?” This little gadget has the answer for me.

Life as a disciple of Jesus Christ is often compared to a journey. Scripture certainly speaks of it this way. It would be an interesting study to examine all of the “direction” language in Scripture. One passage that falls into this category is Proverbs 4. The writer speaks to his son in verse 10, exhorting him to “accept his sayings.” This is a good reminder that we need to fully trust those who give us instruction in order to be guided by them. In Proverbs 4, the father has graciously guided his son, as mentioned in verse 11, “I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths.” All disciples of Jesus can look back and acknowledge the guidance he or she has found from the words of Scripture. We may not have had an audible voice like the friendly lady with a British accent telling us when to turn right or left, but we have had the principles of

wisdom from the Bible, which are our guide. For this, we praise the goodness of God.

When we do decide to go off-roading in life, turning to sin and the pursuit of our selfish desires, we hear the words of Scripture calling us to repentance. We lose our bearings. Once, my GPS was so bewildered by how turned around I was that it said, “At the next convenient opportunity, make a U-turn.” Whether by neglect, ignorance or blatant disregard for the directions from Scripture, the truth remains that we are not where God wants us. The words of Proverbs 4:14-15 guide us, “Do not enter the path of the wicked and do not proceed in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on.” These words are a metaphorical “recalculating.”

We must realize the grace of God in calling us out of our sin. It hurts us to be told we are going in a wrong direction, but can you imagine if God let us go our own way? Instead, He patiently offers us a new path. That path leads to Christ and the cross.

As we repent and turn away from sin and to God in faith during situations like these, God uses this whole ordeal to bring growth in grace in our lives as disciples. While a GPS does not always give perfectly accurate directions, God’s Word does. “Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil” (Proverbs 4:26-27).

Boe serves the Dalton, Minn., parish of Zion-Sarpsborg Lutheran, Kvam Free Lutheran and Tordenskjold Lutheran.