

THE LUTHERAN 

AUGUST 2010

AMBASSADOR



HIS JOY, OUR STRENGTH
The 2010 Annual Conference Report

Our fire

BY MARCUS DAHL



suit

There are people who fight fire. They volunteer and promise to give their lives for others. They run into the flames and do not consider the sacrifice they make as they run. These people do not sit idle, but are ready at a moment's notice. They have the equipment, the training, and, above all, the courage to protect others from danger.

Some Christians are like these firemen. The situations they face might appear to be less dramatic, less obvious to one in common conversations. Yet, their struggles and courage are no less heroic. Gentleness, loving smiles, and encouraging words are part of their equipment. Their strength is from Jesus Christ, who radiates in their hearts. Christ expresses Himself through these ordinary people, sometimes using them in extraordinary ways.

These Christians are often unnoticed, that's why I want to share the story of one of my close friends with you. I want you to see how Christ has worked in my friend's life, so that you can be encouraged to see how Jesus can work through yours. So let me introduce you to my friend, Chip.

Chip is nearly 70 years old and attends three early morning Bible studies a week. He has the special job of unlocking church buildings, setting up chairs and greeting the men who come to these fellowship meetings. He carries an oversized radio/CD player from his car trunk into the church, plays a song for the group and then he begins each Bible study with a few words of encouragement and prayer. Like a fireman, Chip pops out of bed and drives himself to these meetings before 6 a.m. He doesn't

consider sleeping in, how cold or dark it is outside, or anything else that could easily derail his ministry.

He knows what Paul meant

when he wrote in the 12th chapter of Romans, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." I've seen Chip cry. I love that about him. I've seen him dance with joy, too.

There are many men in these Bible studies who have a lot of struggles. They are facing foreclosures, bankruptcies, even divorce. Chip has problems, too. He cares for his wife, and takes her to medical appointments that consume a lot of his time. He's unemployed, challenged by the job market, and has financial issues. However, Chip has a striking optimism and a deep faith that protect him. His wife prays and recites Psalm 91 from memory every morning. She prays for Chip, and he is always praying for her.

Chip brings his problems and worries to the cross. This is Chip's fire suit. He doesn't put the suit on and then rest; he dashes forward. He told me last week that he volunteered to teach first graders during vacation Bible school at his church.

Chip knows what it means to press on toward his high calling.

We all have problems, struggles, worries, and distractions. Trust Jesus as your fire suit and dash forward. Desire to serve Him, and He will use you, too.

Dahl, a member of Hope Lutheran, Minneapolis, is a student at the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, Plymouth, Minn.

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From the 2010 AFLC Annual Conference

As a board we understand fully that we are dependent on God alone to provide what is needed to meet our budget goal. ... We can move forward only as God provides. Therefore, we continue to trust God for His provision.

—Pastor John Mundfrom
Chairman, Board of Publications and Parish Education

[There are all kinds of suggestions and efforts to encourage our families, friends and neighbors to more regular church attendance, but the real and desperate need of America today is revival. Better attendance may look good as statistics on church records and public polling, but it is the hearts of men that need change, not just their habits.]

—Pastor Elden Nelson
AFLC President

Teenagers will not be the church of tomorrow, if we do not see them as the church of today. If saved teens do not see themselves as the Body of Christ right now, then how can we expect them to see themselves as a part of a local congregation a decade from now?

—Pastor Jason Holt
Director of Youth Ministries

In His wisdom God does what is best, in the way and time that is also best. We can rest in the assurance that He governs by His wisdom — even when we can't make sense out of our circumstances.

—Pastor Rick Long
AFLC Home Missions Committee Chairman

conference

Familiar





Ground

by Pastor Craig Johnson

RETURNING TO A FAMILIAR

place brings back memories. When you return you notice things that have changed since the last time you were there. Remembering and noticing new things happened when the AFLC Annual Conference returned June 15-18 to the campus of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School and Seminary, Plymouth, Minn.

It had been 26 years since an annual conference was held on the schools' campus. In that time a lot of new buildings have been constructed. The schools' chapel was recently renovated and the seating capacity increased, which made it possible to hold the conference there again. In recent years a pipe organ was donated to the schools and installed. It was a welcome addition to the conference's worship services.



The opening service for the Annual Conference was held at New Hope Church, near the AFLC Schools' campus in Plymouth, Minn. Pastor Peter Franz led the service and Pastor Tim Skramstad gave the message.

On the cover: Jeremy Crowell, Micah Hjermstad, Robert Lee and Thomas Olson were ordained by Pastor Elden Nelson at the closing service.

conference

The conference passed a resolution expressing appreciation for the work that has been done on the chapel and encouraging congregations to prayerfully commit themselves to eliminating the approximately \$200,000 debt that remains from the chapel's renovation project. A dedication service was held during the conference renaming the chapel the "Hans Nielsen Hauge Memorial Chapel." Teaching was given on the influence of Hauge and his part in the heritage of the AFLC as well as the work of the Hauge Innermission Federation, which originally built the chapel building 50 years ago and then sold it to the AFLC.

Also recently renamed were the two campus dormitories. The men's dorm is now "John Strand Hall," named after the first president of the AFLC and the first dean of AFLBS. The women's dorm has been named "Trygve Dahle Hall." Pastor Dahle was very involved in the early days of the AFLC and led the efforts to raise funds for the building of the dormitory.

Another relatively recent addition to the campus is the schools' Heritage Hall. It includes a student center, classrooms and cafeteria. The conference celebrated the debt retirement on the mortgage for the building. The conference also approved the Schools' Corporation's proposal to begin the next phase of building on campus. This is motivated by the need for more dormitory space for AFLBS students.

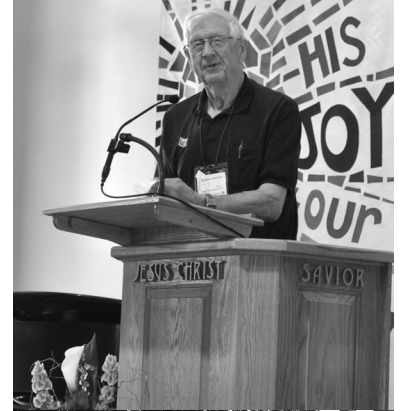
The conference returned to the same individuals to fill positions of leadership. Re-elected to their positions were Pastor Elden Nelson as president, Pastor Michael Brandt as vice president and Pastor Brian Davidson as secretary.

Issues of finances and budgets were returned to during conference sessions. The Budget Analysis Review Committee reported on their review of the finances and budget proposals of the various departments of the AFLC. They said that giving to the AFLC "has been essentially flat for five years. God has been very gracious, and blessed us with all that we have needed to carry out the work He has placed before us. However, the 10 to 15 percent growth in revenue we experienced in the past has not continued these last few years." Committee members expressed serious concerns about subsidy requests that were significantly higher than previous years' receipts. "We would remind the Conference that your approval of the subsidy requests for each ministry represent the approval of the stated budget and direction of that ministry, and the pledge of the larger church body to support each ministry to that level. In light of the serious divergence between past giving and anticipated spending, we would strongly encourage the Annual Conference to give sober and prayerful consideration before approving the budgets here presented." Some discussion of budgets occurred on the conference floor, and they were eventually approved.

Representatives from the Association Retreat Center in Osceola, Wis., shared about their financial situation. A challenge was presented to find 668 individuals or groups who would each donate \$1,000 to eliminate a debt the ARC owes to banks. The ARC's total debt is approximately \$1.8 million.

In the area of things that have changed, ARC Director Pat Flanders told of the many lives that have been changed through the ministry of the ARC and the many people in the past year who

NEAR RIGHT: Vicki Johnson, Cloquet, Minn., takes part in the prayer time during conference. FROM TOP: Bob Dietsche, Osceola, Wis.; conference attendees outside the chapel during coffee break; the parliamentarians debate procedure at the chairman's table; Pastor Terry Olson, Grafton, N.D., and his granddaughter; Pastor Kris Nyman as Georg Sverdrup; Pastor Kevin Olson, Ambassador Institute, meets with a conference committee.



conference



have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior during events held at the ARC.

Out of a desire to see more lives changed, people were commissioned and sent out into missionary service during the conference. As part of the Mission Festival service led by the Women's Missionary Federation, Jonni Silver was commissioned to serve as a missionary in Brazil. Her primary area of service will be with the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourao, Brazil. In their report the World Missions Department shared that missionary candidates Pastor Andy and Monica Coyle expect to be commissioned and begin missionary service in the Ukraine in the summer of 2011. World Missions and the conference expressed appreciation for Pastor Tim and Renata Hinrichs' 17 years of missionary service in the Czech Republic and Poland. They recently began serving Word of Life Free Lutheran in Mankato, Minn.

Four men were ordained into the ministry at the closing service of the conference. The men were Jeremy Crowell, Micah Hjermstad, Robert W. Lee and Thomas W. Olson. Hjermstad will be serving Hope Free Evangelical Lutheran of Ishpeming, Mich. Olson will serve the Trinity Lutheran Parish of Dodge, Golden Valley and Zap, N.D. Along with their ordination, Crowell and Lee were both commissioned for missionary service with AFLC Home Missions in Naknek, Alaska.

Because of concerns the campus chapel may not be large enough, the opening worship service of the conference, which included the serving of Holy Communion, was held at New Hope Church in New Hope, Minn. Special music was shared by a joint choir from area churches and the Ambassadors from AFLBS. Pastor Tim Skramstad of Eagan, Minn., spoke on the conference theme: "His Joy, Our Strength," from Nehemiah 8:10.

On the day before the conference began the AFLC Evangelism Commission sponsored a Rekindle the Fire event for pastors and their spouses. The speaker was Jeff Siemon, who played professional football and now works with Search Ministries. The Commission shared with the

conference about work being done on developing one-minute radio spots that congregations can download and use on local stations and Web sites.

Another tool for congregations that was shared at the conference was the E-Toolbox, developed by AFLC Youth Ministries. It is a one gigabyte jump drive with a variety of youth ministry resources that can be loaded into a computer. The Youth Ministries Department expressed thankfulness for God's provision of the necessary funding that



made it possible for Youth Ministries Director Jason Holt to return to full-time ministry in 2010.

The Parish Education Department shared about resources they have available for congregations. There has been increased interest in translating and publishing some of the material into other languages. They also reported that, in preparation for the AFLC's 50th anniversary, they have begun working with the Coordinating Committee on an anniversary book.

Registration for the conference totaled 560. Next year's annual conference will be held in Sioux Falls, S.D. The 2012 Annual Conference, celebrating the AFLC's 50th anniversary, will be held in Thief River Falls, Minn., the site of the first AFLC conference.

NEAR LEFT: Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D., gave a report on Committee No. 4, Parish Education and Youth. FROM TOP: Pastor Tony Stockman, Madison, S.D., works on Committee No. 2, Schools; Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn., takes part in Committee No. 4; Adam Osier, a student at AFLTS, hangs out with Will Thorson, Larimore, N.D.; Pastor Tim Skramstad spoke at the opening service; ladies have coffee outside during a break; Pastor Brian Davidson and Pastor Elden Nelson led the business meetings; Pastor Wade and Michele Mobley and their new babies, Benjamin and Hannah. THIS PAGE: Registration boxes lined the hallway.

More pictures on 20-21.



COLLOQUY COMMITTEE

Pastor Mark Antal, Park River, N.D.
Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D.
Pastor Cal Willard, Roseau, Minn.
Pastor Tom Gilman, Lakeville, Minn.
Pastor Dennis Gray, Newfolden, Minn.

Coordinating Committee

(Layman, five-year term)

Lowell Watt, Park River, N.D.

Commission on Evangelism

(Pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Peter Franz, Maple Grove, Minn.

(Layman, two-year term)

Eldon Hesterberg, Gifford, Ill.

Board of Publications and Parish Education

(Pastor, five-year term)

Pastor John Mundfrom, Eugene, Ore.

Youth Board

(Pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Wade Mobley, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Stewardship Board

(Pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Greg Schram, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Benefits Board

(Pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Larry Haagenson, Loveland, Colo.

(Layman, four-year term)

Todd Ringeon, Minot, N.D.

Budget Analysis Committee

(Pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Ken Hart, Saint Francis, Kan.

(Layman, five-year term)

Kevin Olson, Eden Prairie, Minn.

World Missions Committee

(Layman, five-year term)

Glen Mork, Buffalo, Minn.

(Layman, three-year term)

Paul Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa

Home Missions Committee

(Pastor, three-year term)

Pastor Dale Finstrom, Fertile, Minn.

Bay Broadcasting Board of Directors

(Pastor, three-year term)

Pastor Brian Davidson, Minneapolis, Minn.

FLAPS Board of Managers

(Layman, five-year term)

Dr. Kevin Lee, Beulah, N.D.

Schools Board of Trustees

(Pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck, Glyndon, Minn.

ARC Board

(Layman, five-year term)

Roger Timm, Wilson, Wis.

2011 CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Committee No. 1

(Administration)

Pastor James Johnson, Fergus Falls, Minn.
Pastor Cal Willard, Roseau, Minn.
Kurt Ziegler, Bethel Park, Pa.
Pastor Ray Ballmann, Glen Rose, Texas
Pastor Phil Hooper, Duluth, Minn.

Committee No. 2

(Schools)

Pastor Jon Wellumson, Williston, N.D.
Pastor Ronald Dahle, Grenora, N.D.
Pastor Tom Olson, Golden Valley, N.D.
Pastor Tonnes Pollestad, Andover, Minn.
Ken Peterson, Fertile, Minn.

Committee No. 3

(Missions and Evangelism)

Pastor John Amundson, New Leipzig, N.D.
Pastor Steve Mundfrom, Valley City, N.D.
Adam Timat, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Clara Gunderson, Cambridge, Minn.
Lee Schierkolk, Valley City, N.D.

CORPORATIONS

Schools Corporation

Ten terms, five years each

Pastor Alan Arneson, Fosston, Minn.
Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn.
Pastor Kirk Flaa, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Pastor James Johnson, Fergus Falls, Minn.
Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, Minn.
Mike McCarlson, Webster, S.D.
Michele Mobley, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Pastor James Molstre, Bethel Park, Pa.
Brent Peterson, Valley City, N.D.
Wendy Westlake, Zumbrota, Minn.

Two terms, four years each

Bonnie Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa
Pastor Kirk Thorson, Larimore, N.D.

One term, three years

Ken Lokken, Fargo, N.D.

One term, one year

Doug Swanson, Burtrom, Minn.

ARC Corporation

Ten terms, five years each

Lee Schierkolk, Valley City, N.D.
Peder Aadahl, Brookings, S.D.
Dennis Parsley, Pipestone, Minn.
Pastor Eric Christenson, Amery, Wis.
Pastor Tonnes Pollestad, Andover, Minn.
Nancy Langness, Ishpeming, Mich.
Roger Quanbeck, Cavalier, N.D.
Pastor John Rieth, Grand Forks, N.D.
Mike Coyle, Nicollet, Minn.
Kevin Holman, Minneapolis, Minn.

Committee No. 4

(Publications and Parish Education)

Pastor Rodney Johnson, Stanley, N.D.
Pastor Paul Kneeland, Sahuarita, Ariz.
Steve Diethorn, Bethel Park, Pa.
Jan Strand, Kenyon, Minn.
Pastor Sam Wellumson, E. Grand Forks, Minn.

Missions Corporation

Twenty terms, five years each

Vonne Coyle, Nicollet, Minn.
Dr. Peter Dyrud, Plymouth, Minn.
Pastor Dale Finstrom, Fertile, Minn.
Gene Finstrom, Buxton, N.D.
Pastor David Hinrichs, Park River, N.D.
Pastor Micah Hjermstad, Ishpeming, Mich.
Ron Jorgenson, Beulah, N.D.
Pastor Mark Johnson, Dalton, Minn.
Glen Larson, Fosston, Minn.
Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, Minn.
Pastor Ken Moland, Kirkland, Wash.
Pastor David Nelson, Ontonagon, Mich.
Pastor Kris Nyman, Beulah, N.D.
Pastor Joe Ocker, Frost, Minn.
Kevin Olson, Eden Prairie, Minn.
Ralph Peterson, Portland, N.D.
Wanita Sletten, Duluth, Minn.
Dr. Wayne Sletten, Faith, S.D.
Loren Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minn.
Eunice Will, Springfield, Mo.

One term, four years

Arley Hartsoch, Ray, N.D.

One term, three years

Pastor Tom Gilman, Lakeville, Minn.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Pastor Jeremy Crowell and Pastor Jon Benson count ballots.

AT RIGHT: Ladies talk outside the chapel building.

BELOW RIGHT: Jeannette Benson reads a ballot.

Committee No. 5

(Stewardship and Benefits)

Pastor Karl Anderson, Bagley, Minn.
Don Bullene, Bloomington, Minn.
Pastor Frank Cherney, Janesville, Wis.
Rod Kjersten, Roseau, Minn.
Pastor Ron Knutson, Kerkhoven, Minn.

2011 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Pastor Terry Culler, Hagerstown, Md.
Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn.
Pastor Dale Finstrom, Fertile, Minn.
Dean Hobelmann, Republic, Kansas
Pastor Herb Hoff, Salinas, Calif.
Kevin Hooper, Ishpeming, Mich.
Pastor Ron Jorgenson, Beulah, N.D.
Dr. Robert Kohl, Brookings, S.D.
Pastor Ken Moland, Kirkland, Wash.
Dr. Francis Monseth, Rogers, Minn.
Doug Niesen, Cloquet, Minn.
Nathaniel Olson, Argusville, N.D.
Pastor Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City, Okla.
Cliff Seldal, DeKalb, Ill.
Bill Sonmor, Dalton, Minn.
Paul Strand, Kenyon, Minn.



Encourage one another ... for such a time

By Phyllis Peterson

On June 15, the 48th annual national WMF Day was held on the campus of the AFLC Schools in Plymouth, Minn. Our theme was “Encourage One Another ... For Such a Time as This (Hebrews 10:25b, Esther 4:14b). Our theme song was “Day by Day,” accompanied on the pipe organ by Marian Christopherson.

National WMF President Lorilee Mundfrom welcomed attendees to the conference. Corrine Mattson, Glyndon, Minn., led a devotional time, applying the convention’s theme verses to her life experiences. Corrine also led in a memorial service and a time of prayer. The author of our 2010 Bible Study, Mary Christenson, brought participants into further study of the theme, drawing examples from our nation’s history and from the making of hats. Our praise and worship times were led by the Association Free Lutheran Bible School’s Ambassadors summer team.

During the business meeting, Karen Pederson was re-elected as first vice-president and Phyllis Peterson was re-elected as recording secretary. Resolutions were adopted, and the women attending the convention were urged to use them personally and bring them before their local and district gatherings. The WMF Constitution was amended to eliminate the office of third vice-president by a unanimous vote.

The four afternoon workshops offered were Beverly Enderlein’s “Encouragement to Persevere,” Ellen Monseth’s “Persevering Through Forgiveness,” Beth Talley’s

“Encouragement in Remembering God’s Faithfulness,” and DaNeil Olson’s “Our Source of Encouragement—Total Dependence on God.”

During the evening banquet, missionary Becky Abel encouraged us in word and in song. At the Leadership Breakfast on June 16, Second Vice President Molly Wiesen gave a presentation challenging the women to honor God by purposeful leadership.

Convention and annual conference attendees were blessed during the Mission Festival Service on June 15 by Marian Christopherson again playing the pipe organ. The Ambassadors led in praise music and in devotions. Numerous missionaries who were in attendance were acknowledged. Our speaker, Darwin Jackson, missionary on loan to WMPL in Mexico, impressed on his listeners how vital prayer is in the life of a missionary. Short greetings were brought by Pastor Paul Abel, missionary to Brazil; Jonni Sliver, who was commissioned as a missionary to Brazil; and Pastor Tim and Renata Hinrichs, who returned from missionary service to Poland last year. Video greetings from other missionaries were played. Pastor Del Palmer, director of AFLC World Missions, led in the commissioning service for Jonni Sliver.

The offerings received by the WMF were divided equally between World Missions, Home Missions, and the WMF General Fund.

Peterson, Portland, N.D., is the recording secretary of WMF.



TOP: Mildred Strand (Remer, Minn.) and Lori Willard (Roseau, Minn.) take advantage of a break time to catch up.

SECOND FROM TOP: Darwin Jackson, an AFLC missionary on load to WMPL in Mexico, was the guest speaker at the Mission Festival Service.

THIRD FROM TOP: Members of the National WMF Board lead the business meeting.

BOTTOM: Beverly Enderlein (Plymouth, Minn.) presented a workshop on "Encouragement to Persevere."

following the cloud

BY JONNI SLIVER



"And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, LORD, are among these people; that You, LORD, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night" (Numbers 14:14).

God has a plan for our lives and in His mercy He shows us the steps along the way. As the children of Israel fled Egyptian captivity, God gave them a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, clear indications of where He wanted them to go. His guidance is as clear for us today. It is more intimate, through the still small voice of the indwelling Spirit, but if we are willing to see it the cloud goes before us.

I first saw the cloud on short-term mission trips to Mexico and Israel. At the time each of them seemed to be wonderful, eye-opening experiences—great blessings but isolated events. They were more. They were necessary stops in the journey God has for me, preparing me for stops I couldn't yet imagine.

The next time the cloud stopped for me was at Bethany Fellowship Missions College. Like an oasis before a long trip in a dry land, it was a wonderful time of soaking in God's Word and being trained to serve Him. Here I was allowed to truly immerse in the Latin culture during an internship in Puerto Rico, and here God showed me He was asking me to stand up in defense of the children of Brazil.

The cloud moved to Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in 1988, where it stayed for a long time. For 16 years I was allowed to take part in a ministry reaching out to children at risk. We had a variety of ministries; my place was in the recuperation house for teen-age boys coming off the street. Beginning as a counselor, spending time as co-leader of the house and then working with training and counseling new staff and volunteers, I was given the opportunity to care for our boys in a lot of different ways.

In 2004 the cloud moved again, back to the United States and from dozens of boys to one white-haired woman. I had the privilege of spending five years with my mother who was no longer comfortable living alone. It might have looked like I was caring for my mom; she was actually giving me one-on-one tutoring on walking with Christ with joy through everything—pain, illness, loss of independence, loss of privacy, but never loss of joy! My mother found ultimate freedom in Christ in May 2009.

The cloud is moving again and I am rejoicing. During the next six months or so I will be doing deputation, requesting a visa and getting to know my AFLC family. Soon after, I will be joining the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourao, Brazil. Ministering to children of all ages and offering a special opportunity for the Bible school students to learn to minister God's loving kindness, the Miriam Home is a place of blessing. And I get to be a part of it! My peace and joy are based on God's goodness to show day by day His will and direction. It is my heart's desire to remain under the cloud.

Sliver has been commissioned as a missionary with AFLC World Missions. She will work at the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourao, Brazil.



TOP: Pastor Del Palmer, director of AFLC World Missions, and members of the World Missions Board commission Jonni Sliver for missionary service at the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourao, Brazil.

ABOVE: Jonni Sliver speaks to the conference prior to her commissioning for missionary service. Sliver is a member of Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn.

Say to this MOUNTAIN

BY PASTOR TODD SCHIERKOLK

“And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith” (Matthew 21:22).

What for one person may seem like a relatively small problem, may for another person be a rather huge obstacle—a mountain—that causes great anxiety and fear. Some might authoritatively and prayerfully command the preferred result to come to pass as Jesus did in the Matthew 21 account when He cursed the unfruitful fig tree. Others might access Jesus’ wonder-working power by simply asking Him to move the mountain in their path, as Jesus explains in that same account from Matthew 21. Either way, the same faith in God is required in each situation, and the glory goes to the same source, our glorious Father in heaven who loves us and meets our needs.

So when the mountain before you is that your son has no shoes, and you have no money to buy them, the only place you can go is to the One who can move mountains. This is Aracely’s mountain. Her husband had been having a very difficult time finding work. But that didn’t keep their son Pepe’s feet from growing. When you are poor, generally no one really knows how much you are eating. But when you have no shoes, your poverty is on display for everyone to see. Aracely felt humiliated by her inability to provide shoes for Pepe. And so we prayed with her for a pair of shoes for her son. The answer, however, didn’t come in the form of shoes, rather, snow cones. God gave Aracely a job shaving ice for snow cones. She earned enough money to buy her son a used pair of shoes. Now dad, mom and son are all smiles as they think of the mountain God moved for them in order to provide a pair of shoes.

Getting a job wasn’t going to help Socorro at all, though. Socorro is another mom of one of the children who come to our Kid’s Club ministry. Even if Socorro would have been able to get the money to access the top medical care in Mexico City, she didn’t have enough time for it to matter because the tumor in her body wasn’t going to wait. She already had a mastectomy because of previously discovered cancer, but that was before her husband died. He had been killed a couple of years ago when a horse he was riding was spooked and fell on top of him. Socorro was left with her teen-aged daughter and her young son, Brian.

The new threat of cancer scared her because of what it could



mean for her kids. She brought this request to us, and we prayed with the kids in the Tuesday club for Brian’s mom. We also prayed at the Bible study in her neighborhood. We pleaded with God for His mercy for this single mom and her family. God answered her request. A couple of weeks later we received the wonderful news that the tumor had disappeared. Socorro had received no treatment or medicine. She said the pain she had felt was gone, and the doctor said the tumor wasn’t there anymore. Brian looked like he was walking on air the day he told us the news. When we stopped by to see his mom, she was all smiles, as well.

Our Heavenly Father is glorified by another mountain thrown into the sea.

Schierkolk is an AFLC missionary serving in Jerez, Mexico.



TOP: Brian
ABOVE: Pepe

MISSION VS. PEOPLE

creating a culture of care and compassion

BY CHAPLAIN CRAIG BENSON

I recently had a discussion with a senior leader at my Air Base on the importance of people within our organization. The discussion centered on the need to focus more time, money and energy in helping our people become more effective in accomplishing the military tasks given to us by the Department of Defense.

The senior leader concluded that we need to do more for our people. She said our mission is suffering because our people aren't getting the care they need. She then explained her plan to improve the care that is given to the people in her unit. I tried to encourage her in this noble cause and pointed out that it will require time and energy to create a culture of care and compassion within the U.S. military.



Pastor Craig Benson

This leads me to ask: What are you and I doing to care for the people that

God has entrusted to us?

What are we doing to care for our family members, neighbors, coworkers and church members? Some of these people are lonely, lost and unloved; others are weak, wounded and overwhelmed. These people need love and guidance. They need salvation. Jesus said it best, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32, NIV).

Service in the Church includes both attitude and action. It includes God's participation as well as ours. It begins with God giving us a heart to serve and it leads to action on our part. This includes spiritual seeking and physical participation. Service to God joins the heavenly, spiritual realm with the earthly, physical realm. How?

First *ask God* to give you a heart to serve. For it is the heart and mind that direct the body. God allows our sincere prayers to increase the movement of His Spirit in our hearts. You and I need to devote adequate time to this important aspect of ministry.

Always begin with prayer and continue in prayer throughout the day. And we can pray "big" prayers, praying for great miracles, because our God will meet all of our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). That is a powerful truth!

Next, *acknowledge God's* vital part in this act of service. He gives us a heart to serve and wisdom to understand the particular needs of others. God's Spirit opens our eyes and minds to sense the hurts and loneliness of others. Just as a successful military operation relies on accurate intelligence and strategic leadership, so also a successful ministry operation (service to others) relies on spiritual intelligence and divine leadership.

Jesus is our role model here. In the Gospels there are many accounts where Jesus knew the exact needs of the people around Him. His disciples were often ignorant of these needs. It took a special moving of God's Spirit to open their "spiritual eyes" to the specific needs of others. This is called spiritual discernment and it is one of God's many gifts to his children.

Then, *act with purpose* on the urgings of God's Spirit upon your heart. The first step in planning a military operation is to define the "end state." What specific goals do we want to accomplish? Every military activity must support the desired end-state goals. What goals does God define in His Word? In general terms God has put us on this earth to increase the "kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 13). All of our daily activities should support this goal. Our daily service to others is directly related to increasing the kingdom of heaven.

Creating a culture of care and compassion in this world directly supports God's plan to urge people everywhere to repent of their sin and be made complete in Christ. What is on your to-do list? May God richly bless you as you ask and acknowledge Him, and act with purpose today.

Major Benson is a chaplain in the US Air Force Reserves and an AFLC pastor. He is currently serving a two-year active duty chaplain assignment at March Air Reserve Base near Los Angeles, Calif.



USS Arizona Memorial, Honolulu, Hawaii



My dad's Best sermon

By Marvin Rodvik

During my childhood years and teenage period, I listened to countless sermons from my father (Pastor Johan Rodvik) from the pulpit and some not from the pulpit. Most were preached in English, but many, in the early years, were in Norwegian.

In my eyes my dad's most meaningful sermon was preached not from the pulpit, but by example. Let me tell you about it.

As a youngster in about eighth grade, I was beginning to exercise my own free will. After all, wasn't free will one of the special gifts given us by our Creator? Well, I was going to make the most of it. As it happened, there was an out-of-school activity that I wanted to attend. But when I announced my plans to do so, my father would not give his permission.

I can't remember his reasoning. But failing in my attempts to persuade him that I needed to go and that all the other kids were going, I simply exercised my free will and declared, "I am going," picked up my things and headed for the door.

As I swung the door open to step outside, my father, who was seated at the head of the dining room table, called to me, "Marvin, remember this: If you go against my wishes, the house will be locked when you return and you will have to sleep somewhere else tonight."

I wasn't fazed, so off I went.

I can't remember what the event was or whether or not I had a good time. But I do remember that it was the shortest part of the night.

On the way home I began to wonder if my father was going to actually lock the parsonage. After all, it was the middle of October and the nights could be a bit chilly in southwest Iowa. I hadn't thought of that before I left. When I arrived home, the house was dark. I tried both doors. Both were locked.

"I wonder if he remembered that one basement window," I thought to myself. He sure did. I wondered if my younger brother Arnie told him about it. "Nah, he wouldn't do that; we always stuck together in matters like this. Now what?"

I sat down under a tree to ponder the situation. That's when the October chill began to creep through the light jacket I was wearing. I also began to wonder if my choice was worth it.

All of a sudden, I thought I had solved my problem. Arnie and I

had built a nice wide bunk in the loft above the garage and chicken coop. We had something we called a mattress on the bunk. I thought it would work just fine. "I'll tough this thing out," I thought.

I made my way in the dark through the garage, feeling my way around the usual clutter and banging my knee on the '34 Chevy. I finally found the ladder that we had nailed to the wall studs. Up in the loft I located the bunk. No pillow, no quilt. "Oh well, at least I am inside," I thought.

As I lay there in the dark, the shivers began to take over and I assumed the fetal position. That didn't help much. The wind was blowing through the chicken coop, which Arnie and I hadn't properly cleaned lately. You have no idea how time can drag when your teeth are chattering and you have to share the same air with a bunch of restless chickens comfortable in their own feathers. Sleep was out of the question.

"What was that?"

It sounded like someone opening the garage door. A few moments later I heard someone climbing up into the loft. Whoever it was didn't say a word. A pillow was placed under my head and a heavy quilt thrown over me. This same someone crawled in the bunk and placed another heavy quilt over the both of us, not saying a word.

By then I knew it was my dad. As he drew me snugly to his warm body he said to me, "Marvin, when I told you that if you went, the house would be locked and you would have to sleep somewhere else, I did not say that I had to sleep inside the house."

I could think of nothing to say. In a few minutes we were both asleep.

In the morning both of us rose and started a new day. Neither of us, during the remaining years of his life, spoke of this again.

As time passed, I thought of that night. Each time I did, it became clearer to me how much God loves me ... even as my father loved me enough to leave the comfort of his bed to go out into a chilly October night and "suffer for me" because I used my free will to make the wrong choice.

Rodvik, Franklin, Minn., is the son of Pastor Johan Rodvik, a pastor in the Lutheran Free Church, the precursor to the AFLC.

conference



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP RIGHT: Pastor Mike and Beverly Burke, Humboldt, Tenn., and Pastor Mike and Maria Flechsig, Ortley, S.D. during prayer time;; Jeff Siemon speaks at Rekindle the Fire; Chanyce Dahl, Felton Minn., Beverly Enderlein, Plymouth, Minn., and Mary Cafoncelli, Reading, Pa., talk outside the chapel; activities for children were held at Heritage Academy; Pastor Connely Dyrud, Plymouth, and Anderson Frohlich, Brazil.

OPPOSITE TOP: Caleb Fugleberg helps lead kids activities on the chapel lawn.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Daniel Keinanen, Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt, both from LaCrosse, Wis., reconnect with Pastor Seth Forness.



ABOVE: Pastor Jeremy and Sarah Vance, Wadena, Minn., support Dylan Emerson in his effort to raise funds to go to the Free Lutheran Youth convention next summer by purchasing pop during a break from business at the Annual Conference.

To everyone who donated,

I wanted to say thank you very much for your donations for me to go to FLY. Your gifts and purchases really helped me out. I couldn't have done it without you.

Thanks,
Dylan Emerson



ABOVE: Dr. Dan Mundfrom, AFLC Schools Board of Trustees chairman, burns the mortgage on the AFLC Schools' Heritage Hall.

AFLC memorials: June

AFLBS

Theodore Bouchard
Florence Baron
Edna Eversvik (2)
Irene Tvinnereim
Palmer Haugen (2)
Orval Hurner

AFLTS

Palmer Haugen (7)
Arlys Bates
Theodore Bouchard (3)
Ray Camrud
Pastor Theodore Lee
Diane Pester

Evangelism

Palmer Haugen

General Fund

Theodore Bouchard

Home Missions

Erling Emerson, Sr.
Diane Pester

Lutheran Ambassador

Theodore Bouchard

Parish Education

Edna Eversvik

Vision

David VanHoveln

World Missions

Theodore Bouchard
Neidra Newberry
Pastor Milo Gudim

Youth Ministries

Palmer Haugen
Arlys Bates

... in honor of

AFLBS

Wes and Patty Stillwell

Online giving now available

To better serve you and maximize stewardship of resources, several departments of the AFLC now offer new options for your financial participation. Online giving is available on the department home pages for Home Missions, World Missions, and AFLBS. Watch for other departments to be adding this option soon.

Online giving options include: secure electronic check; secure debit/credit card; one-time gifts or automatic monthly giving options; donations by phone; easy-to-designate gifts.

ARC hosts upcoming retreats

A look at upcoming retreats and camps at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis.

♦ Classics' Retreat

For those 55 years old or older
Dates: Sept. 17-19
Cost: \$75/person, \$130/couple
Speakers: Pastor Elden and Faith Nelson

♦ Chosen Child Conference

For adoptive families
Date: Nov. 5-7
Speaker: Beth Thomas

♦ Silent Prayer Retreat

Dates: Dec. 3-4

For more information on these retreats and future camps, 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.

People and Places

Two congregations were added to the AFLC congregational roster during the June meeting of the members of the Coordinating Committee:

♦ A letter to affiliate with the AFLC was received from **Christ Lutheran Church, Shingleton, Mich.** A motion to approve their membership was passed.

♦ A letter to affiliate with the AFLC was received from **First American Lutheran, Tripp, S.D.** A motion to approve their membership was passed.



New members were received June 6 at King of Glory Lutheran, Eden Prairie, Minn. Pictured are (front row, from left) Brennan, Adelynn, Caden and Olivia Johnson, and Cayden Cianflone; (second row) Morrie and Kathy Oldfather, Sandra Schultz, Abigail Johnson, Kari Hanson, Heidi and Cameron Cianflone, and Gwen Ellingson; (back row) Isaac, Joan and Tim Paige, Patricia and Brent Johnson, Ryan Rasmussen, Pastor Les Galland, Chris Cianflone, Beth and Mel Fischer, and Ron Ellingson. Not pictured are Joel, Heather, Caleb and Samuel Hickman, David and Joan Hover, and Dr. Brent Holtz and Sydney.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1-June 30, 2010

FUND	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$28,859	\$161,870	\$159,216
Evangelism	6,495	69,305	42,605
Youth Ministries	7,973	75,960	42,569
Parish Education	11,665	58,972	54,424
Seminary	16,501	103,465	92,501
Bible School	32,321	231,159	190,575
Home Missions	23,078	231,184	157,059
World Missions	18,110	139,636	120,110
Personal Support	26,672	152,883	196,050
TOTALS	\$171,674	\$1,224,433	\$1,055,109

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

Hearts of compassion

During the recent AFLC Annual Conference tornados threatened much of Minnesota at the time of the pastors' banquet. They hit other parts of Minnesota, but not where the pastors and their wives were gathered that night. Unlike last year, we were able to have the banquet and program this year. Tornados were in the Fergus Falls, Minn., area last year—also on the evening of the pastors' banquet. We had to leave

the building early, but at least I was able to finish my dessert.

This year's pastors' banquet was held in a basement. Considering our history with the weather maybe we



Pastor Craig Johnson

should continue to have our banquets in basements.

What does it mean? Are the tornados a sign that God does not want AFLC pastors to meet together? I don't think so. Instead of looking to tornados to determine God's will, we look to Scripture where it says, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25, NIV).

It is difficult to try to discern God's will on the basis of what happens in the weather or other circumstances. Why tornados hit one place but not another is hard to tell. When the storm hits a town we think is corrupt we believe it is a sign of God's judgment. When it hits our house

we accuse God of being unfair.

Jesus and His disciples came upon a man who had been blind from birth. The disciples tried to interpret the meaning of that circumstance but got it all wrong. They asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life'" (John 9:2-3).

Interpreting the meaning of good circumstances is hard, as well. In our congregations and ministries we receive opportunities to serve, and we wonder if it is from God. As we try to decide, it is important to consult with others. "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22).

The congregation should be in charge of making major decisions, rather than placing the burden on just the pastor or a small group of leaders. In our AFLC major decisions are to be made by the corporations and conference. They should not just be turned over to the directors and boards.

Circumstances do influence our decision making. God can use them to guide us. But we need to be careful. We shouldn't be living in such a way that we are doing nothing but reacting to circumstances.

When he was a young man Martin Luther got caught in a violent storm and feared for his life. In response to his life being spared he became a monk. Later, when he formulated his beliefs as to how we can have a right relationship with God,

he looked to the Scriptures. "The Word alone" became a foundational truth of the Protestant Reformation. It is the Word of God alone that determines our beliefs and has authority over our actions. We only say, "Thus saith the Lord," when we are quoting Scripture.

At my first interview when applying to the Free Lutheran Seminary, Pastor

Circumstances do influence our decision making. God can use them to guide us. But we need to be careful. We shouldn't be living in such a way that we are doing nothing but reacting to circumstances.

John Strand, the first president of the AFLC, was on the school board. During the interview he asked me: "You said you believe God is calling you to seminary. How do you know it is God who is calling you?" I shared some Bible verses and how I believed God's Spirit was directing me through them. Strand got a smile on his face. I realized later that he was looking for a call through Scripture. He didn't want somebody to say he saw a cloud in the shape of a pulpit so he knew he was to preach. He wanted to hear the Bible quoted because God guides us through His Word. When we want to know what God wants, we look to the Word.

building the base

BY PASTOR TOM TUURA

My mom's faith

My mom passed away a few months ago at age 86.

Like all parents, she was far from perfect. This is a big realization for me, though not a new one by any stretch. My mom and I disagreed on some things but we shared the most important thing—our faith. We saw eye to eye on those crucial personal, practical and doctrinal matters.

I see my mom's faith in stark contrast to modern society. Many mainline American denominations have adopted radical social and moral positions, which are very different from what their predecessors held just 50 years ago. Consider the impact of rationalism, humanism, naturalism, and a half dozen more "isms." Believing the Bible is truth, inspired by God, is often mischaracterized as trite, ignorant, or old fashioned in spite of the fact that Jesus Himself and the New Testament biblical authors regarded the Old Testament and what they were inspired to write as God-breathed truth.

My mom grew in her faith over the years. For example, I remember hearing her come home from Ladies Aid and complain-

ing over and over about one particular lady whom she really disliked. My mom was not kind. She really dug into this woman. I remember thinking that woman must be evil. Later, I learned otherwise, and I know mom did, too.

At her funeral service the pastor disclosed some things he had discussed with Mom. He mentioned her concern for friends and family. That raised a question afterward. Because my mom was dearly loved by so many, what possibly could have been her concern? I believe it was a concern for the souls of those she loved.

I believe my mom was loved by so many because of the changes that were wrought in her heart by the Spirit of God through His Word, which she grew to love. I asked her on a couple of occasions how she came to faith, and she said it was at an evangelistic crusade as a young girl. Basic biblical teaching, yes, Christ Himself, teaches the necessity of repentance and belief in Him for salvation. Christ Himself taught more about hell than anyone else in the New Testament.

Mom was a work-in-progress as far as sanctification was concerned. But she was also completely saved by the merits of Christ's death and resurrection, which is the biblical teaching of justification — a big word understood well by our fathers in the faith.

All of us look through the lenses of our day with some curiosity and perhaps doubt these things. "Come on, Tom, that's outdated," says one. Another says, "You can't be so closed minded; Christianity is one of many roads." I'm not naive. I've grown up in a diverse family, went to secular colleges, and worked in the private sector, as well as the church. But I still say that my mother's faith stands—imperfect, and clueless as she was at times. Her life shows the truth of the lyric, "I'm not what I want to be, I'm not what I'm going to be, but thank God I'm not what I was."

Tuura, who serves Living Word Lutheran, Windom, Minn., writes a blog at www.part-timecountrypreacher.blogspot.com.