

THE LUTHERAN 

JUNE 2011

# AMBASSADOR



## Mission community

A focus on finding  
ways to reach the  
lost in your own  
backyard and beyond



# Be still

BY PATRICIA PILLMAN

*"Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10a).*

**S**ilence. Before God. I believe this verse is one of the most challenging in Scripture for me to put into practice. With the whirl of life's amusements and activities racing around me, it's hard for me to stop and still myself before the Lord. Even when I've removed all external distractions from myself, I find it even more difficult to turn off the motor in my head ... to quiet my active mind before the presence of my Savior. The fact that it's so hard to do this is a good indication of its importance. The devil fights the hardest against the things that would bring the greatest spiritual gain. When one quiets his heart and learns to know and trust God, big things happen. I've found this to be true repeatedly both in my life and in the pages of Scripture.

The Bible is full of examples of people being still before God and seeing Him reveal Himself to them in a big way, changing them for good. Moses experienced major changes in his life after moments of supreme aloneness. You can't get much quieter than the desert. Both when he saw the burning bush and received an assignment from the Lord, and also at Sinai where God gave His law multiple times, the prerequisite for God to reveal His character and Himself to Moses was that he first withdraw himself to an isolated place. A place of devotion and silence. When Moses was willing to do this, he found the I AM God waiting for him.

Elijah needed a change of heart and a new commission, both of which he got when God revealed Himself in I Kings 19. But



God made sure to make the point clear: there needed to a quiet humility and readiness before He would speak. Verses 11-12 of chapter 19 say, "And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount

before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." Elijah needed to understand that while sometimes God worked through flashes of fire and dramatic displays of His power, there were other times when He revealed Himself through stillness and a heart prepared to seek Him.

My heart should be thus prepared to meet my Lord on a regular basis. When I still myself before Him, He can finally reveal Himself to me. As Scripture declares, "The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord" (Lamentations 3:25-26).

*Pillman attends Christ the King Lutheran, Wilson, Wis. Along with her husband, Justo, she is an AFLC missionary candidate.*

June 2011 >>

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR vol. 49, no. 6

Editor Pastor Craig Johnson  
craigj@teleport.com

Managing Editor Ruth Gunderson  
ruthg@afcl.org

Editorial Board Oryen Benrud  
Pastor Jerry Moan  
Pastor James L. Johnson

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

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

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

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

We can reach our world, if we will. The greatest lack today is not people or funds. The greatest need is prayer.

—Wesley Duewel

[ The concern for world evangelization is not something tacked on to a man's personal Christianity, which he may take or leave as he chooses. It is rooted in the character of the God who has come to us in Christ Jesus. Thus, it can never be the province of a few enthusiasts, a sideline or a specialty of those who happen to have a bent that way. It is the distinctive mark of being a Christian. ]

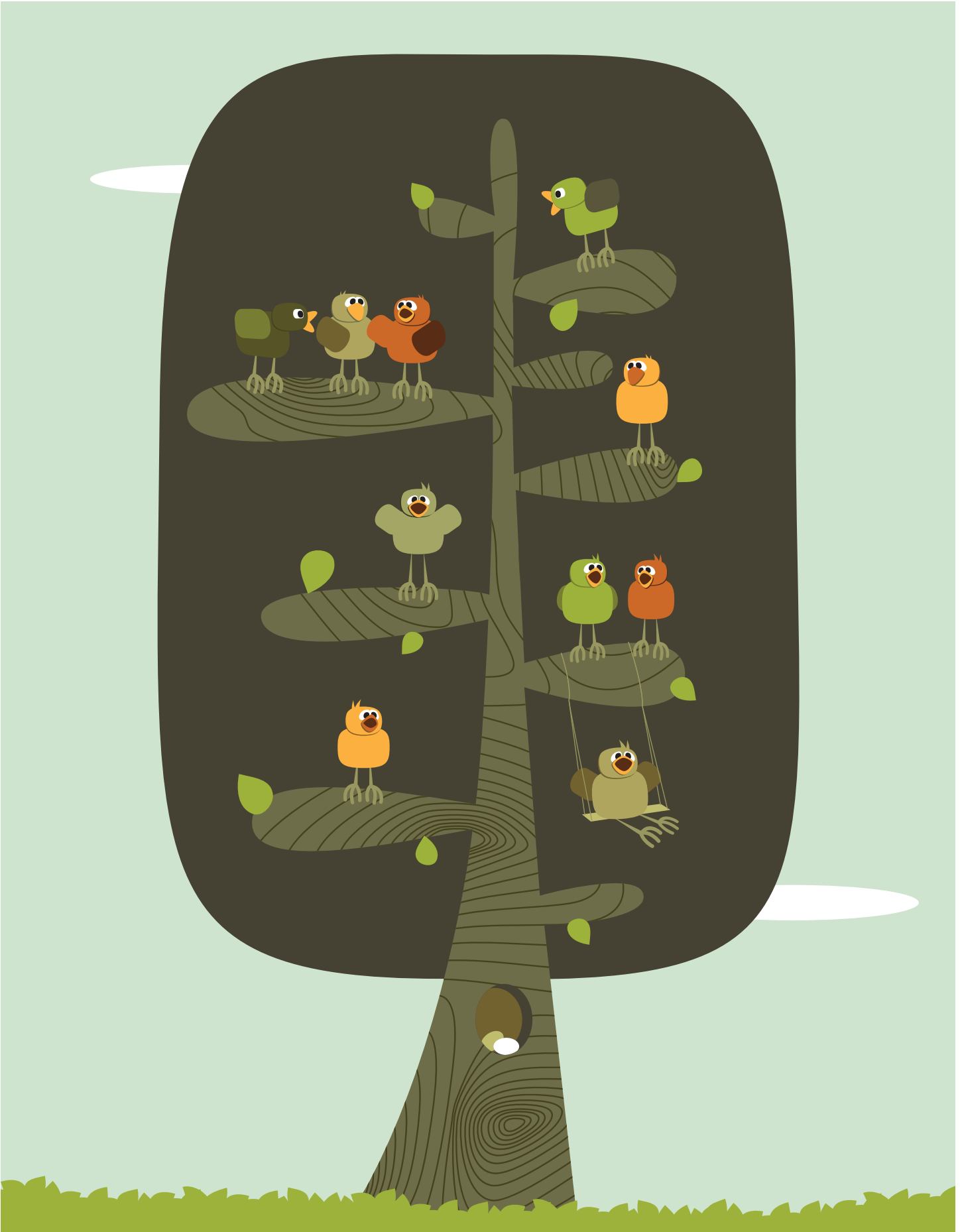
—James S. Stewart

Missionary zeal does not grow out of intellectual beliefs, nor out of theological arguments, but out of love.

—Roland Allen

A congregation that is not deeply and earnestly involved in the worldwide proclamation of the gospel does not understand the nature of salvation.

—Ted Engstrom





# Out of the nest

Cultivating friendships that challenge us to look beyond our own sphere

By Kayla Paige



he Lord chooses and the chosen goes. Then what? The beginning stages of parish building include a bit of glamour. At least for me, fear and anticipation fought their turn as I thought about this town of Madison, S.D., I had never seen, full of people I did not know, among whom I would do things not yet planned. I could appreciate the adventure of the call. All in all, the path ahead of me seemed extraordinary, as if floating just above the normal muck of life.

Once I arrived in South Dakota, I spent much of the first two weeks on my hands and knees, laying ceramic tile in Pastor Tony Stockman's flooded basement. Scuttling away went my hazy images of things sailing along splendidly according to God's will. Instead, faith met the stuff of real life and counted it all joy (James 1:2). What could be more natural? We follow the One who washes feet. So as a parish builder in a Home Missions congregation, what does that look like?

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you" (John 15:16).

Speaking from my own experience, it's rejoicing with those who rejoice and grieving with those who grieve. It means spending all day Saturday snapping handles on flowerpots to raise money for the youth. Sometimes it's leading music so others can have a Sunday off; at other times, it's hosting a candle-lit dinner so couples can relax together. We merely live the ordinary life of a believer, sharing not only the gospel but our own selves as well (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

That giving of ourselves can be relatively easy with fellow Christians who share many of our experiences, passions, and gathering places. But how do we cultivate friendships with those outside the four walls of the church? How do we draw people in without gimmicks? How do we do the reaching out of outreach? Here in Madison we have

struggled with those questions. Calvary Free Lutheran in Mesa, Ariz., has their food shelf and English as a second language classes; Good Shepherd Free Lutheran in Camarillo, Calif., has sports clinics and outdoor services. Currently, we have little more than the heart-cry, "Lord, what are You doing in this community?" Yet that question readies us to hear and leads us to search out the ways He has already been at work these past few months.

Last October, the Chamber of Commerce eagerly supported the idea that we join a downtown Trick or Treat event. Almost 200 children and parents came for candy and carnival games, many expressing surprise that our church even existed. Better yet, our puppets shared the gospel while they evoked giggles. Following that success,

the Chamber of Commerce urged us to set up a booth at the Day with Santa, where we helped children spread frosting and shake sprinkles on Christmas cut-outs. Through these two events, we learned to take advantage of community activities which already do the advertising and attract the crowds.

We still searched, however, for a long-term way to get connected with people. So in January we started King's Kids, a Wednesday after-school program of snacks, songs, puppets, flannelgraph Bible stories, and games. The swarms of children we envisioned never materialized. Most weeks we have only two or three kids, and one of the regulars already belongs to our church. It can be discouraging to prepare every week for a handful of children who squirm and simply want to have fun. Yet for me it's a reminder to be faithful in little things, to offer my very best to God and leave the results squarely in His hands.

Now in April we're back at the drawing board again, prayerfully planning our summer ministry. This time we've included the council and the entire church body in brainstorming a plan of action, relying on their insight into how our congregation works and what the town needs. In all of that, we're also learning to use the resources available to us: our corner on the puppet market, for instance. Right now it looks like we'll hold family nights at the park, inviting whole neighborhoods for puppet shows, lawn games, and ice cream as a way to intentionally encounter people.

These things require commitment: creative thinking, delegation, time, labor, heart. Yet our effort alone cannot produce fruit. To bear fruit—fruit that abides—we must first abide in Him. After all, Jesus declares, "Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). So we cling to Jesus and fix our eyes on Him, knowing that in the Lord our labor is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58). Herein lies the extraordinary life: to toil, to wash feet, to attend to a host of commonplace details, and to still hope with all certainty that these feeble efforts are being used for His kingdom, by His power, and to His glory. Our feet may be mud-spattered and weary. Yet our hearts revel in wonder at the astounding God we serve, who leads us off on adventures and guides us by the hand all the while.

*Paige, a 2010 graduate of AFLBS, is a Home Missions Parish Worker at Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Madison, S.D.*



# To be part of His work

By Pastor Bob W. Lee



What in the world have I done? How have I managed to take my wife—who was born and raised in a sub-tropical country in Asia—to the sub-arctic tundra of bush Alaska? Who knows how far we are from her grandchildren in Illinois? Google Maps doesn't even calculate distances where there are no roads.

Naknek, Alaska, does have 15 miles of roads, but after that it is barren tundra and mountain passes for 300 miles to Anchorage. What was I thinking? Bears and foxes take their separate turns cutting through our yard. Tomatoes are \$4.99 a pound and gasoline is \$4.70 a gallon.

Visitors say, "The coldest winter I ever spent was my summer in Naknek."

It takes three to four hours to be medevacked to a hospital in Anchorage, if weather permits. Rusted vehicles and boats are strewn throughout the town as it is too expensive to ship anything out. Everything you ship in costs about a dollar a pound.

And then I think of the work at KAKN radio station. My alarm clock rings at 5 every morning. I get ready and down some-

thing to wake up my voice. The sun is ending its winter hibernation. Soon the sun won't set until midnight. I poke my head out the screen door to the transmitter room—hoping I don't surprise a passing bear—while I look up 325 feet to see whether the blinking red light is on. The FCC requires I do this every 24 hours and record it. The thought of climbing 30 stories up a tower to change a light bulb sends a panic through me. But it is an important job. Several years ago a plane hit our tower in foggy weather, tumbled over the apartments, and landed in the front yard, killing the pilot.

And then there is the alarm that causes us to run for the studio whenever there is more than 30 seconds of dead air caused by a glitch in the programming. We must also be ready at any time to power down the transmitter and start the generator to keep us on the air.

There is always something waiting to be done: Throughout the day we collect and record 14 broadcasts and download another 272 programs each week. We also have public service announcements to rip, new music to add, announcements to be made, accounting, billing, FCC requirements, maintenance and housekeeping, emergency alert system to be tested, etc.

There are many projects waiting in the wings for either money or people: a garage to be built, a dishwasher to be purchased, shipped and installed; leaking windows to be replaced; a water filter to stop the iron from ruining the pipes and clothes, etc.

Although KAKN is not a church, it does provide the only Christian radio programming—and for some, the only news—in this area. We hope the Holy Spirit will use our programming to bring encouragement, comfort, guidance and correction to the 90 percent who do not attend a church in our community and the 10 percent who do. Focus on the Family, Joni Eareckson Tada, Ravi Zacharias, Chuck Smith, Greg Laurie, Alistair Begg, David Jeremiah, Elizabeth George, and Chuck Swindoll are but a few who share on our airwaves, as well as mission updates, testimonies, Christian comedy, devotionals, and several children's programs. Sprinkled throughout each day is Christian music, including Native American worship. Local and visiting Christians have recorded the whole Bible. Natives hear the Word in their own mother-tongue, as well.

All of this is found 24 hours a day, seven days a week not only on KAKN in Naknek, but on 104.9 in Dillingham, across the Bay,

and 103.9 in Egegik, and on one channel of cable television.

I'm not pastoring a church, but I am facilitating dozens of pastors, teachers and lay people to bring the good news—the saving news of Jesus Christ—into people's lives each day.

I am given opportunities to preach and teach occasionally in local churches. One Sunday, after leading and preaching at a service in Naknek, my wife, Margaret and I were flown by fellow pastor Jeremy Crowell over to South Naknek to preach. What a great group of people; we enjoyed sharing the Word and then sitting down together at their weekly potluck.

We've also had opportunities to serve

What was God thinking when He brought us up here? I might better wonder why God allows us the privilege of being part of His ministry to the people of Bristol Bay.

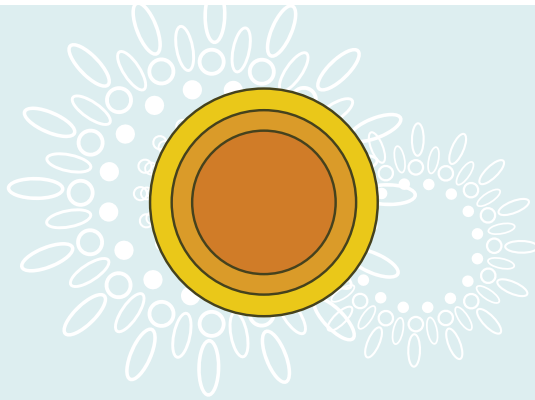
our neighbors by pulling an 18-foot skiff that had flipped over in a storm and was stuck fast in the river. Visiting with the family of two brothers who were among four missing on a flight that never arrived at nearby King Salmon Airport gave Jeremy and me an opportunity to bring comfort and to pray with them as the search continued for their loved ones. Later, we interviewed the father, recording a testimony that gave him an opportunity to thank those who helped their family, to give testimony of their faith, and to request prayer for the men, their families and the searchers.

And what about Margaret? God placed her in Naknek at precisely the right time. A much-loved kindergarten teacher became ill and passed away on the first day of school. Margaret was available to take up the teacher's class. She has the wonderful opportunity to meet with people in the community in a way I don't.

What was God thinking when He brought us up here? I might better wonder why God allows us the privilege of being part of His ministry to the people in Bristol Bay. We are humbled to play a small part in bringing glory to Him.

*Lee and his wife, Margaret, serve Home Missions at the Alaska Mission in Naknek.*





# A work of faith

By Pastor Lyle Aadahl

A congregation finds joy reaching out  
to an immigrant community





s unlikely as it may seem to us, the Lord has graciously and unexpectedly given our ordinary, little AFLC church (of 50 or so people on Sundays) a new ministry to Hispanic children, and it's all been a God-thing. In His own time, He has given us changed attitudes, brokenness of self, a new willingness and bigger hearts for souls in need.

I stand amazed as almost everyone in our little church, from people in their 70s to pre-teens, is working to share Jesus with others who come from different and often difficult backgrounds.

-----

It all seems to have begun years ago, especially through two faithful women. One of them, Susan, is the perennial vacation Bible school director whose persistent, prayer-filled vision and efforts have been so blessed by God. Under her leadership, VBS registration has reached 85 children—often only a fraction of them from our own church. Because of this, an organized, well-staffed, Christ-centered VBS was in place to reach 35 Hispanic kids last year.

The other woman is my wonderful wife, Mary, who sees one thing when she encounters internationals—missions. About 10 years ago her employer was hiring Latino women, and she made a concerted effort to befriend and encourage them to send their children to our VBS. Gradually, a few Hispanic kids came to VBS and, eventually, to Sunday school. Being willing to drive an extra 30 miles to transport these kids helps a lot. In the spring of 2010 God led us to start a year-around Sunday children's church to further instruct these restless kids in place of the sermon.

As we approached VBS last August, it became apparent that we were getting a unique opportunity to reach more of these

children than usual. With much prayer, a focus on evangelism and a ministry team from AFLBS, we began a challenging week. One team member remarked that they had never seen so many children who knew nothing about the Bible. But, praise the Lord, one day about a dozen boys and girls came to Christ.

Following up the next day with the oldest class of 18 kids, I attempted to picture the lost condition of all people everywhere, and carelessly commented: "We're all in the same boat."

Curious hands popped up all over, and one 10-year-old girl asked: "Well, if we're all in the same boat, isn't it going to sink?"

"Yes!" I got excited. "That's exactly what's going to happen. 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,'" I quoted from Romans 3:23.

After describing our utter helplessness, I added, "But Jesus took your place and my place, and paid for our sins when He died on the cross. And the best part is that forgiveness and heaven, too, is His free gift for anyone who trusts Christ to save them."

One Latino boy, who came to Christ the day before, reached up his arm and cried out: "Then everyone should do it!"

In spite of imperfect theology, his point was that salvation is a "no-brainer," and a couple more kids wanted Jesus, as well.

After our week of VBS, the chairman of the congregation suggested that we were ready for the next step. An after-school weekly kid's club was started to teach Latino kids the basics of living Christianity. Even in our little congregation, God provided a leadership committee of four truly gifted people including:

- An executive from a large, local manufacturing corporation with unbelievable organizational skills, focus and drive.
- A young, mission-minded AFLBS graduate and missionary kid with tireless energy and creativity.
- A self-sacrificing, prayer-warrior mother of 16 children with endless patience and love for anyone's kids.
- Another key mom recently sent our way with kid's club experience. Understanding the nuts and bolts of this ministry, this visionary woman absolutely knew it could work and put it all together. Her previous church also supports this ministry with a sizable monthly gift.

Now, with the help of another AFLC pastor, we've planned a supper and worship service (*Cena Hispana Y Fiesta De Cristo*) in Spanish. As God provides, this may become a regular occurrence, and a bilingual Lutheran pastor has already agreed to lead future services.

I stand amazed as almost everyone in our little church, from people in their 70s to pre-teens, is working to share Jesus with others who come from different and often difficult backgrounds. For how long this will last, I cannot say. But as they find themselves sacrificially teaching, feeding, transporting, praying for, and loving these beautiful children, we can say two things. We have been shown God's faithfulness to unlikely servants and He truly does all things well.

*Aadahl serves Zion Lutheran, Dexter, Minn., and Mt. Sion Lutheran, Kasson, Minn.*



# Ministry of changed lives

Pastor John and Ruby Abel were honored for their many years of service in Brazil

By Pastor Craig Johnson



A lot has changed in Brazil since Pastor John and Ruby Abel first went there as missionaries in 1953. A trip to Campo Mourão, the city that became the headquarters for AFLC work in Brazil, was considered traveling into the interior of Brazil's jungle. Now the trip from Brazil's coast to Campo Mourão is done on a modern, major highway. When the Abels first arrived in Campo Mourão it was an area where jungle had recently been cleared away. The city had only a couple of blocks of paved road. Now it is a modern city with pavement everywhere, tall buildings and much development.

I reflected on some of the changes the Abels have seen during my recent trip to Brazil. The itinerary of the trip was changed somewhat when a service was arranged to honor the Abels and thank them for their years of service. A few weeks earlier they had made another trip to Brazil to visit family. Pastor Abel was also planning to hold evangelistic meetings. He developed congestive heart failure, however, and they needed to cut their trip short and return to the U.S.

On the Sunday evening before they left Brazil, March 27, a service was held in one of the AFLC churches in the Curitiba area. One of the Abels' sons, Pastor Paul Abel, and his wife, Becky, serve as AFLC missionaries in Curitiba.

While the people planning the service did so on short notice, it is clear God had things planned and was arranging details far in advance. A girls' choir from Atonement Free Lutheran Church in Arlington, Wash., was in Brazil on a mission trip and was in Curitiba for a concert that same Sunday. AFLC World Missions Director Del Palmer and two World Missions committee members, Paul Handsaker and Glenn Mork, were visiting the work in Brazil and were in Curitiba at that same time. Pastor Connely Dyrud, who had served with the Abels for many years as a missionary in Brazil, was back in Brazil for a month teaching a class at the school in Campo Mourão. He, along with missionary Pastor Jonathan Abel—another of the Abels' sons, two Brazilian pastors and this writer, were able to travel to Curitiba for the service.

During the service, as various ones shared thanks to God for the Abels' ministry, it was clear that changes had occurred in Brazil that were far more important than paved roads and better phone service. Lives have been changed. People who had been trusting in saints and spirits have come to faith in Jesus. Some who thought doing good works was the way to get right with God have heard the good news of Christ's death and resurrection and they have entered into a personal relationship with Jesus. Congregations have begun and people are now gathering together to encourage each other in their walk with the Lord.

At the end of the service Pastor John Abel went to the podium and shared. He spoke about the blessing of seeing fruit from their years of ministry. Ones he had known when they were young, ones he had shared Christ with and taught the Word of God, are now leaders in the church in Brazil.



We give thanks for the Abels' many years of service in Brazil and the encouragement and example they have been to so many. And we give thanks for changed lives . . .

Pastor Abel encouraged all those who were there, the young people in particular, to keep following Christ and living for Him. It was an evening of reflection, but Pastor Abel was looking ahead and wanting to encourage the next generation to trust in Jesus and serve Him.

The service concluded with members of the Abel family who were in attendance singing the hymn, "Now Thank We All Our God." Thankfulness was an appropriate theme for the evening. We give thanks to God for working out details so the service could take place and so many were able to be there. We give thanks that Pastor Abel's health has seen some improvement and he was able to be at the service and share and then return safely to the U.S. We give thanks for the Abels' many years of service in Brazil and the encouragement and example they have been to so many. And we give thanks for changed lives—"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). "Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices, Who wondrous things hath done."

*Johnson, editor, serves Bethany Lutheran, Astoria, Ore.*



By Monica Coyle



Just a year ago, my husband, Andy, and I returned from a brief trip to Ukraine. Our time there confirmed God's call on our lives to serve alongside our Ukrainian brothers and sisters in Christ. The souvenir *matryoshka* dolls we purchased for our children, though now a bit worn from play, tell a story of their own.



Aside from their cultural significance and pretty painting, these “nesting dolls” remind me of the generations of people whose lives were greatly affected by communism. Now, even after 20 years of freedom, the gospel is so desperately needed.

The outer doll, largest in size, signifies the generation before communism took root in the early 1920s. The *babushkas*, or grandmas, were largely responsible for passing down their faith in God despite the anti-religious campaigns that ensued in years to follow. Many were persecuted severely for their faith, and the light of Christ that once shone freely and brightly was threatened.

Unpacking the *matryoshka* doll reveals a smaller doll inside, representing a new generation. These believers faced even more cultural, political and social pressure to deny their faith. The struggle was intense to keep their lights shining when everything around them threatened to blow it out. Skepticism led to atheism. Persecution was a reality.

By the time another generation came

about, Christianity was nearly wiped out. Seventy years of attempting to erase God from an entire people group took quite a toll.

Finally we unpack the smallest doll, which symbolically tells of a generation hungry for the gospel. For some of these youths, communism is but a faint memory. Others have no understanding of life under communism. Yet with their freedom, new strongholds threaten

with spiritual darkness: secularism, materialism, new age religions, and resistance to Christianity.

The children's song, “This little light of mine,” holds a deeper meaning when I think of the great need in Ukraine for the light of the gospel of Christ. Who will tell them of the Christ's love? Who will shine the light of Christ in a very dark place?

Psalm 78:4-7 speaks clearly to the necessity of sharing the light of Christ through the generations, “We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.”

It is this context of post-communist Ukraine where we will be ministering to young adults. In a culture where there is very little remembrance of Christianity, very little evidence of it currently, and plenty of obstacles for rebuilding the Church, there is yet an openness for the gospel. A great need exists, and generations await.

As AFLC missionaries on loan to East European Missions Network, we will be helping to start a Lutheran Bible Training Center. Russian-speaking students, primarily ages 18-30, will be equipped with God's Word and practical ministry training to serve in local congregations.

We have had a desire to serve in this kind of ministry since our time in seminary, and it has been rewarding to see God direct our paths. We are so thankful for our marriage of nearly eight years and our three children: Moriah (5), Isaiah (2), and Josiah (5 months).

Would you join us in praying for the people of the former Soviet Union? Pray for Christ's light to shine brightly there; for renewal in the Body of Christ and rebuilding of the Church; for a generation to be raised up that will declare the gospel. It is our prayer that God will use the Bible training center to multiply missionaries in the former Soviet Union.

We covet your prayers for our family as the days are counting down quickly. Our five-month deputation comes to a close as we depart for Odessa on June 29. During the last few weeks, we look forward to participating in mission training, finalizing preparations for our move, and being commissioned at the annual conference.

The Lord has faithfully guided and provided for each step of the way, and to Him we are so grateful. Since moving from Iowa, where Andy served as a pastor for two and one-half years, we have seen God do amazing things as He raises a team to support this mission. He has reminded us in countless ways how He daily and abundantly provides for all our needs. And yet, we realize that the journey has only begun. Looking ahead toward our new life in Ukraine, we cling to His promise that “faithful is He who calls you, and He will also bring it to pass” (I Thessalonians 5:24).

*Coyle and her husband, Pastor Andy Coyle, will be commissioned as AFLC missionaries at the annual conference. They leave at the end of June to work in Ukraine.*

# Generations await



# Devoted to prayer



## I was humbled and challenged by the faith and prayer life of our brothers and sisters in Christ in India.

---

By Pastor Jim Rasmussen



India is a nation of 1.2 billion people. Each day 24,000 people die and 55,000 are born; there are people everywhere. Some people live in very nice homes and others live in thatched homes. Their houses sometimes literally stand next to each other.

The majority of the people in India are searching for answers. The Hindu religion has millions of gods that have more problems than the people do. The average Indian is very open to talk about religion—even openly about Jesus.

The people of AFLC-India do not have a lot of money or things. They are a part of the Dalit Caste, which is the lowest of the Indian caste system; they truly live by faith. They believe what they read in the Bible, obey the Word and have a childlike faith (Matthew 18 1-6).

One of the first pastors I met in India was Dunna Devasahayam. Dunna is a man who lives the life of Jesus. His desire is to follow and obey the Word fully. One evening while we were visiting, Dunna's church had an all-night prayer meeting. After conducting the prayer meeting, Dunna took the bus home and was back to Chirala the next morning for training that was being provided for the pastors of AFLC-India.

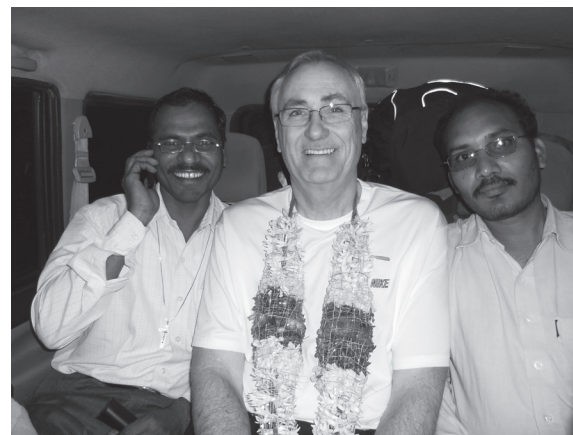
I was amazed not only that they had an all-night prayer meeting, but that Dunna, the pastor of the congregation, went without sleep and was back for a full day of training a couple of hours after the prayer meeting was over. This man caused me to question my prayer life. Even more astonishing to me is that Dunna's commitment to prayer was not an unusual occurrence in India. After visiting a number of village churches, we found a profound dependence on prayer. The people there wanted us to pray for everything from healing physical ailments to healing of family relationships. I often wonder what would

happen here in the United States if we prayed all night long and expected God to hear and answer our prayers.

We were told that all the churches in AFLC-India have prayer meetings every night from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Isaiah 56:7b says, "For my house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples." What would happen in your congregation and the community around you if you had more than 40 days of prayer meetings?

AFLC-India operates St. Paul's Lutheran School in Chirala. About 350 students attend the school, from kindergarten through tenth grade. Most of these students live at home with their parents, but there are about 35 who live in campus dorms. They have names like Maddu, Marcbabu, Sudhakar, Kranthi and Sunita. There are also many with names familiar to us like Isaac, Hannah and Joshua. These 35 students, ranging in age from 5 to 16, get up at 5:30 a.m. for one hour of Bible reading and prayer every day of the week. These young people are being trained in the necessity of a living relationship with Jesus. It is amazing to see all ages actually believing that prayer is the key to what happens in their lives and how God uses them to grow His kingdom in their midst.

A night or two before Pastor Kevin Olson and I left India, we asked Luther



Dasari, president of AFLC-India, what the church in the United States could pray for in the church in India. His answer, without even thinking, was that we could pray for the prayer life of the church in India. Our first response was, "No. You need to pray for our prayer life in the United States!"

I was humbled and challenged by the faith and prayer life of our brothers and sisters in Christ in India. It seems that they understand what prayer is all about: a total reliance on Jesus for everything. They believe they can be healed and that God will protect them. It was amazing to get to know these people of faith, to be in their midst and see how they look at the Word of God. They have such a deep desire to know God's Word and live it out. My prayer for the AFLC in America is that we would have the same hunger for God, His Word and prayer as our sister church in the great nation of India. Pray with me for a revival in our congregations and an awakening throughout the world.

"There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer" said Dr. Arthur Tappan Pierson, a pioneer advocate of faith missions in the mid- to late 1800s and early 1900s. May we agree with the disciples in the church in Jerusalem? Acts 6:4 says, "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word."

*Rasmussen, a member of Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn., is the director of the AFLC Commission on Evangelism.*

# AFLC mission ministries

By Sam and Rachel Menge



he AFLC provides a variety of mission opportunities and experiences for people of all ages. Because there are so many mission programs, the different opportunities and groups that provide them can become confusing. This list is a brief attempt at clarifying the different ministries that each group facilitates, with a focus on AFLC Student Missions.

Missions have all found useful to teach the Word of God across cultures and languages. Others have volunteered to travel and teach short courses internationally. Future projects include transcribing AFLTS' Summer Institute DVDs and preparing additional teaching resources.

## Youth Ministries

### Student Missions

This is a short-term trip opportunity for 15-19 year olds (and sometimes as young as 13) who may not have access to an independent trip through their home church. Student Missions has existed sporadically for many years as part of the AFLC, but recently has provided more consistent trips. The trips are planned and coordinated by volunteers working with AFLC missionaries or those on loan to other mission organizations. Recent trips have included Brazil, Ukraine, India, Uganda and Ecuador.

The Student Mission trip process starts with an application, due each year by February 1. There are assignments that are due periodically in the months leading up to the trip. The trip begins with a time of training on the AFLBS campus, where the team learns about the culture, practices what they will be sharing, bonds as a team, and learns common short-term trip problems and how to avoid them.

Recently, Student Missions has facilitated work trips, teaching trips, VBS trips and many trips that focus on sharing the Scripture with the orality method that the Ambassador Institute uses. In the past four years, 46 students have participated in Student Missions short-term trips.

Student Missions is under the Youth Ministries department and coordinates planning with World Missions and the Ambassador Institute. The goal of Student Missions is to expose youth to missions and ministry opportunities, to encourage support and knowledge of missionaries and their work, and to encourage and minister to the missionaries and those they work with.

## World Missions

### Full-time Called Missionaries

These are ones who have presented themselves to the World Missions Committee as a missionary candidate. In order to receive a call they must receive unanimous approval of the members of the World Missions Committee. Once they are called and commissioned, called missionaries raise their support through deputation and then depart for their assignment on the field. The AFLC currently has called missionaries in Brazil, Uganda, and Mexico.

### Short Term Assistants

Short term assistants are people who feel a special burden for a particular aspect of foreign mission work. Because short term assistants work on a volunteer basis, they do not receive a salary or benefits. They are supported by offerings given for their living expenses.

### Missionary on Loan

These are full-time missionaries who have been called as AFLC missionaries and loaned to another organization. The call for the missionary on loan is contingent on the missionary working under the current organization. If the missionary resigns from the current organization, they are in effect resigning from AFLC World Missions.

### Ambassador Institute

Volunteer editors and translators have been preparing oral Bible study curriculum for use in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Telugu and Lusoga. The curriculum has been an effective tool that nationals, full-time missionaries, short term assistants and Student

## Other

### Independent Mission Trips

Includes any trip you or your home church coordinates independent of AFLC departments.

### Parish Builders

These volunteers (from college students to retirement age) move and integrate into a community and assist Home Mission congregations with visitation, canvassing, youth work, and special outreach events. They support the pastor and his family, and encourage the congregation members to become more vitally involved and assume leadership.

### Student Mission Fellowship

This AFLBS student-led ministry is focused on raising awareness of mission work, mobilizing prayer, and providing opportunities for students to support, encourage, and be inspired by active missionaries.

### Ministry Training Institute

The third-year program at AFLBS focuses on specific ministry training. Students choose from a missions track, youth ministries track or an aviation track. The students spend the first semester learning in the classroom and the spring semester in the field putting into practice what they have learned with either AFLC missionaries, in an AFLC congregation or with Home Missions work. Previous students have participated in ministry all over the world, including throughout the United States, Brazil, Mexico, Europe, Africa, and Alaska.

*The Menges currently serve as coordinators for Student Missions.*



# Focus on discipleship

By Tom Caouette

**G**ood Shepherd Free Lutheran Church is an AFLC Home Missions congregation located in Brainerd, Minn. In an area known for its lakes and forests, Brainerd has one of the fastest-growing populations of people in their retirement years. It was originally founded through the logging and railroad industries, but is now sustained primarily through the tourist industry. Churches are fairly well established throughout the area, but up until a couple of years ago the AFLC had no churches in the area.



Good Shepherd, served by Pastor Gary Jorgenson, has experienced some of that amazing growth. The facility the congregation now leases will soon no longer meet its needs. Property has been purchased and building plans are being prepared. It seems like a good time to reflect on what has caused the growth, how that growth can be sustained, and how we can encourage other congregations to do the same.

When new members were asked why they decided to become part of Good

Shepherd, we had several responses.

Some came due to their desire to be part of a church body that believes in the inerrant truth of God's Word. It seems God's timing placed Good Shepherd in the community just as some of the more liberal local churches in the area made some radical departures from the Scriptures in an attempt to become more politically correct.

Other new members commented on how welcome they felt when they first visited and how they were able to participate in the

worship services and Bible studies. When a Home Missions congregation begins, like Good Shepherd, with just seven families, it is difficult to contain the excitement when people come from the community desiring like-minded fellowship. There is also ample opportunity for new members to demonstrate their spiritual gifts and make significant contributions to the growth of God's church.

Yet others came through the invitation of a friend, co-worker, or even from a contact through another AFLC church that had heard of the new Home Missions congregation in Brainerd. In these visitors, we have witnessed life-changing commitments to Christ. One person in particular expressed a new commitment to Christ after many years of bitterness in blaming God for her life's circumstances. The love of God and the truth of God's Word has the power to heal old wounds. Another visitor, who was directed to Good Shepherd by an out-of-state AFLC friend, made a first-time commitment to Christ after many years of avoiding church contact. Jesus said, "There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10).

The challenge ahead for Good Shepherd—and for any congregation, for that matter—is to keep the focus on what God has placed us here to do. That focus, as outlined in the Great Commission, is to make disciples through teaching and evangelism. It sounds simple until we engage in the practical events of a growing congregation such as finances, facilities, and fellowship. Although these things are good and necessary, they are not the prize that has been set before us. As Jesus said, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

If you are traveling through the Brainerd area, Good Shepherd Free Lutheran Church invites you to stop in and worship with us.

*Caouette is a member of Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Brainerd, Minn.*

# Facilities, camps available at Bethany Bible Camp

Bethany Bible Camp is a seasonal Bible camp located just outside Bemidji, Minn., on the sandy shores of beautiful Grace Lake. Owned by the AFLC, Bethany is run by the North Central Minnesota District churches. We can accommodate approximately 120 people overnight, have a commercial kitchen and our caretakers (Ben and Terrah Sutton) live on site. Rental reservations are prioritized to ministry groups first and then to family bookings.

Our district hosts two camps for students: Junior Camp, for those who have completed third through sixth grade, will be held June 21-25. The theme will be "Lessons from the Battle," with seminarian Scott Stroud, speaking. The cost is \$100/student.

Senior Camp, for those who have completed grades seven through twelve, will be held June 25-30. The theme will be "Blessed," with Pastor Sam Wellumson, East Grand Forks, Minn., speaking. The cost is \$115/student.

For more information on these camps or to make reservations, call (218) 751-6094. Or visit the camp's Web site at [www.bethanybiblecamp.com](http://www.bethanybiblecamp.com).



Isaac Edlund, a junior at AFLBS, leads devotions around the campfire at Bethany Bible Camp. In the background is the newly renovated dining hall.

## EEMN hosts annual banquet of praise

East European Missions Network hosted its annual banquet of thanksgiving and praise on April 8 at the campus of the AFLC schools in Plymouth, Minn. Kristian Lande, who works with Normisjon, was the guest speaker at the banquet. Normisjon, an independent mission agency within the Lutheran Church of Norway, works closely with EEMN in helping rebuild the Lutheran Church in the former Soviet Union.

AFLC missionaries Pastor Andy and Monica Coyle (see page 12) were commissioned with EEMN during the banquet. The Coyles will be commissioned by the AFLC as missionaries at the annual conference during the Mission Festival Service June 15 in Sioux Falls, S.D. They will be on loan to EEMN, and will serve in Ukraine beginning at the end of June.

EEMN has missionaries serving throughout Eastern Europe and offers short-term mission trips each summer. For more information on their ministry, visit their Web site at [www.eemn.org](http://www.eemn.org).



Kristian Lande, Bergen, Norway, gave a short testimony during chapel services April 7 on the campus of the AFLC schools.

# Links in the chain

BY JONNIE SLIVER

Ladies, please take a look at your favorite necklace. Gentleman, take a gander at your best chain saw. If there are kids reading this, please consider your bicycle. You will find a common denominator—chains. They



Jonni Sliver

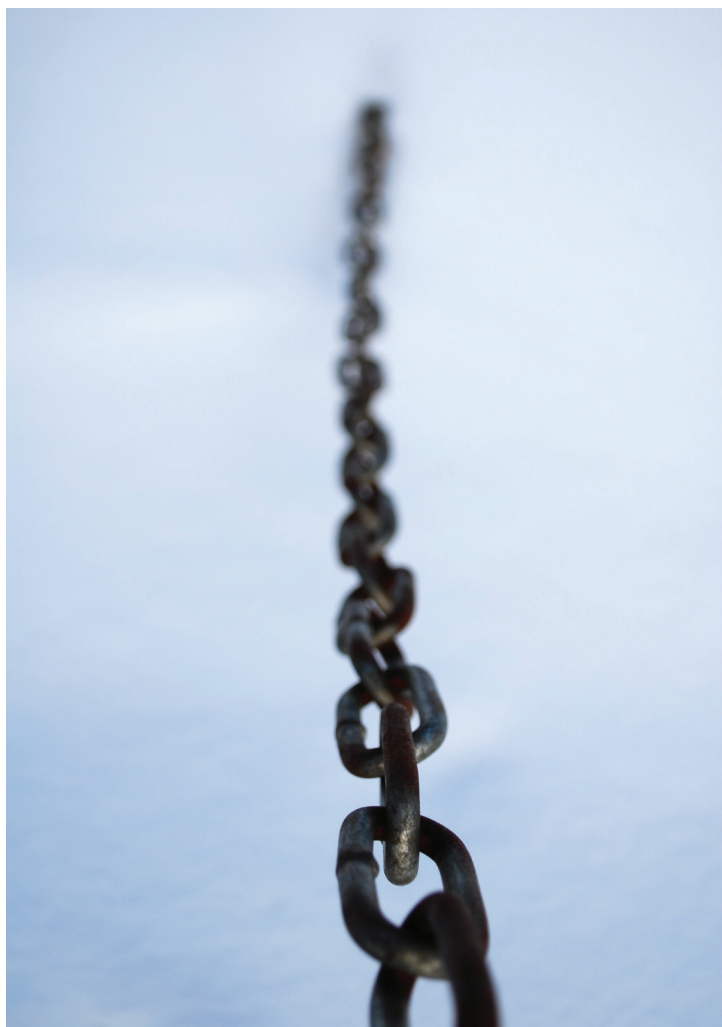
may be composed of tiny, delicately twisted loops made up of silver and gold or dirty, oily rings made of coarse

but strong metals. In any case the chains have commonalities.

They are effective because they are made up of a lot of pieces that work together. If any part of the chain is damaged, the whole chain is broken, but as each link holds on to its neighbor, the chain remains firm.

All chains are used in service—their purpose is to support something bigger, like a beautiful stone or a powerful motor. Whatever the case, the chain is important but not central.

I am brand new on the mission field, having arrived in Campo Mourão, Brazil, on April 4, and am enjoying finding my place in the chain. There are many links here in the Miriam Infant Home. The house mothers care for the children with everything from providing hot meals to clean clothes to cheering for good grades at school. Surai, the director of the home, works non-stop to make sure the place not only runs but runs well. She has a passion for children and demands that they receive the best



care possible when they are in this place. Pastor Silvio, who is responsible for both the Miriam Home and the Bible school, provides godly covering for all of us. He brings God's grace and protection in such a tangible way. Then there are the short term mission assistants and the Bible school students who offer friendship, affection and time to the children, big and small. This chain is amazing, and I am so blessed to be a part of it.

I mentioned that the purpose of a chain is to serve. Can you guess who the Miriam Infant Home serves? If you are thinking it is the children of the Miriam Home that would be a good guess, but wrong. The precious jewel, the focus of the chain, is Jesus Christ. His desire is to be known by the children of the Miriam Home; His desire is to reach into their lives and bring healing and hope; His desire is to release blessings in their lives. The Miriam Home's focus is to serve the living God and see His will done in the lives of these children.

There is a wonderful grace in finding our place in the min-

istry God has for us. Like the links in a chain, each one contributes strength not because of their position but because of their commitment to God's calling and faithfulness to the brothers and sisters to whom we are linked.

*Sliver is an AFLC missionary serving at the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourão, Brazil.*

# IT IS WRITTEN

JOHN 20:30-31

## The mission of FLY

BY DANIEL KEINANEN

On Friday, July 8, at 10:30 p.m. MST, there will be a group of staff members cleaning up the Longhouse at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colo. The chairs will all be put away, the stage will be torn apart, boxes of computers will be packaged, and buses of students will be heading home. The next day, everyone who attended the 2011 Free Lutheran Youth Convention will return to their normal everyday lives. Counselors and staff will return to work. Students will return to family and friends. Speakers will have nothing more to prepare. The 2013 FLY Committee will be preparing for the next FLY Convention beginning in September. But will they return to their normal lives unchanged?

I don't know the answer to that question. I don't know what everyone's week will be like. I am not sure how the speakers are going to embellish on our theme, "It Is Written." I am unaware of the different friendships that will start, or the ones that will pick up where they left off. I don't know who will receive Christ as their Savior for the first time. I can't tell you who might surrender their lives over to Jesus as Lord.

I can tell you that God will be present. I do know that He will call sinners to repent and turn to Him. I know that He will strengthen people's relationships with Himself. I know that His Word will be effective in each of our lives. How do I know this? Because His Word tells me so.

When people return home from FLY this summer, my prayer

is that if they do go home a changed person, it will be because of God, His Son, His Spirit, and His Word. I pray that God will be the centerpiece throughout the week. I pray that as we trust in Him, and not in our own ways, He will make our paths straight. Did you catch that—HE will provide straight paths.

It would be tragic if the staff and speakers at FLY directed students to look at anything but Jesus. Imagine the missed opportunities if we made the FLY Convention itself the center of the week. What would happen if a speaker didn't point others to Jesus? The result would be FLY disciples, and not Jesus disciples. God has called the FLY Convention to help local congregations in their efforts to help students through disciple-making relationships. My prayer is that FLY is a platform for youth ministries within the AFLC, and outside of the AFLC, to help in that process. I pray that youth workers are doing their job by pointing their students to Jesus, and Him alone.

If we succeed in pointing others to Jesus, then people will return home changed. We won't be able to be in the presence of God, look into His Word, and into His face, and walk away without being changed. Isn't that what ministry is all about: pointing and bringing others to Jesus?

*Keinanen, a youth pastor at Christ is Lord Lutheran, Onalaska, Wis., is the president of the Free Lutheran Youth Committee.*

## AFLC memorials: April

### AFLBS

Darrel Ford  
Erling Hoseth  
Donnie Olson

Arthur Arneson  
Darrel Ford  
Ernest Haabak

### Parish Education

Bob Bilden  
Ruby Jones

### AFLTS

Darrel Ford  
G. Wright  
Harvey Smette  
Pastor Steve Odegaard

### Youth Ministries

Arthur Arneson

### All Departments

Doris Newell

### World Missions

Arthur Arneson  
Darrel Ford  
Donnie Olson  
Duane Knudsvig

### Evangelism

Arthur Arneson  
Lowell Formo

### FLAPS

Robert Dobbin

... in honor of

### AFLBS

Bev Hurner

### Home Missions

Colleen Roscoe

## People and Places

**Pastor Marlin Harris** was installed March 3 at True Vine Lutheran, Mora, Minn., with Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president, officiating.

**Pastor John Kiehl** was installed March 17 at Faith Lutheran, Metropolis, Ill., with Pastor Elden Nelson officiating.

**Pastor Ken Hart** was installed May 1 at Faith Lutheran, Fairbury, Neb., with Pastor Richard Gunderson, assistant to the president, officiating.

**Jason Gudim**, a 2011 graduate of AFLTS, has accepted a call to serve Faith Free Lutheran, Minneapolis.

**David Franz**, a 2011 graduate of AFLTS, has accepted a call to serve St. Paul's Lutheran, Jewell, Iowa, and Salem Lutheran in Radcliffe, Iowa.

**Pastor Richard Ramsbacher** has accepted a call to serve Immanuel Lutheran, Springfield, Mo. He has resigned from serving Faith Free Lutheran, Culbertson, Mont.

Members of **Living Faith Free Lutheran**, Larimore, N.D., celebrated the congregation's 25th anniversary on March 27.

Members of **AFLC Canada** held their annual conference April 1-3 in Elbow, Saskatchewan, with Dr. Francis Monseth, dean of AFLTS, as guest speaker and teacher.

**Correction:** Pastor Peter Franz was incorrectly identified as service leader for the opening service of the AFLC annual conference on June 14 at Sioux Falls Christian School in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Ben Dahl**, a 2011 graduate of AFLBS from Plummer, Minn., is working in Naknek, Alaska, this summer as a Parish Builder for AFLC Home Missions.

## ARC to host summer camps

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

### ♦ Fire Up Camp

Ages: Grades 4-7  
Dates: June 19-24  
Cost: \$190\*

Leaders: Pastor David and Vicki Johnson, St. Paul's Lutheran, Cloquet, Minn.

### ♦ Kid's Camp

Ages: Grades 1-3  
Dates: June 24-26  
Cost: \$75\*

Leader: Pastor Jeremy Vance, Zion Free Lutheran, Wadena, Minn.

### ♦ Family Camp

Dates: July 24-30  
Cost: Family rates apply

\*Discounts are available for families having more than one child attending these camps: two children, 10 percent; three or more, 15 percent. An additional fee of \$20 applies if registration is submitted fewer than 10 days prior to the beginning of the camp.

For more information on these camps, contact the ARC by e-mail at [arcregistration@centurytel.net](mailto:arcregistration@centurytel.net) or call 800-294-2877. You can also visit the ARC Web site at [www.arc-aflc.org](http://www.arc-aflc.org) for more information.

## Wilderness Bible Camp dates

Wilderness Bible Camp will host an annual family camp on July 12-17. The camp is located 11 miles south of Lake Park, Minn., on County Highway 5.

The camp is also available for retreats and family reunions. Contact Maranatha Free Lutheran Church for more information: (218) 498-2808 or e-mail [maranatha@multiband.us](mailto:maranatha@multiband.us). Or contact Bob Softing at (218) 937-5414.

### AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1-April 30, 2011

FUND	REC'D IN APRIL	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$22,335	\$96,893	\$105,550
Evangelism	10,812	36,683	57,662
Youth Ministries	6,764	52,698	60,825
Parish Education	13,567	40,102	41,181
Seminary	18,062	77,709	72,655
Bible School	53,080	152,379	167,642
Home Missions	35,157	139,787	187,326
World Missions	27,460	165,065	102,416
Personal Support	32,232	131,624	103,278
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$219,470</b>	<b>\$892,940</b>	<b>\$898,534</b>

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

# Engaging to serve

Union Civil War General George McClellan was good at training his troops. They looked impressive as they went through their drills.

McClellan, however, was hesitant to go to battle. Historians have described him as “a brilliant organizer and strategist with just one flaw: he was afraid to fight.”

In the spring of 1862, McClellan finally, cautiously led the Union army into Virginia. He encountered the Confederate forces in Yorktown. The Union troops vastly outnumbered the Rebels, but McClellan didn’t realize that. He overestimated the strength of the Confederate army and was unwilling to attack. He

waited for reinforcements. By the time they came the Rebels had escaped.

In our approach to missions sometimes Christians act like McClellan did. We overes-

Because we are the church of the living God we are to be an advancing, conquering force that overcomes the obstacles and challenges that evil tries to put in our way.

Pastor Rick McKinley, who serves a Portland, Ore., area church, said, “If you take the gospel seriously, you can’t retreat and hide. You have to engage and serve.” Our church buildings are not to become bunkers we hide in, afraid of the evil, scary world around us, hoping we can hang in there until Jesus returns. Our congregations are to be sending people into the world with the good news of Jesus. With confidence in

God’s ability to protect us, we go forward into the world with the life-changing gospel of Christ.

In our mission efforts, both in the United States and around the world, we’re not going forward as much as we are just reacting to

circumstances. A group doesn’t like the church body they are a part of so they call the AFLC and ask for assistance in starting a new congregation. Some healthy congregations have begun that way. I hope, however, we do not view that as the main way we do church planting. Our ambition should be like that of the apostle Paul who wanted to “preach the gospel where Christ was not known” (Romans 15:20). We ought to prayerfully look at our nation and our world and think strategically: Where are there a lot of people but few evangelical churches?

In New York City’s Manhattan there are more than 1.6 million people, about

200 evangelical churches and some 35,000 people attending those churches. On that island more than 1.5 million people are not a part of an evangelical congregation. I pray the day might come when the AFLC sends a team to try to reach some of those people.

Around 20 million people live in the Sao Paulo, Brazil, metro area and a similar number in the Mexico City area. I pray our mission work in those countries might one day include planting congregations in those urban areas. We should not wait for a phone call to come from those cities.

*In our mission efforts, both in the United States and around the world, we’re not going forward as much as we are just reacting to circumstances.*



Pastor Craig Johnson

timate the strength of the enemy and we are afraid to act. We’re to be aware of the devil’s schemes, but let’s not spend more time talking about the devil’s threats than proclaiming the power of Christ. Jesus has already won the victory. “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Colossians 2:15). We can enter into battle with confidence that “the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (I John 4:4).

Jesus said, “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18). He is describing His church as doing more than just holding on and surviving the attacks of the enemy.

The fact that there are millions there who haven’t heard the good news of Jesus is the reason we go.

Big cities are noisy, crowded and expensive places to live. But they are full of people who need Jesus and need to be a part of a congregation. We are not to shrink from the challenges because of fear. We go forward by faith. Our God is able. He will not be stopped. His truth is marching on.

*something to share*

# The gospel according to Gladys

BY RACHEL SCHIERKOLK

I have this favorite moment from the *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. When Gladys Herdman is cast as the Angel of the Lord in a Nativity play, everyone worries, but against all hope she performs brilliantly. Without a trace of fear, she tears up the sanctuary shouting, “Unto you a child is born!” as loudly as her vocal chords can muster. What I love about Gladys’ performance is this: she just couldn’t keep her mouth shut. She was bubbling over with a story to tell, and she shouted it out as jubilantly as she could.

At its core, this is what missions is about—sharing the jubilant message of salvation as loudly as we can. Do you ever wonder what it would be like if we were more like Gladys and went about our lives shouting that message as loudly as her? I would suggest that there are three fears that we must overcome if we are to share the gospel Gladys-style.

First is our fear of failure. We worry that what we share will bear no fruit and end up neglecting to share the good news at all unless we know it will be effective. This attitude places the burden of people’s souls on our own shoulders instead of leaving their lives in God’s hands. However, our God needs no help in saving the lost. If we neglect to see this, we usurp Christ’s sovereign role as Savior. It is essential that we acknowledge that though we are unable to have any part in someone’s salvation, God is all powerful to rescue them.

Another fear is that of looking foolish. We worry others will mock us as backward or illogical. To let our fear of being ridiculed prevent us from sharing is to let our pride get the best of us. Again, we must remember it is not up to us to ensure that our message is accepted. I Corinthians 1:18 says, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” As God’s children we possess a wis-

dom that the lost cannot possibly have. Theirs is the wisdom of the world, but ours is the wisdom of God. Our words alone could never convince anyone, but Christ’s words through us have the power to change lives.

Perhaps one of the greatest fears we might experience is the fear of our own insincerity. How could we possibly share Christ with someone if we ourselves struggle to follow Him as we should? Psalm 34: 4 says, “I sought the LORD, and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears.” If our doubt and insincerity genuinely troubles us, we can have every confidence that if we ask Him to reveal Himself to us, He will. Though we struggle to trust God and believe His promises, we must not let that struggle squelch us into keeping quiet. Despite our sinful nature, God is able to work through us in marvelous ways beyond anything that we could imagine.

Ultimately, missions is not just a career; it is a calling for every Christian. Romans 10: 14-15a says, “How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” In a sense, as believers in Christ we are all sent. We are each called to proclaim His name to those around us. To let our fears get in the way is to ignore what God has expressly asked us to do and to assume that He is not great enough to work through us. A well-known maxim says that God does not call the equipped, but He equips the called. When we let Him allay our fears and open our mouths to proclaim His truth, He gives us the words to speak. All He asks is that we be willing to keep our mouths open.

*Schierkolk, who just finished her junior year at AFLBS, is the daughter of AFLC missionaries Pastor Todd and Barb Schierkolk.*