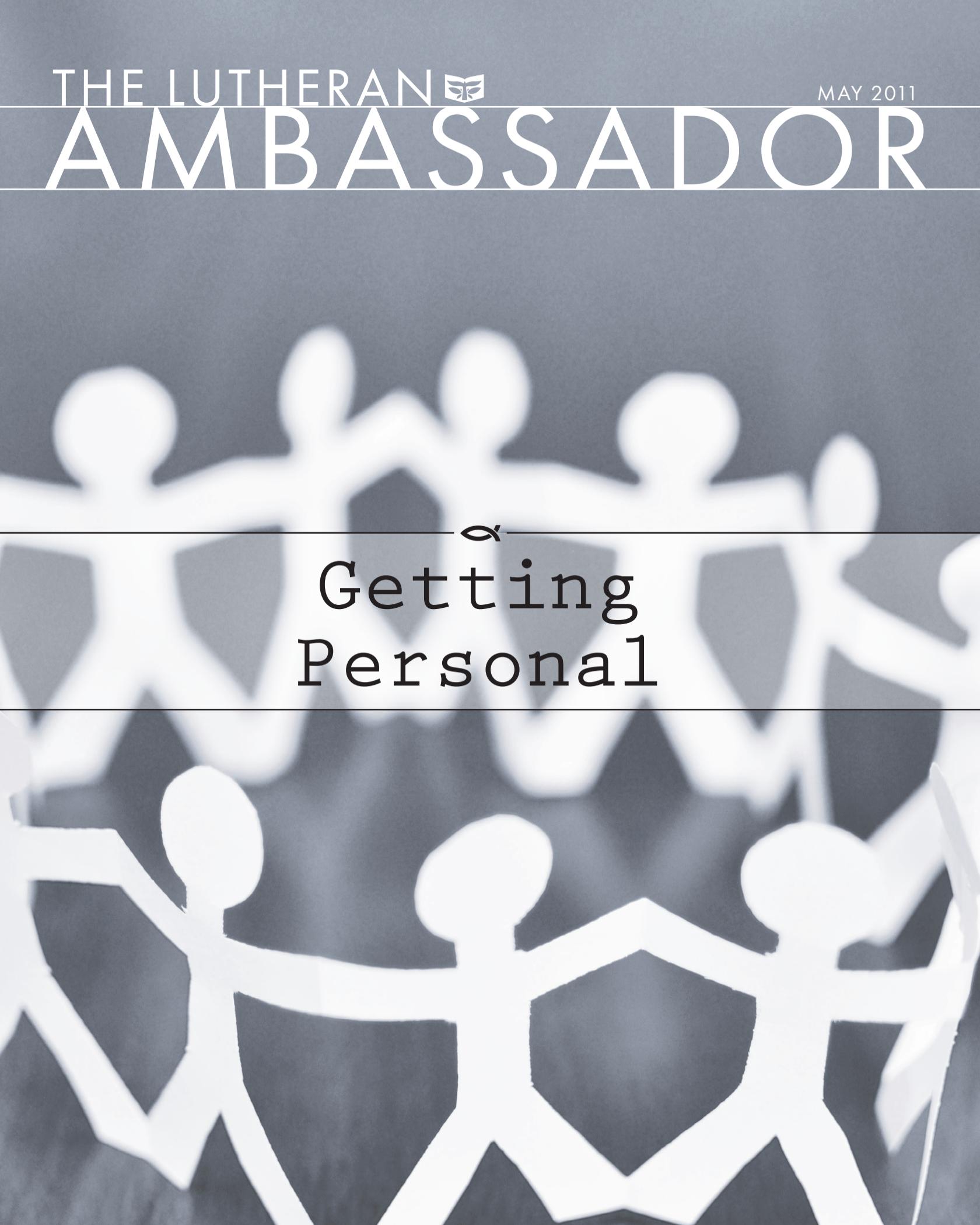


THE LUTHERAN  MAY 2011

AMBASSADOR



Getting
Personal

Thorns

BY PATRICIA PILLMAN

How easy it is to become discouraged when difficult times come my way, especially when those trials “stick” to me like a thorn in my hand, continually causing pain and discomfort. Paul, too, suffered this trial and writes of what the Christian’s perspective of these thorns of life should be. “A thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (II Corinthians 12:7-9).

I find it interesting from this chapter that the thorn in the flesh Paul spoke of was from Satan. He even called it a “messenger of Satan” sent to torment him. He pleaded with God to remove this hard burden. And yet, God chose to let it remain. His response: “My grace is sufficient for you.” God’s message is the same to you and me today. His grace is more than enough to help us bear the thorns stuck in our sides. God has a plan for them, just as He did for the thorn in Paul’s flesh.

Herein lies the crucial point: the thorn serves an important purpose to point us to Christ and to cause us to rely on God. We learn to depend on God when we come to the end of our own strength, and that often happens through hardship and pain. But



oh the glorious victory that comes when we surrender and rest in the Lord ... when His perfect strength works in our complete weakness! No wonder Paul said he would gladly glory in this thorn—not because it was pleasant and easy. Rather, through Paul’s complete surrender because of the pain, God was able to shed abroad His abundant grace and shine

through Paul. God declares that He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). When we depend on the Lord in grateful and humble surrender, He does mighty things in and through us.

So rejoice! These difficult times in your life can and will be used of God for your good, if you are willing. Like Joseph, one day may you declare to Satan and his devices, “you thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good” (Genesis 50:20a). Indeed, let us take the words of II Corinthians 4 to heart: “For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

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

May 2011 >>

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It is the duty of every Christian to be Christ to his neighbor.

—Martin Luther

[Humility and love are precisely the graces which the men of the world can understand, if they do not comprehend doctrines. They are the graces about which there is no mystery, and they are within reach of all classes ... [The poorest] Christian can every day find occasion for practicing love and humility.

—J. C. Ryle]

I know what most easily destroys churches. It's not crack cocaine, government oppression, or even lack of funds. Rather it's gossip and slander that grieves the Holy Spirit.

—Jim Cymbala
Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire

The plain, unvarnished truth is that every one of us needs the accountability that comes from formal, regular, intimate relationships with other godly people.


—Wayne Mack



Love one another



By Kristin Fritz



While attending college and now being involved in college ministry, I have been blessed to be treated almost like royalty by my brothers and sisters in Christ. I have been surrounded by men and women who would literally go to the ends of the earth to help me in any way possible. Writing this very article has given me a chance to reflect on the precious friendships the Lord has blessed me with over the last six years, and only one phrase can accurately describe the effect it has had on me: It is humbling.

In the summer of 2010, my dad had a massive heart attack at Bethany Bible Camp in Bemidji, Minn. Much of the camp staff were emergency medical technicians, registered nurses, or CPR certified. Everyone acted fast and began the life-saving process of CPR and using an AED machine. It was definitely the scariest moment of my life.

A few hours after the initial attack, we were assured that he was going to survive. However, the emotional and mental stress during those first few critical moments just after the attack and the days and weeks to follow was almost unbearable. The friends I made at AFLBS and the friends I am in ministry with in Fargo, N.D., were quick to reach out to not only me but to my family, as well. The gifts, visits, phone calls, and prayers were abundant. Knowing that I had people “in my corner” made the healing process much easier. I attribute much of my dad’s quick recovery to the people who treated us well and helped us with every fiber of their being. My dad has fully recovered from his heart attack. He leads an exceedingly healthy lifestyle that puts most people his age to shame. Praise the Lord!

A smaller, more everyday example of true friendship in my life comes from my accountability partnership with a girl I met while I was involved with Campus Crusade for Christ at North Dakota State University. Not only was she understanding and willing to listen to my struggles, trials, and tribulations, but she was quick to celebrate the victories in my life, as well. To have someone intentionally come alongside you and encourage you to be the person our Creator God has designed us to be is nothing short of priceless. I have seen great improvement in areas of my life that have been lifelong struggles for me. Why? I have found that answering that question is not as easy as it seems.

I mulled over the details of these stories and tried to find the answer to that question. Why do these men and women treat me so well? Why do they take time out of their lives to help me in my greatest need? Why do I have their friendships? Is it out of obligation or duty? I don’t think this is the case. I don’t believe that someone can freely and humbly give of themselves out of obligation.

After seeking the Lord for wisdom to discern what it was that I was missing, the answer suddenly came out of nowhere, and I felt a little bit foolish for not recognizing it. The answer I had been looking for was love. And almost as suddenly, I John 4:7-8 came to mind, “Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God, and everyone that loves is born of God and knows God. He that does not love does not know God for God is love.”

Wow! How could I have missed that? It seems so foundational, does it not? After all, love is the underlying theme of our very salvation. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life” writes the disciple John (3:16). So why wouldn’t love be the underlying theme throughout the rest of our lives?

In I John 4:19-21 we are told, “We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.”

Yes! It was like God had opened up a fire hydrant of understanding in my heart. It made so much sense. But then I started to question my own application of this love I had so recently discovered. Then I wasn’t so jubilant. The list I could make of various people in my life showing me love was never ending, but the list I tried to make of me reciprocating that love was very small. However, yet again, God brought His Word to my mind, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

Since then it has been my prayer that God would give me opportunities to love others the way they have loved me, and that He would show me how to go about doing it. I know that it is only through the Holy Spirit that I am able to do anything, so my daily prayer is to be Spirit-filled and love others well. I can say I know what love is and it truly is humbling. My brothers and sisters, have you experienced this love? Have you shown it in return? I encourage you to make it your prayer to treat your friends with 1 John 4:7-8 in mind. Also, pray for me, that I might be a blessing to others, as well.

Fritz, a 2007 AFLBS graduate, is currently interning with Campus Crusade for Christ in Fargo, N.D., and Moorhead, Minn.



Sharing in affliction

By Wilmar Olson

Your fellow Christian is going through a tough time: a death in the family, a serious health problem, a marriage on the rocks, serious financial difficulties, or a spiritual crisis. You want to help, but maybe you don't feel qualified. You don't know all the answers to all the questions. What should you do?

When you visit a hurting friend, remember that you don't go alone. The Holy Spirit indwells and counsels and enables you to be and to do that which is impossible in your own strength. In fact, someone has said that if we attempt only that which we can accomplish on our own, then our goals are too small. God is not honored and our faith is not strengthened by reliance on self alone.

Don't visit others unprepared. Pray through the situation, telling God of all your concerns and limitations and how inadequate you may feel. Then commit the fellow Christian and yourself to the grace of God, believing that in all things God works for the good of those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

Take your Bible with you, and be prepared to share a few verses that speak to God's promises never to leave or forsake us, that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, and that difficulties in life do not necessarily indicate God's displeasure, although God can use circumstances to direct our path. The Word of God is always a source of strength and comfort, especially for those in difficult situations. God works through His Word to strengthen our faith and to draw us unto Himself (Romans 10:17).

Don't give advice you're not qualified to give. Perhaps professional attention is needed to deal with the situation. You're not there to be an answer-man or to solve every problem your fellow Christian may be trying to deal with. Rather, you're there to come alongside the hurting, to literally or figuratively put your arm around him or her, to feel some of the pain of the situation, to try to understand what that person is going through, and by understanding to ease the isolation the person may be feeling.

I remember hearing about a little girl whose play-mate next door had lost her puppy. The little girl told her

mother that she had helped her friend. When the mother asked how she had helped, the little girl replied, "I helped her cry."

In a way, isn't that what we do when we come alongside hurting friends? We feel some of their pain. We try to understand what they're going through. We try to ease their burden by praying with them and sharing God's Word with them, and by affirming God's love for them, and our love as well. Our presence can be a real comfort as long as we don't overstay the visit.

Generally, we shouldn't try to counsel someone of the opposite gender. Men should counsel with men; women counsel with women. This avoids every appearance of evil, and can prevent an unfortunate relationship which would only add to the problems already present.

Try to determine whether there are practical things to be done to ease the burden: a meal to fix, transportation to be offered, babysitting needed, a letter to be written.

Be sure not to miss an opportunity. When our beloved son, David, died unexpectedly, a number of church brothers and sisters visited our home to show their concern for us. These friends didn't have any magic words to say to make the terrible pain go away, and they didn't stay too long. But the simple fact that they cared enough to visit was a blessing for us. These friends knew they couldn't make all our troubles go away, but they came anyway.

The thoughts and ideas expressed here are mainly a common sense approach to visiting a hurting person, and most of us know these things as part of our Christian experience. Visiting a hurting friend can be somewhat daunting, but done in the love and fellowship of the Holy Spirit it can also be rewarding.

You and I don't have the power to erase all pain and loss. But we can demonstrate God's love which has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5:5).

Olson is a member of Our Redeemer Lutheran, Kirkland, Wash.







Active participant

By Joan Culler

One of my favorite Bible verses is Ephesians 2:10, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” It takes my breath away to realize the creator of the universe made me with certain tasks already in mind. I am not meant to be an observer, but an active participant in His great plan.

This means that you, and I and every Christian ever born has a personal ministry. Each of us has a “... manifestation of the Spirit ... given for the common good” (I Corinthians 12:7). Paul (I Timothy 4:14), Peter (I Peter 4:10) and James (James 1:22) all tell us that if we are to be good stewards, we must use and not neglect our gifts. The first step in doing this is to gain a sense of what our gifts are.

This requires time and thought. Years ago a good friend suggested that I write a personal mission statement. A mission statement can motivate and inspire us. It gives us a picture of what we want to become. It helps us know when to say “yes” to a task (even if it seems challenging) and “no” to the things we really shouldn’t do (even if others think we should). My mission statement has been an immense help to me in my Christian walk.

If you would like to write a personal mission statement, here are some suggestions on how to go about it.

- First, pray for God to enlighten and lead you in the use of your gifts.
- Second, spend some time discovering what your gifts are. Read about spiritual gifts in the Scriptures. Visit the Christian bookstore or ask your pastor—there are many books and tools available.
- Third, Eric Liddell, in the movie “Chariots of Fire,” said, “When I run, I feel the Lord’s pleasure.” Think about the times in your life when you felt this way. What were you doing? Were you teaching, serving others, building something, organizing a project or encouraging someone?
- Last, ask several friends who know you well to make a list of your best qualities and strongest talents. Make your own list of things you are good at or that others have commended you for.

After you have assembled the information, pray some more! Sit down to actually write your statement. It should not be too broad: for example “to lead a faithful Christian life” is a laudable goal, but it applies to everyone. Your mission is meant to be uniquely yours.

Your statement cannot be too specific, either. “To teach crafts to elementary students” is a wonderful calling if that is what you want to do right now. However, it does not allow for change as new circumstances and opportunities arise. A good mission statement gives you room to grow and can last a lifetime.

Here is the mission statement I have used for more than 10 years:

To be mindful of the fact that I am a pilgrim on a journey to grow closer to God; to recognize and celebrate this pilgrim quality in others; to use my God-given talents, insights and resources to encourage them in any way I can; to enjoy the life, friends, family and work with which I am blessed and to be a peaceful and harmonious influence in all these places.

As you can probably tell, I see encouragement as one of my spiritual gifts. So, in keeping with my calling, I encourage you to write your own mission statement. It will bless you and help you to be a blessing to others.

Culler is a member of St. Paul’s Evangelical Free Lutheran, Hagerstown, Md.



Visitors among us

By Ruth Gunderson

I remember my first Sunday at a small church in southern Minnesota rather vividly. More to the point, I distinctly remember the look one of the parishioners gave me during the meet-and-greet time.

"Hi," said the woman in the pew in front of me, giving me a big smile. "You must be the new teacher!"

"No," I said, warming up to her smile. "I'm the new reporter, for the newspaper."

"Oh," her face fell. She couldn't have been more disappointed.

"Sorry," I said to her back, the conversation obviously over.

Newly graduated from college, I was visiting the church with my parents, who at the time were serving as missionaries in Mexico. After attending my graduation in the Twin Cities, they had helped me move all of my possessions into a tiny top-floor apartment in the middle of this small town. In a few short hours, they would climb into their truck, get back on the interstate and leave me adrift on this prairie—alone.

To say I was anxious would be an understatement. I needed my church family.

Growing up a missionary kid and, later, a pastor's kid in a large family, I'd always belonged. Walking into church was like walking into a second home. My church family was my extended family. The youth group kids were my best friends. I still call our missionary friends "auntie" and "uncle."

But that Sunday I couldn't even get a pleasant hello from a fellow worshiper. It hurt. Leaving church, ensconced between my parents, I told myself I'd never go back there on my own.

The next three months were filled with the dreaded meet-and-greet each Sunday at a different church. Sometimes people politely said hello, but little else. Other times they just ignored me. This was new. This was hard. I didn't belong.

I prayed a lot about it. One day, I felt the Holy Spirit tugging me back to that small church. OK, I thought, I'll give it one more try. But I dreaded meeting disappointment once again.

Instead, I met Arnold and Elna, a tiny, smiling white-

haired couple who looked like the ideal grandparents. Elna made a beeline for me soon after the service ended and caught me somewhere between my back-row pew and the narthex door.

Would I have lunch with them? She asked, smiling up at me.

OK, sure. What did I have to lose?

We sat at a local diner and talked about life. They wanted to know all about me, my family, my job. They told me about their family, grandchildren, church. Simple conversation. And then they invited me back to church, promising to introduce me to people my age. And they did. A week later I was part of a family who would surround me through a very lonely season in my life. I had Thanksgiving and Easter dinners with them, weekly Bible studies and choir practices. They even paid for a ticket for me to spend Christmas with my brother in Portland, Ore. I built friendships with people there that continue to bless me today.

All because of Arnold and Elna. Retired, yes. But not retiring. They love people because Christ loves people. Their act of kindness toward me (and many others) is what I think of when I read Paul's request to the Romans church to welcome Phoebe in Romans 16:2: "I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she many need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me."

Of all the mission opportunities that we have, the most basic would be the open doors at our churches. The way we greet visitors—and how we treat each other each Sunday—is at the core of our love for Christ. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

I've often thought of Arnold and Elna when I've visited churches. I look for their spirit among the people I meet. And I've tried to live by their example in my own church. It's not easy walking into a new church alone. It's not easy finding a church home. Arnold and Elna were the bridge I needed to a church family. I hope I can be a bridge for others. Will you?

Gunderson, the managing editor, is a member of Vision of Glory Lutheran, Plymouth, Minn.



Cooperation without compromise

BY PASTOR MARK ANTAL

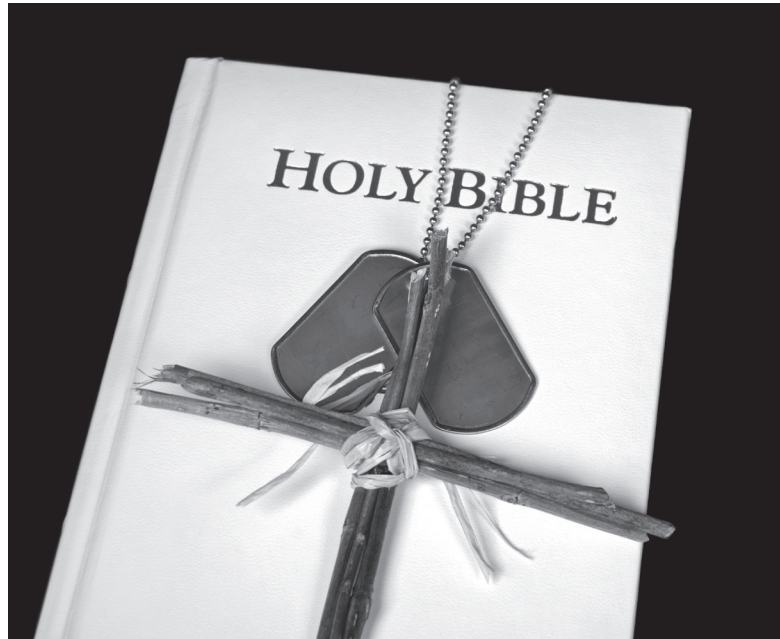
"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

The Lord gave me the joy and privilege of serving in the United States Army for 23 years. Among the many skills I learned over three months at Chaplain Officer Basic Training was how to work with chaplains and soldiers of differing faith groups. Cooperation with other faith groups can

be very challenging for the individual chaplain. At one particular class, a brigadier general came to address us. When a superior officer walks in the room we were taught to stand at attention until given an order to "stand at ease" or "be seated." One of my classmates refused to stand. The general who spoke to us was an outstanding female officer. She was extremely well educated and addressed us with respect and dignity. The classmate who refused to stand stated that his faith did not allow him to be placed under the authority of any woman, under any circumstance. Needless to say, the classmate was counseled, respected for his view, but released from military service.

"Cooperation without compromise" is a guiding principle taught to chaplains. We were taught to cooperate with other chaplains and soldiers of all faith groups. We were taught to uphold their freedom of religion, as granted under the Constitution of the United States. The men and women of the United States military have fought, bled and died for our right to worship God in our way. The chaplain is the first line of defense to help the soldier exercise their freedom of religion.

I am thankful for the chief of chaplains whom I served under. Each chief demanded that we not compromise our personal faith.



Here are some of the guidelines I remember:

- Know the religious beliefs of the faith group that endorsed you.
- Be a person of the Scriptures.
- Know and understand the Holy Scriptures of your faith.
- Live a life becoming of the God and people you serve.
- Preach in your chapel service as you would in your home congregation.
- Give godly counsel to soldiers and families. Use your faith, not psychology, or secular principles. Meaning: let your

faith be the cornerstone of your counseling.

- Stand up to any soldier regardless of rank when moral principles are involved.
- Be the pastor/chaplain your faith ordained and expects you to be.
- Let others know what your faith is. Do not disguise your denomination in any way, shape or form.

If you would have dropped in on one of the worship services I led, you would have heard me preach just like I do today. At a communion service, you would have heard me read from the AFLC Ministerial Acts book, the same book I still use.

Today, as a parish minister, I am thankful for this lesson on cooperation without compromise. It was at AFLBS and AFLTS that I learned to love my Savior, Jesus Christ. It was at our schools that I was anchored in the faith, and given a commission to tell others that there is salvation by no other name, than the name of Jesus Christ.

Antal serves Victory Free Lutheran, Park River, N.D., and Grace Free Lutheran, Edinburg, N.D.

2010 annual conference WELCOME

“Generations walking together”

(Deuteronomy 6:1-9)

*The annual conference will be held
June 14-17 at Sioux Falls Christian School*

Sioux Falls, S.D., is the place. June 13-17 are the dates. Add people from all across the United States under the theme “Generations Walking Together” to make up the 49th annual conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

Abiding Savior and Living Word Free Lutheran congregations, both based in Sioux Falls, will be our hosts for that week. Their pastors, Kirk Flaa and Wade Mobley, together with their staff and congregations, are busy planning and making ready for our time in their fair city. As an AFLC we say thank you to the pastors and members of the two Sioux Falls congregations for the kind invitation to host our conference this summer. We remember how well we were treated in 2007 when we gathered in Sioux Falls for our 45th annual conference, and our prayer is that we will again be spiritually refreshed and encouraged in the work which we, as members of AFLC congregations, share all across our country and in foreign lands.

The week will begin with members of the AFLC Commission on Evangelism hosting their annual Rekindling the Fire event for our pastors and their wives. This has come to be a very special privilege and time of refreshing for pastors and wives. Rev. H.B. London, from Focus on the Family ministries, will be the guest speaker for this event, and he will also bring the message for our opening service on Tuesday evening, speaking on the conference theme from Deuteronomy 6:1-9.

Tuesday will be a full day with the ladies of our AFLC gathering for their annual convention and members of the five resolution committees meeting to prepare resolutions on our common work. Some of the elected board and committee members will also be meeting that day.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find information regarding registration, nominees, meals, children and youth events and the agenda for our business sessions. I do encourage you to get your registrations in early as that is a great help for those who are making preparations for our time together.

I John 1:3-4 says, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.” Yes, it is because of Him that we gather, we work, we pray and we fellowship. And so on behalf of Abiding Savior Free Lutheran and Living Word Free Lutheran pastors, staff and members I say welcome as you plan, pray and attend this 49th annual conference.

Nelson, who is a member of Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn., is president of the AFLC.



Pastor Elden Nelson

2011 annual conference AGENDA

“Generations walking together” (Deuteronomy 6:1-9)

DATES: June 14-17

SITE: Sioux Falls Christian School,
6120 South Charger Circle Sioux Falls, S.D.

HOSTS: Abiding Savior Free Lutheran
and Living Word Free Lutheran

TUESDAY, JUNE 14

9 a.m.

The conference committees meet for devotions, instructions and room assignments.

7:30 p.m.

The opening service of the conference with Communion.

Leader: Pastor Peter Franz, Maple Grove, Minn.

Speaker: H.B. London, Jr.—Focus on the Family

AFLC President Pastor Elden Nelson will open the conference and appoint necessary committees.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15

9 a.m.

Devotions: Seminarian David Franz
Report of the Credentials Committee
Adoption of the Conference Agenda
Approval of 2010 Annual Conference Report
Election of the Nominating Committee for the 2012 Conference
The President's Report
Report of the Chairman of the Coordinating Committee,
Pastor Timothy Skramstad, Eagan, Minn.
Report of the Chairman of the AFLC Foundation,
Kevin O'Neil, Marshall, Minn.
Reports of Chaplaincy Ministries
Institutional: Pastor Kerwin Sletto, Grand Forks, N.D.
Military: Pastor Mark Antal, Park River, N.D.
Report of the Director of the ARC,
Pat Flanders, Osceola, Wis.
AFLC Financial Report,
Cory Buck, New Hope, Minn.
Report of the Family Bible Camps
• Lake Bronson: Treasurer, Sonia Balmer, Thief River Falls, Minn.
• Wilderness: Treasurer, Jon Dryburgh, Grafton, N.D.
Report of the Budget Analysis Committee,

Alan Twedt, Portland, N.D.

Report of the Nominating Committee, always in order
Election of nominees for the Missions, Schools and ARC
Corporations

11:30 a.m.

Prayer Hour

Noon

Builder's Fellowship Lunch

Chaplain's Lunch

1:30 p.m.

Devotions: Seminarian Jason Gudim

Report of the Credentials Committee

Election Procedures

Elections: (all terms five years unless noted)

• Vice President—one-year term

• Secretary—one-year term

Selection of nominees to the:

• Home Missions Committee—one pastor;

• Bay Broadcasting Board—one layman (three-year term);

• FLAPS Board of Managers—one pastor, one layman;

• World Missions Committee—one layman;

• Board of Trustees—one pastor, one layman;

• ARC Board—one layman

Report of Committee No. 1 (Administration)

Report of Nominating Committee

Election of nominees to the Coordinating Committee—
one pastor and one layman

Election of Committee No. 1 for the 2012 Conference

5:30 p.m.

Schools Corporation Annual Meeting

7 p.m.

The Mission Festival Service conducted by the WMF

Speaker: Pastor Jonathan Abel, AFLC missionary to Brazil

THURSDAY, JUNE 16

7 a.m.

Mission Corporation Annual Meeting

9 a.m.

Devotions: Seminarian Ryan Mairs
 Report of the Credentials Committee
 Report of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees,
 Dr. Dan Mundfrom, Las Cruces, N.M.
 Report of the Dean of the Seminary,
 Dr. Francis Monseth, Rogers, Minn.
 Report of the Dean of the Bible School,
 Pastor Joel Rolf, Plymouth, Minn.
 Report of Committee No. 2 (Schools)
 Report of Nominating Committee
 Election of Committee No. 2 for the 2012 Conference
 Report of the Schools Corporation Annual Meeting

11:30 a.m.

Prayer Hour

Noon

The ARC Corporation Annual Meeting
 Partners in Mission Outreach Annual Meeting

1:30 p.m.

Devotions: Pastor Joel Walde
 Report of the Credentials Committee
 Report of the Chairman of the World Missions Committee,
 Pastor Craig Wentzel, Edmore, N.D.
 Report of the Director of World Missions,
 Pastor Del Palmer, Shakopee, Minn.
 Report of Partners in Mission Outreach Board President,
 Ken Sletten, Duluth, Minn.
 Report of the Chairman of the Home Missions Committee,
 Pastor Richard Long, Arlington, Wash.
 Report of the Director of Home Missions,
 Pastor Paul Nash, Brooklyn Park, Minn.
 Report of FLAPS Executive Director,
 Lavon Bohling, Golden Valley, Minn.
 Report of WMF President,
 Lorilee Mundfrom, Eugene, Ore.
 Report of the Chairman of the Commission on Evangelism,
 Pastor Tim Johnson, Northwood, N.D.
 Report of the Director of Evangelism,
 Pastor James Rasmussen, Maple Grove, Minn.
 Report of Committee No. 3 (Missions and Evangelism)
 Report of the Missions Corporation Annual Meeting
 Report of Nominating Committee
 Election of member to the Commission on Evangelism—
 one pastor;
 Election of Committee No. 3 for the 2012 Conference

5:30 p.m.

Pastor's Banquet

7 p.m.

Laymen's Service

FRIDAY, JUNE 17

7 a.m.

FLAPS Annual Meeting

9 a.m.

Devotions: Pastor John Kieh
 Report of the Credentials Committee
 Report of the Chairman of the Board of Publications and Parish
 Education, Pastor John Mundfrom, Eugene, Ore.
 Report of the Director of Parish Education,
 Marian Christopherson, Crystal, Minn.
 Report of the Chairman of the Youth Board,
 Pastor Mark Johnson, Dalton, Minn.
 Report of the President of the Free Lutheran Youth,
 Daniel Keinanen, Onalaska, Wis.
 Report of Youth Ministries Director,
 Pastor Jason Holt, St. Michael, Minn.
 Report of Committee No. 4
 (Publications, Parish Education and Youth Work)
 Report of Nominating Committee
 Election of member to the Board of Publications and Parish
 Education—one pastor
 Election of member to the Youth Board—one layman
 Election of Committee No. 4 for the 2012 Conference

11:30 a.m.

Prayer Hour

Noon

AFLC Foundation Lunch

1:30 p.m.

Devotions
 Report of Credentials Committee
 Report of the Chairman of the Stewardship Board,
 Pastor Greg Schram, Thief River Falls, Minn.
 Report of the Chairman of the Benefits Board,
 Jordan Volk, Brandon, S.D.
 Report of Committee No. 5 (Stewardship and Benefits)
 Report of Nominating Committee
 Election of member to the Stewardship Board—one layman;
 Election of member to the Benefits Board—one pastor;
 one layman (one-year term)
 Election of Committee No. 5 for the 2012 conference
 Report of the Chairman of the Colloquy Committee,
 Pastor Dennis Gray, Newfolden, Minn.
 Election of Colloquy Committee for the 2011 Conference
 Report of special committees
 Election of Budget Analysis Committee—two lay terms
 Report of Committee No. 1 as the Committee on General
 Resolutions
 Other Reports

7:30 p.m.

Ordination/Closing Service

Conference Committee

Pastor Elden Nelson, President
 Pastor Brian Davidson, Secretary

49th annual conference

NOMINEES



Coordinating Committee

(One layman, five-year term)

X
X

(One pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, Minn.
X

Schools Board of Trustees

Voted on by corporation members

(One pastor, five-year term)

*Pastor Martin Horn, Kenyon, Minn.
Pastor Todd Erickson, Maple Grove, Minn.

(One layman, five-year term)

X
X

World Missions Committee

Voted on by corporation members

(One layman, five-year term)

X
X

Home Missions Committee

Voted on by corporation members

(One pastor, five-year term)

*Pastor Rick Long, Arlington, Wash.
X

FLAPS Board of Managers

Voted on by corporation members

(One layman, five-year term)

Joel Forness, Wahpeton, N.D.
X

(One pastor, five-year term)

X
X

Bay Broadcasting

Voted on by corporation members

(One layman, five-year term)
Eldwyn VanBruggen, Mesa, Ariz.
Ken Pederson, Fertile, Minn.

ARC Board

Voted on by corporation members

(One layman, five-year term)

Denis Parsley, Pipestone, Minn.
X

Stewardship Board

(One layman, five-year term)

Roland Meyer, Paxton, Ill.
X

Board of Publications & Parish Education

(One pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Sam Wellumson, East Grand Forks, Minn.
X

Youth Board

(One layman, five-year term)

X
X

Benefits Board

(One pastor, five-year term)

X
X

Commission on Evangelism

(One pastor, five-year term)

*Pastor Tim Johnson, Pipestone, Minn.
Pastor James Johnson, Camarillo, Calif.

* Incumbents

** Must be re-elected to corporation to remain on committee or board

X Nominations not named by press deadline

ARC Corporation

(10 terms of five years each)

Shawn Adrian, Binford, N.D.

Alan Behm, Lowry, Minn.

*Kermit Berge, Larimore, N.D.

**Ivar Berge, Fargo, N.D.

Rob Edwards, Andover, Minn.

Mark Fagerstrom, DeKalb, Ill.

Ernie Hilbert, Wheatland, Iowa

Lorin Lyon, Kenyon, Minn.

Jackie Manninen, Annndale, Minn.

*Jason Norlien, Maple Grove, Minn.

Pam Olson, Savage, Minn.

*Susan Parsley, Pipestone, Minn.

*Wayne Peterson, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Chuck Siems, Urbana, Ill.

**Roger Timm, Wilson, Wis.

*Pastor Jon Unverzagt, Sparta, Wis.

Pastor Jeremy Vance, Wadena, Minn.

**Pastor Eric Westlake, Zumbrota, Minn.

X

X

Schools Corporation

(10 terms of five years each)

*John Amdahl, Sioux Falls, S.D.

*Larry Behne, Lowden, Iowa

*Jon Dryburgh, Grafton, N.D.

Mark Fagerstrom, DeKalb, Ill.

*Lyle Forde, Arlington, Wash.

*David Fugleberg, Lakeville, Minn.

*Pastor Earl Korhonen, Radcliffe, Iowa

*Pastor Terry Olson, Grafton, N.D.

Mark Sivertson, Sioux Falls, S.D.

*Pastor Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, Mont.

Bill Sonmor, Dalton, Minn.

Pastor Kent Sperry, DeKalb, Ill.

Gary Stegman, Crookston, Minn.

*Doug Swanson, Burtrum, Minn.

*John Talley, Newark, Ill.

X

X

X

X

X

Missions Corporation

(20 terms of five years each)

*Don Berge, Fargo, N.D.

Bev Burke, Humboldt, Tenn.

*Carl Busse, Humboldt, Tenn.

*Robert Dietsche, Osceola, Wis.

*Tim Erhardt, Lake Stevens, Wash.

*Scott Erickson, Badger, Minn.

Glenn Espe, Thief River Falls, Minn.

**Pastor James Fugleberg, Moorhead, Minn.

*Lois Grothe, Astoria, Ore.

Karen Hart, Saint Francis, Kan.

*Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D.

*Pastor Lynn Kinneberg, McVillie, N.D.

Rod Kjersten, Roseau, Minn.

*Pastor Dale Mellgren, McIntosh, Minn.

Ryan Mairs, Plymouth, Minn.

*Pastor Allen Monson, Mesa, Ariz.

**Glenn Mork, Buffalo, Minn.

Peter Slayton, Newark, Ill.

*Pastor Stephen Mundfrom, Valley City, N.D.

Terry Park, Kirkland, Wash.

*Pastor Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City

**Eldwyn Van Bruggen, Mesa, Ariz.

*Jeremy Zeltinger, Litchville, N.D.

17 more nominees needed

(2 terms of three years each)

X

X

X

X

(two terms of one year each)

X

X

X

X

Nominees to serve at the 2012 conference

Committee No. 1

(Administration)

Pastor Les Galland, Shakopee, Minn.

Dr. Robert Kohl, Brookings, S.D.

Pastor Gerald Peterson,
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Darin Dykstra, Sioux Falls, S.D.

X

Committee No. 2

(Schools)

Amy Dalager, Argyle, Minn.

Larry Behne, Lowden, Iowa

Pastor Tim Hinrichs, Mankato, Minn.

Paul Kylo, Byron, Minn.

Gary Stegman, Crookston, Minn.

Committee No. 3

(Missions and Evangelism)

Mike Coyle, Nicolette, Minn.

Roger Tollefson, Crookston, Minn.

X

X

X

Committee No. 4

(Publications and Parish Education)

Kristin Tanner, Sioux Falls, S.D.

X

X

X

X

X

Committee No. 5

(Stewardship and Pensions)

Scott Schauer, Oklahoma City, Okla.

X

X

X

X

49th annual conference REGISTRATION

June 14-17 at Sioux Falls Christian School, 6120 S. Charger Circle, Sioux Falls, S.D.

For a downloadable form, and for more information, visit our Facebook page or go to www.aflc.org and click on "conferences"

First name: _____ Spouse (if attending): _____

Last name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

AFLC Congregation: _____

Other Congregation: _____

Membership (Check one)

You: _____ Rostered AFLC Pastor or serving AFLC church _____ Visiting Pastor _____ Lay Member _____ Lay Visitor

Spouse: _____ Rostered AFLC Pastor or serving AFLC church _____ Visiting Pastor _____ Lay Member _____ Lay Visitor

Number of children attending (see page 21 for details): _____ 5 and younger _____ 6-12 _____ 13-17

Number attending Saturday's free optional creation apologetics seminar (see page 21): _____

Meals and banquets: A general conference meal is only being offered at noon Wednesday through Friday. All other meals are on your own. Board and committee members must register for applicable meals. **Meal registration must be received by May 31.**

Meal	Cost	#	Total
Tuesday lunch (for those serving on committees)	\$10		\$
Wednesday Conference lunch (ages 13-adult)	\$10		\$
Wednesday Conference lunch (child)	\$5		\$
Wednesday Builder's Fellowship lunch	\$10		\$
Wednesday Schools' Corporation dinner	\$9		\$
Thursday Missions Corporation breakfast	\$7		\$
Thursday Conference lunch (ages 13-adult)	\$10		\$
Thursday Conference lunch (child)	\$5		\$
Thursday ARC Corporation lunch	\$10		\$
Thursday PIMO lunch	\$10		\$
Thursday Pastors' banquet	\$20		\$
Friday FLAPS breakfast	\$7		\$
Friday Conference lunch (ages 13-adult)	\$10		\$
Friday Conference lunch (child)	\$5		\$
Friday AFLC Foundation lunch	\$10		\$
Children/youth events (attach names and ages)	\$25		\$
Total meals			\$
*Conference registration fee (\$30 single/\$40 couple)			\$
Total registration and meals			\$

*The registration fee is required for all attending the AFLC Conference. **Make checks payable to "AFLC" and mail to: AFLC, c/o Conference Registrations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441.** Registrations must be postmarked by May 31.

Corrie ten Boom: a life of service

BY MARLENE EIDSMOE

For years, Corrie ten Boom has been my heroine. Perhaps it was the Dutch heritage that we shared, or perhaps it was because she reminded me so much of my maternal grandmother, whom I dearly loved. Corrie and my grandmother spoke with the same Dutch accent, had similar facial features and posture, loved to sing, and often wore the color blue. Most important, however, was their similar love and devotion to God. Much like Corrie, every conversation with Grandmother somehow ended up to be about God.

As I began to read Corrie's books, I realized that I, too, shared many things in common with her—not the least of which was the background of "good Dutch Reformed stock."

We grew up with many of the same customs such as family meals three times a day with prayer before and after each meal, along with reading of the Scriptures. Stopping mid-morning for coffee and mid-afternoon for tea was as daily as the rising sun. "Let's put the kettle on," were familiar words which always meant an hour of laughs and relaxation. Our lives were orderly but flexible.

During a time of crisis, both Corrie and I recalled from childhood the touch of our father's hand upon our face; a blessed

memory of the love of our earthly fathers serving to remind us of the love of our Heavenly Father.

Corrie was always involved in children's ministry. She founded an organization for girls in Holland, similar to that of the Girls Scouts in America. She also taught Bible classes for children, as I do with Child Evangelism Fellowship.

Though I could never compare my life with hers in terms of service or impact, I hope I can give her honor by keeping her memory and work alive in the hearts of a new generation.

I began doing a Corrie monologue several years ago for children at a missions conference in Montgomery, Ala. Since then, I have given the presentation to civic groups, schools, churches, senior citizen clubs and home school conferences. My prayer is that people will be touched by the life of Corrie ten Boom, that the presentation honors her faithfulness and commitment to God, but mostly that people are reached by the gospel and God's message of forgiveness.

Eidsmoe, from Pike Road, Ala., will present a monologue on Corrie ten Boom during an afternoon workshop at the WMF convention June 14 in Sioux Falls, S.D.

2011 WMF Convention • June 14 • Sioux Falls, S.D.

Please use this form to register for the WMF Convention, luncheon and banquet on Tuesday, June 14, and for the WMF leadership breakfast on Wednesday, June 15. The convention will be held at Sioux Falls Christian School, 6120 Charger Circle, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home congregation: _____

Address: _____

Item	Cost	#	Total
*Registration	\$7.50		\$
Tuesday luncheon	\$8.50		\$
Tuesday banquet	\$10		\$
Wednesday breakfast	\$6		\$
Total			\$

**The registration fee is required for all attending the convention. Make checks payable to "WMF of AFLC" and mail to: Lois Grothe, 3745 Franklin Ave., Astoria, OR 97103. Registrations must be postmarked by May 31. Preregistration is required to attend luncheon and banquet. Childcare will be provided. Please indicate children's ages on AFLC Conference registration form on page 18.*

What sign are you wearing?

BY PASTOR CRAIG WENTZEL

Sometimes, we may wonder what we can do to support world missions and the evangelism of the unsaved. Beyond our prayers and our gifts to missions, we need, like local businesses, to be wearing the right spiritual signs.

Out to lunch

I was working at church one Saturday evening, and I noticed a strange pickup drive by with a driver I had never seen before. I began to wonder who he was and if he lived in town. If he did, why didn't I know him in a town of only 50 people? It struck me that maybe I've been "out to lunch" for a while, not noticing the people right around me. Is this true of you or of your congregation? Have we turned off our spiritual concern for the people in our neighborhoods?

There could be many reasons why we have been spiritually out to lunch. Do we see our own sin or need of a Savior? Are we currently pursuing some sin or selfish desire? Perhaps we have had needs or troubles in our own lives that we haven't been able to see beyond. Perhaps we have lost sight of the inevitable destruction that awaits the eternal souls around us who are without Jesus.

Every lunch break comes to an end. Jesus tells us that the lunch hour is now over and it's time to get back to work for Him.

Open for business (as usual)

I used to enjoy going to Benjamin's Restaurant & Bakery with a friend for breakfast whenever I came to Minneapolis. When I came to the Summer Institute of Theology one summer, I looked up another Benjamin's. It was difficult to get to because they were working on the highway. A sign in the door quieted any doubts, "Open for business (as usual)."

Perhaps that is the sign many of us are wearing. We live our personal Christian lives, as usual, doing the same things we've always done: prayer, Bible-reading, worship, conferences, etc. Our congregations are still consistent in their offering of good, spiritual



food in worship services and ministry. We support our missionaries as usual with our finances and prayers and maybe support our mission fields in the same way as always.

But the world around us is changing. People neither feel an interest in, nor an obligation to, the Church. The world is full of personal and national crises that people can't see beyond—to their spiritual need. Can we afford to keep doing

business as usual, or expect people to come to us for ministry?

Gone fishing

This sign is rare to see on business doors today and is also unusual to see in the lives of individual Christians and congregations. It may be thought frivolous for a businessman to go fishing, but according to God's Word, it is necessary for the Christian to go fishing for souls. Jesus says: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." But we seem to have adopted completely different priorities.

One summer, when I was in grade school, a friend got me interested in fishing. I painted an old tackle box and started collecting fishing lures and various equipment for it. However, my fishing interest soon evaporated. The reason? I never caught any fish.

I think the same thing may be true of us spiritually. We study the best spiritual "fishing" (evangelism) methods, but we're not excited about fishing with Jesus because we've never caught any fish (souls) ourselves. When we are successful, we become excited about the results. The methods, or tools, for missions or evangelism are no longer important in themselves, but only in so far as they enable us to win more souls for Jesus. Are you excited about "fishing" for eternal souls?

Wentzel serves Living Word Lutheran, Edmore, N.D., and Zoar Lutheran, Hampden, N.D.

Creation apologetics seminar offered

Answers in Genesis speaker David Menton will present a creation apologetics seminar on Saturday, June 18, in Sioux Falls, S.D. (the morning after the AFLC Annual Conference). Dr. Menton will present two sessions on biblical authority and design inferences in creation, and will provide time for interaction. Make sure to take advantage of this free training opportunity.

A lifelong Lutheran born in Mankato, Minn., Dr. Menton has done research at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., edited five editions of *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*, and taught for 34 years at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Mo.

This valuable seminar, which is presented at no cost to conference attendees, will be held from 8:30 a.m. to noon at Abiding Savior Free Lutheran. Please register your plans to attend on the conference registration form (see page 18). For more information on this event, contact Pastor Wade Mobley of Living Word Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D., at (605) 361-3044, or e-mail him at pastorwade@lwflc.org.

WMF Convention events set for June 14

Come join the Women's Missionary Federation June 14 for the WMF Convention. This is the one time a year that we can gather together to study God's Word, sing praises to Him, fellowship together and attend workshops. We are excited to hear what our Bible study leader and workshop presenters will share with us under the theme "Trust~Delight~Commit."

Several ladies have accepted the opportunity to proclaim God's Word to us. Candice Johnson will lead us in our Bible study and Amy Skogerboe, Arlys Jorenby and Marlene Eidsmoe will present work-

shops. The afternoon format has changed so that everyone will be able to attend all three workshops. The day will conclude with a banquet at 5 p.m., featuring missionary Tamba Abel and chalk artist Christie Ballmann.

The WMF leadership breakfast is scheduled for June 15 for those who are interested in ideas for your women's ministry programs. Pastor Jonathan Abel will bring the Word to us at the Mission Festival service that evening. We pray that you will make every effort to join us.

Youth, children events planned for annual conference

Hosts of the AFLC Annual Conference are busy planning events for children and youth. The conference will be held June 14-17 at Sioux Falls Christian School, Sioux Falls, S.D.

The program of events will include vacation Bible school for children and Bible studies for youth in the morning hours, and field trips in the afternoon. Off-campus field trips are being planned to the Great Plains Zoo and Museum, the Washington Pavilion and a geo-trekking event. Other

activities include Frisbee golf and lawn bowling.

The programs will begin on Tuesday, June 14 and conclude on Friday, June 17.

Host congregations Abiding Savior Free Lutheran and Living Word Free Lutheran are in charge of planning these events. The cost for the entire week, which includes all programming, activities, transportation and food, is \$25 per student. Please register for these events on the conference registration form (see page 18).

Housing options within Sioux Falls area

No conference-related rooms have been blocked at Sioux Falls, S.D., area hotels for the AFLC Annual Conference attendees. However, ample space remains. Early booking is still best, though, as tournaments and conventions book the most economical rooms quickly. Rooms range in price from \$79-129, with the hotels in closest proximity to the conference site (East 69th Street and South Cliff Avenue) in the upper portion of that range. A variety of on-line resources will give hotel locations on an accurate map of Sioux Falls.



Pastor Tonnes Pollestad hired as director of development for AFLC

Pastor Tonnes Pollestad was hired by the AFLC to fill the position of director of development. He began in the new position in March.

Following a conference resolution in 2010 to create and support the position, members of the Coordinating Committee refined the job description and coordinated funding the position from all AFLC departments.

Pollestad, an AFLC pastor, most recently served with the Bible League International as regional field director. Previously, he worked as director of Vision 2004 for four years.

In his new position with the AFLC, Pollestad will work with each department to help assess funding needs and opportunities. Though based at the administration building in Plymouth, Minn., Pollestad will travel throughout the United States as he seeks to promote AFLC ministries.

Ambassador on Facebook

The editors of *The Lutheran Ambassador* recently started a fan page on Facebook, featuring posts of past articles and news from campus events.

We'd like to hear your thoughts on articles and themes planned for future issues. Become a follower of the Lutheran Ambassador and feel free to share your thoughts with us.

AFLC memorials: March

AFLBS

Vivian Wall, Bob Bilden,
John and Jackie Nelson,
Ruth Claus

Pastor Stephen Odegard,
Lou Warwick, Darlene
Wolla, Ella Oscarson,
Marvin Schaper

AFLT

Vivian Wall, Beulah Olson,
Loren Berkness (2),
Florence Anderson

Parish Education

Ella Oscarson

Youth Ministries

Oscar Tjeerdsma

Evangelism

Lowell Formo

World Missions

Vivian Wall, Maynard Hjelle,
Darlene Wolla, Ray Haltli,
Lowell Formo, Arland
Panchot

Home Missions

Laura Kummer, Rich Holm,
Erling Emerson Sr.,
Dennis Myers, Arlie Garrick,

ARC hosts 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
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 or call 800-294-2877. You can also visit the ARC Web site at www.arc-aflc.org for more information.

Wilderness Bible Camp

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 email maranatha@multiband.us. Or contact Bob Softing at (218) 937-5414.

People and Places

Pastor David Hinrichs is serving as interim pastor at Christ Lutheran, Stover, Mo.

Pastor John Kiehl has accepted a call to serve Faith Lutheran, Metropolis, Ill.

Effective immediately, all mail intended for **Pastor Todd and Barb Schierkolk** and their family, as well as for **Ingrid Giles**, all AFLC missionaries in Jerez, Mexico, should now be sent to the AFLC administration building: 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, Minn.

Pastor Richard Anderson is serving as interim pastor at Hosannah Free Lutheran, Cumberland, Wis.

Licensed Pastor Robert Grebel is serving as interim pastor at Egeland Lutheran, Waubay, S.D., and Ortley Free Lutheran, Ortley, S.D.

Lutherans for Life host national conference

Lutherans for Life will host a national conference Aug. 5-6 at the Sheraton Grand Hotel, Irving, Texas. The conference theme is "Adopted in Christ."

This year's keynote speaker is Russell Moore, author of the book, *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches*. Workshop topics will include a panel with a birth mother, adoptive parent and adopted child. Other workshop topics include embryo adoption, foreign adoption, foster care and pastors and politics.

Christian singer-songwriter Heather Ruesch, from Brainerd, Minn., will be featured during the conference.

Also featured during a conference workshop will be AFLC Pastor John Eidsmoe, professor of law at Oak Brook College of Law.

For more information on conference workshop topics, speakers conference fees or to register, visit the Lutherans for Life Web site at www.lutheransforlife.org.

Lutherans for Life is a pro-life ministry whose mission is equipping Lutherans to be gospel-motivated voices for life.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1-March 31, 2011

FUND	REC'D IN MARCH	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$26,662	\$74,558	\$80,078
Evangelism	8,674	25,871	50,117
Youth Ministries	6,719	45,934	54,996
Parish Education	9,363	26,535	26,044
Seminary	25,539	59,647	58,464
Bible School	27,069	99,299	123,126
Home Missions	24,435	104,630	146,958
World Missions	36,785	137,605	77,901
Personal Support	35,996	99,392	73,792
TOTALS	\$201,241	\$673,470	\$691,477

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

Making people a priority

When I was a child, if our family had some free time, we did something that now sounds a little like something from a bygone day. We went and visited friends. My parents weren't officers in the church who were expected to make a certain number of visits a month. The people we visited often weren't sick or shut-in or going through some difficult trial. They were just friends that my parents wanted to spend time with.

Those visits sound almost strange in this day and age when some consider e-mail to be a time-consuming means of communication and they text message instead. If somebody suggests a visit just to see how we're doing, we're almost tempted to wonder, "What's up?"



Pastor Craig Johnson

Our schedules get so full. We have so much we think we have to do; so many things we are trying to accomplish. Something has to get cut out of the schedule. That visit with the friend is often sacrificed. It doesn't seem so important or urgent. It can wait for a more convenient day.

Maintaining relationships can often get shoved down the list of priorities. Other things clamor for our attention and occupy our time. Some let their relationships slide until they become just a distant memory. Then when a crisis hits and they need the support of others, sadly some people discover they have a lot of acquaintances but few real friends.

Sometimes we talk about friends as either high-maintenance or low-maintenance.

Low-maintenance friends are those friends who aren't easily offended. You're confident they're still your friends, even if you haven't talked to them for a while. Those friends are great to have, but sometimes we get tempted to treat friends as if they require no maintenance.

Every friendship, in order to be healthy and growing, needs some maintenance. Relationships require attention. They take time and effort. It is good to make a phone call or a visit, even if there is no special occasion or pressing need.

The early Christians worked hard at maintaining their relationships. As they faced persecution, and as they strived to spread the good news of Jesus' resurrection, they knew they needed one another. "Every day they continued to meet together

in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:46, NIV). Their relationships were of vital importance to them. They sacrificed their homes and all their material possessions. They even sacrificed their lives. But they did not sacrifice their relationships with one another. They held tightly to those friendships to the very end.

Too often we hold tightly to things but not to our relationships. We spend more time maintaining our homes and our cars and our bank accounts than we do maintaining our friendships.

I remember being in a conversation

with somebody once who admitted he didn't like working with people. Some people aren't meant to work in customer service. For some people, because of their personality type or their background, interacting with others in a social setting can be a challenge. God didn't intend for everybody to be the life of the party. It's okay if you're a little quieter than your neighbor and a little more reserved. But no matter your personality type, each of us is called to care about people.

Interacting with people can be con-

Too often we hold tightly to things but not to our relationships. We spend more time maintaining our homes and our cars and our bank accounts than we do maintaining our friendships.

fusing and a source of pain. Maintaining relationships can be hard and stressful. But the Church is in the people business. If we have our buildings in good shape and our theology straight but we're not impacting the lives of people, we're failing at our mission.

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 John 3:16). Jesus endured all the suffering of the cross because He has an incredible love for people. He calls on us to follow His example and make people and our relationships with them a priority.

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

Periodicals

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

building the base

Spiritual food

BY PASTOR BRETT BOE

Have you ever gone to a banquet or fancy dinner, possibly a wedding reception, only to sit down at your table and discover a small army of cutlery surrounding your plate? Not being one to know the nuance of etiquette, you shudder in fear wondering which utensil to use first. Yep, I've been there too, friend. It has typically been my experience to use one fork and one spoon when I eat; I have not been trained in how to dine at an elegant banquet.

Did you know that God uses the illustration of food to teach us about stages of spiritual growth—from infancy to maturity? The type of food one eats depends on one's stage of development. Infants need baby food. Be it pureed "big people food" or something from a glass jar that includes peas, babies cannot eat solids such as a pork chop. Little ones are hindered from the ability to chew due to lack of teeth. As a father it would be inappropriate for me to place before my infant child a slab of steak and say, "Dig in!"

The same truth applies spiritually. Read these verses from Hebrews: "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil" (Hebrews 5:12-14). While this passage speaks to those who after a certain amount of time should have grown

up and didn't, it also traces the spiritual developmental stages that each believer may grow into. As a spiritual infant, you need milk. As a spiritually mature person, your regular diet will be solid food.

At what stage do you find yourself, friend? Perhaps you feel the sting of condemnation that the writer of Hebrews wishes to convey to "Baby Huey" Christians. Baby Huey was a cartoon duck the size of an adult who wore baby clothes, drank milk from a bottle, and acted childish. The exhortation for us is to grow into maturity, to nibble at the next level of spiritual food. Crave the milk of the Word and grow. I Peter 2:2-3 teaches, "Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord."

Perhaps you are a spiritual infant. Enjoy feeding on the Word in convenient bite sizes from your pastor or feast on the Bible through daily devotions; it will sustain you spiritually.

Perhaps you are a mature believer of Jesus Christ. Your spiritual steak dinners are savory and extremely delightful. Your senses have been trained to feed on the depth and richness of Scripture, knowing how to discern good and evil throughout the course of your days.

Whatever your place in the development cycle, God's Word is able to sustain you, even to help you grow into mature believers.

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