

THE LUTHERAN 

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AMBASSADOR



THANKFUL FOR THE
REFORMATION



Harvest in the northland

BY JONATHAN ANDERSON

Ripple effects from America's mid-20th century revival lasted for decades afterward through the ministries of its converts. One of those converts was a young man in Michigan's Upper Peninsula who, in spite of his father's persistent admonitions, had resisted the Lord until age 30. But during evangelistic services in April 1947, God rescued a soul and secured a future laborer for His harvest in the person of Herbert Franz.

Soon thereafter, when an invitation to share his testimony at an area church turned into a last-minute request to fill its pulpit, Herb began sensing God's call to the ministry. After some years, he completed seminary and was ordained as pastor of a parish in the Upper Peninsula.

In January 1960, Herb arrived in Minnesota's northland to take a call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Cloquet. Soon discovering that spiritual life there was quite low, he did not despair but seemed rather to hear Jesus saying, "Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (John 4:35). Indeed, when viewed through Jesus' eyes, the situation was most hopeful.

Earnestly desiring that people see their sin and their consequent need for Jesus, Herb began an evangelistic preaching mission to his own congregation. Enraged, one woman exclaimed, "That man is going to preach the church empty!"

"No," said her yet-unsaved son-in-law, "He is going to preach the church full!" And that is exactly what happened as God's Spirit worked powerfully.

For the next decade and beyond, revival became the norm at St. Paul's. Almost every Sunday, people came to the altar repenting of sin and seeking salvation or renewal. One New Year's Eve, Herb organized a watch-night prayer service and led Christians in



confession of their own sins for the first hour. During the next three months alone, more than 30 people were saved. Of typical conversions Herb noted, "First people get mad; then they get sad; then they get glad."

St. Paul's membership leaped by scores. Annual church Bible camps became so dynamic that a guest evangelist declared, "I stepped right into a revival." Weekly radio broadcasts made Herb's fiery sermons the talk of Cloquet. Wherever he went, everyone knew him. Though he spoke the truth frankly, he won many listeners by his infectious friendliness and exuberance.

Yet clearly the conversions were not Herb's work but God's. Circumstances often confirmed Jesus' words, "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored" (John 4:38). There were roommates who overheard and responded to the gospel during Herb's visits to hospitalized church members. There was a man who became a Christian when his wife hosted Herb for supper, announcing, "I invited you here because my husband needs to get saved." And there was the stepfather eager to be led to Jesus after his recently deceased Christian stepson suddenly sat back up in bed, witnessed to him, and then lay down dead again.

St. Paul's grew rapidly, necessitating a second Sunday morning service and the renting of additional Sunday school facilities. Soon, the church building had been completely outgrown, and a much larger one was constructed in 1967. Even more significantly, the ongoing revival at St. Paul's began coinciding with multiplied signs of a surprising new national movement, as we shall see.

Anderson, Moorhead, Minn., worships at St. Paul's Free Lutheran, Fargo, N.D. (Source: Jonathan D. Anderson, Our Fathers Saw His Mighty Works, 2013. Scripture from NKJV.) Special thanks to Peter Franz and Dean Franz for relating many of the stories above.

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The story of Christian reformation, revival, and renaissance underscores that the darkest hour is often just before the dawn, so we should always be people of hope and prayer, not gloom and defeatism. God the Holy Spirit can turn the situation around in five minutes.

—Os Guinness

Evangelical Christians need to notice ... that the Reformation said, "Scripture Alone" and not "the Revelation of God in Christ Alone." If you do not have the view of the Scriptures that the Reformers had, you really have no content in the word "Christ"—and this is the modern drift in theology. Modern theology uses the word without content because "Christ" is cut away from the Scriptures. The Reformation followed the teaching of Christ Himself in linking the revelation Christ gave of God to the revelation of the written Scriptures.

—Francis Schaeffer

So when the devil throws your sins in your face and declares that you deserve death and hell, tell him this: "I admit that I deserve death and hell, what of it? For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, and where He is there I shall be also!"

—Martin Luther

For Christians to influence the world with the truth of God's Word requires the recovery of the great Reformation doctrine of vocation. Christians are called to God's service not only in church professions but also in every secular calling. The task of restoring truth to the culture depends largely on our lay people.

—J. Gresham Machen

ON BEING A
REFORMATION



CHRISTIAN

BY PASTOR JOE FALDET

“For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith—and this not of yourselves, it is a gift from God—not of works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

When Martin Luther brought about the Reformation on Oct. 31, 1517, his hope was to return the Church’s focus to Christ and the knowledge that “it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith—and this not of yourselves, it is a gift from God—not of works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV84). It is grace alone that saves us, and we can know this because it is stated in God’s Word. The Holy Scripture was divinely inspired by God Himself and given to us so that we may all come to a full knowledge of Him. A key error of the pre-Reformation Church was that tradition, not Scripture, governed the lives of those desiring to follow Christ.

I am grateful to be a Reformation Christian because I hate being wrong. When I am wrong about everyday things it irritates me, but when I am wrong about spiritual things it frightens me. It does not frighten me because I may have to admit that I have made a mistake. It frightens me because these truths are important, more important even than life and death. These truths are the difference between heaven and hell. As a Reformation Christian, I have source material that I can trust with an unwavering commitment. I have the revelation of God Himself.

One of the truths that the Reformation returned to us was the authority of Scripture. Perhaps you have heard the term *Sola Scriptura* or Scripture alone. The knowledge of God is not divined through pilgrimages and secret rituals. It is not bound up in the minds of sages and mystics. It is written down and submitted for study and scrutiny. When someone comes to me with a belief, doctrine, or feeling about God, I can echo the words of Isaiah, “To the Law and to the Testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn” (Isaiah 8:20). In Scripture I can see if the teaching is true or not. I do not have to take that person at his/her word, but I have the ability to go to Scripture and look it up.

Sola Scriptura enables me to teach. I have many opinions that

I feel are based upon well-thought-out arguments. These arguments are often based upon both logic and observation. Be that as it may, there are times when my opinions are proven wrong due to gaps in my logic or observation based on insufficient information. My opinions are, therefore, untrustworthy and do not merit authoritative teaching. Scripture, however, does merit authoritative teaching. I have both the right and the responsibility to stand firm against any and all teachings that are contrary to Scripture. I thus have a platform from which I can push back against the lies of the Devil. A platform constructed not of the arguments and opinions of fallible mankind but the declarations of an infallible God.

Sola Scriptura is also the only reason that I can know and separate lies from the truth. It is difficult being human. We enter into this world ignorant. We are born with no innate knowledge of the world or of its Creator and Redeemer. We are born without knowing right from wrong. We are born rebellious. Without Christ’s Word, I do not know truth from lies and desire the lies. It is out of this

condition that God called me, as He calls all of us, through His Word. For “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). John records that to the believing Jews “Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’” (John 8:31-32). One thing He sets you and me free from is the lies of this world. He does this by His Word so that we might be free to live by the truth. His Word *is* truth.

As a Reformation Christian I am constantly pointed back to the source: God’s Word. It is powerful; He uses it to change the heart. God’s Word is accurate; He uses it to change the mind. God’s Word is inerrant; it contains no mistakes. God’s Word is infallible; it never leads astray. I am happy to be a Reformation Christian because you do not need to take my word for it. You have the same source material I have. Go see for yourself.

Faldet serves Hosannah Free Lutheran, St. James, Minn.



THANKFUL FOR
CHRIST
ALONE

BY MATTHEW BALLMANN

The inviting smell of turkey drifts through the house as the final sides of stuffing, cranberry sauce, and gravy are placed on the table. Taking our seats before the Thanksgiving meal, my family participates in a long-standing tradition involving three kernels of corn. Beside each plate rest three kernels of yellow corn. A jar is then passed around the table and the kernels are dropped in one at a time as each person names one thing he or she is thankful for. The list includes both small and great blessings. At the top of the list, the gift of salvation through Christ alone is always mentioned.

Though obviously not intended, I've always found it

highly appropriate that in our American-Protestant calendars Thanksgiving follows immediately after Reformation Day. It was salvation through Christ alone, through grace alone, and by faith alone which was the rally cry of the Protestant Reformation. What more could we be eternally thankful and grateful for than the precious gift of eternal life we have in Christ?

I'd like to take a closer look at one aspect of this beautiful gift—the phrase “Christ alone”—and what it means for us today. The phrase itself comes from the Latin *Solus Christus*, which when translated means, “by Christ alone.”

What does a fancy term like *Solus Christus* mean and what

difference does it make? The answer begins by first understanding our problem and ends when we discover the solution to our problem.

OUR PROBLEM

You and I have a big problem. We, along with all of humanity, are born with corrupt natures. The apostle Paul describes it succinctly when he says, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). He goes on to describe the direness of our situation when he states that we are all “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3) and “enemies of God” (Romans 5:10) in our natural state. The consequence of our corrupt natures is death. Romans 5:12 says, “Therefore,

just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.” When death tears the spirit from the body, it destroys how God created humans. It destroys the very image of God. Let there be no doubt, death is our ultimate enemy and a horrible consequence of sin.

So let's assess our situation: we have corrupt natures, are children of wrath, enemies of God, and bound for death. Yes, we have a serious problem.

World religions have suggested multiple solutions to humanity's problem. Each of these solutions falls into the category of achieving salvation through works. Whether it is Buddhism's Noble Eightfold Path, Islam's

“For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life” (Romans 5:10).

Five Pillars, or Mormonism’s holy living, the idea of achieving salvation on our own merit is tempting. If I’m responsible for my problem, then I should be responsible for getting myself out, right? We couldn’t be more wrong.

At the time of the Reformation there existed those in the Church who believed they could do something to contribute to their salvation. They thought if they just served God hard enough, loved others deeply enough, and prayed long enough, then maybe they could be deserving of forgiveness and salvation.

The Protestant Reformers disagreed with this premise. They argued that there is no place for man’s works in earning or deserving a right standing before God. The all holy and righteous Judge of the universe is not impressed with flawed human works. Not only do works not outweigh the sins man commits, but the works themselves are filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Ever tried washing your car with a muddy sponge? No matter how hard we work or how many good thoughts we have, they will never be enough.

If the answer is not ourselves, where does that leave us? Where else can we go? To Christ, and to Christ alone.

THE SOLUTION

Though we are completely unable to reconcile ourselves to God, it doesn’t mean we can’t be reconciled. Scripture says, “For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life” (Romans 5:10). Because of the great love God the Father had for the world (John 3:16), He sent His only begotten Son to deliver those in bondage and slavery. Christ alone could do this work of reconciliation because He alone was both God and Man (John 1). He lived the perfect life we could not, died the death we should have, paid our penalty, conquered death, and stands before the throne of God now making petition on our behalf.

The solution to our problem is Christ—not my works, not other gods, not other means—only Christ. He alone is able to deliver us from sin, death, and the devil. It’s a very

simple truth, yet one with many implications. Here are just a few things this truth changes in how we view our relationship to God:

First, salvation by Christ alone means we don’t have to strive to please God for our salvation by any other means. In Christ alone we are pleasing to God the Father. We don’t have to fear that some other criteria will be required of us. Christ alone was able to please God because He alone was the God-Man.

Second, salvation by Christ alone highlights the value of the gospel message because it means there is no back door to God. It is Christ alone and His work alone that gives us access to the Father. God’s Word says in I Timothy 2:5, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” And in John 14:6 Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father except through me.” We often refer to this as the exclusivity of the gospel. There is no back door, no side door, no window, and no chimney to get to God. Christ alone is our access to the

Father and hope for salvation.

Third, salvation by Christ alone is a free gift that we can possess with complete assurance. Act 16:31 says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, you and your household.” It is a promise to be believed, as opposed to a promise to be earned. In Christ we are acceptable to God and, thus, in Christ we can have complete assurance of the forgiveness of our sins and hope of a future bodily resurrection.

The phrase “Christ alone” means exactly what it says. In Christ alone we are reconciled to the Father. In Christ alone we receive salvation. In Christ alone we will rise from the dead and live eternally worshiping the Triune God. *Solus Christus*—it is beautifully simple, yet so very magnificently profound. As we celebrate both Thanksgiving Day and Reformation Day, my prayer for us is an increased gratefulness and thankfulness for salvation through Christ alone.

Ballmann, an AFLC World Missions candidate, is a pastoral intern at Abiding Savior Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D.

“... offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace” (Romans 6:13).

What's it like to live on “Waiting for Death Street”?

And what is it like to have done something really bad, really evil—something irreparable? These were the thoughts of Sister Helen Prejean, as she mailed her first letter to Pat Sonnier, a convicted murderer awaiting execution in Louisiana. As she got to know Pat, and eventually visit him, she was surprised by “how human, even likable, he is.” He confided to her his “terror ... of the death that awaits him.” He didn't eat or sleep well, and a guard told Sister Helen, “The guy [is] ... eaten up by what he did.”

Unfortunately, at that stage of his life, all the remorse in the world could not save Pat from his sentence. He had never received a disciplinary write-up since he arrived on Death Row, but good behavior could not help him.

Pat's brother, Eddie, in prison for life for the same murders, told Sister Helen that he, not Pat, was the actual murderer. Pat was a participant in the abduction of two teenagers, but was not the shooter. Having less responsibility than someone else could not save Pat, either.

If he was to live, his only

hope was that the Governor would intervene by commuting his sentence to life in prison. Yet he could not even argue for himself. He was dependent upon others to make his case at a Pardon Board hearing, which would recommend life or death to the Governor. He was a condemned man, totally helpless.

Most of us cannot identify with Pat Sonnier. We may not even understand how Sister Helen could befriend him. However, if we stop and think about our own situation before God, we see it is no different. In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul tells us that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (3:23) and “the wages of sin is death” (6:23). Paul admits of himself, “I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing”(7:19). In desperation he cries out, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” (7:24).

Like Pat Sonnier and the apostle Paul, we stand condemned. Our sins are heinous and we are helpless. Our repentance and good works are laudable, but they do not change our situation. We deserve death and cannot save ourselves.

Fortunately, for Christians, the rest of the story is that we “are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood” (3:24-25). Grace is a gift from God, and we are saved by this gift alone (Ephesians 2:8).

The response to such incredible grace can only be gratitude.

Think about it. What if someone paid a crushing debt you owed? What if someone forgave you for a wrong that seemed unforgivable? What if you met a person who literally saved your life? Such an experience would be life-changing. As a Christian you share this experience. It is called conversion, and if authentic, leads to transformation: a life of gratitude and service.

Paul describes how this happened to him in I Corinthians 15:10: “... by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I but the grace of God that is with me.”

We may recognize God's grace in an instant or gradually over the course of years. However it happens, our Christian testimony is no more

than a story of grace: how God opened our eyes and how we responded.

Pat Sonnier was eventually put to death for his crime. He was deeply grateful to Sister Helen and others who tried but failed to save his life. In his will, he left his worldly possessions (which were few) to Sister Helen. Her compassion and loving kindness helped him to die without hatred in his heart; in fact, his last words were a request for forgiveness for what he had done.

Jesus was put to death for our crimes “while we were still sinners” (Romans 5:8). Like Pat, we have little to offer the one who has shown such mercy and grace to us. The best we can do is heed Paul's instruction to “... offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace” (Romans 6:13).

Culler is a member of St. Paul's Evangelical Free Lutheran, Hagerstown, Md., where her husband, Pastor Terry Culler, serves.

THANKFUL FOR
**GRACE
ALONE**

BY JOAN CULLER





THANKFUL FOR
**FAITH
ALONE**

BY CLARA GUNDERSON

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

I have to start at the beginning—my beginning, when the gift was given.

Shortly after I was born, Lillian and Ted, my parents, brought me to the altar where I received new life in Christ Jesus through baptism. Could any child have a greater privilege? The free gifts of God’s grace, salvation, and the promise of eternal life—all received in faith—were a gift from God.

Neither of my parents grew up in a Christian home. But together they sought out a church, and as each child was born, they brought us to the altar for baptism. They were young when they married, and their faith grew as they learned more and more about the Lord and His Word. Isn’t that the nature of spiritual gifts? They increase in depth as time is spent with the Lord. Through encouragement in the church family, my parents learned the importance of instruction, and took us to Sunday school.

A few years ago my sister and I took Dad back to our birth town, and to the church we had attended and loved. Standing in front of the church building

Dad said, “Take my picture here and tell everyone that this is where the Lord found me and brought me to salvation.” Old already by that time, he gave me the precious gift of knowing that his faith was strong, trusting in Jesus. As both Mom and Dad have gone home to be with Jesus, this legacy of faith is my inheritance.

I want no less for my children. The covenant God made with us as we brought our children to Him in baptism is the basis of my prayers for each of them every step of the way. Faced with decisions, hard times, financial ups and downs, God’s faithfulness to mine has never faltered. Why would I not trust Him?

It was by faith that we said yes to God’s call to be His ambassadors in Latin America. The Lord increased our faith through His promise in Hebrews 13:5, “Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’” How we leaned on that promise. There was the emotional

stress of leaving the children in boarding school, depending on others to care for them; there was the danger in travel on rough mountain roads; and for me, there was the feeling of inadequacy in the language.

But, God. Yes, this is definitely a “But, God ...” testimony. He kept our children well, happy, and well loved; God’s angels were always there as we traveled; and my language skills became adequate. Because of God’s constant faithfulness, our own trust grew and grew.

The gift of faith has such a liberating quality to it. Think of it, freedom to not fret. Freedom from worry. Freedom from anxiety. Freedom from fear. Freedom from guilt. I have been tempted in each of these areas. Life can be so ... so, *daily*, can’t it? Just that fact is reason enough to cultivate faith in our Lord, whose very nature breathes loyalty and faithfulness.

Hearts and minds open to the Spirit’s moving is what the Lord seeks in blessing His children. “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ” writes Paul in

Romans 10:17. That’s the way it was in Lillian’s and Ted’s lives. As they were under the teaching and preaching of the Word of Christ, their faith grew. I am so thankful for their faith.

There is no doubt that the greatest gift of all that has come to me through faith is that of my salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. Here are the benefits: forgiveness of sin, the promise of a resurrected body, spending eternity with my Lord, and, as Hebrews 11:1 reminds me, it is through faith that all of my hopes and dreams are realized.

Generations come and go, leaving their legacies. To my children and grandbabes, I leave my testimony that the only worthwhile pursuit on this earth is the pursuit to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be found in Him, fully convinced that what He has promised, He is able to do.

Gunderson, who serves on the AFLC Parish Education Board, is a member of Sunnyside Free Lutheran, Stacy, Minn.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

Several years ago I attended a meeting at a location that was a two-hour drive from my Minnesota home. I followed all the main roads to get there. But after the meeting was over, it was late and I wanted to get home as fast as I could. I decided to take a short-cut on some back roads. I left the well-lit highway with its signs and headed out across the pitch-black prairie. After driving for many miles, I hadn't seen a single town. I didn't know if I was going north, south, east, or west. I started to panic. I was lost in the dark.

I eventually came to a town and its well-lit signs to discover I'd been going in the wrong direction. Needless to say, I was very grateful to get back on track and eventually make my way home.

This story easily relates to my need for God's holy Word. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path,” writes the psalmist (Psalm 119:105). These are not just nice words about how important the Bible is. They express in a simple, straightforward way how indispensable the Bible is for those who want to find their way home—the way to truth and eternal life. Living without the Word of God is like driving

in the dark without knowing where you are or where you are going. Discovering the power of the Word is like finally seeing the welcoming light of a town with its signs to show you the way home. I can't imagine what life would be like without the Bible.

I love Psalm 119. The author is unnamed, but the older commentaries almost universally say it is a psalm of David, composed throughout his entire life. It is the longest psalm in the Bible. Over and over again, each of its 176 verses glorifies God and His Word. Martin Luther professed that he prized this Psalm so highly that he would not take the whole world in exchange for one leaf of it. *Sola Scriptura* (the Word alone) became the great proclamation of the Protestant Reformation. It was largely through Luther that the Church rediscovered the power and purpose of God's Word. Inherent in the proclamation of “the Word alone” is a warning and a promise. It is a warning that we dare not add or subtract from what is already perfect. Manipulating the Word only contaminates the truth with error. It is also a promise that we will find everything we need in the pages of this book to light our way in this dark world. It shows us the way to our



Savior and Lord.

I was a late bloomer when it came to discovering the power of God's Word. As a child, my parents taught me God's true Word. I was raised in the Lutheran Church, and my family was very active and devout. At an early age I decided I wanted to be a pastor. To my great surprise that eventually came true. However, it was not

until I was serving my first parish that I began to discover and grasp the power of God's Word. Someone showed me the truth of I John 5:13: “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” Suddenly the light of God's Word came on and I saw the truth for the first time.

I can know for sure that I



THANKFUL
FOR THE
WORD
ALONE

BY PASTOR DAVID HINRICHS

am going to heaven. All of my trying to be good was of no benefit. The light of God's Word showed me the way home. During all of the preceding years of my life I had managed to speak the truth without actually seeing the truth of God's grace. I was lost in the dark, but I didn't realize that I was lost. I had grown accustomed to living with the Bible, but not actually

experiencing its full power. How sweet and precious is God's Word when it brings you into the loving arms of Jesus.

Since that day so long ago, I've grown greatly in my love of God's Word. I sit each morning, my well marked Bible in my lap, ready to fill my mind and heart with God's truth before I start a new day. After 70 birthdays, I find that I am still discovering

new and exciting truths in God's Word. In fact, now that I'm retired, I'm more excited about learning and growing in the Word than ever before. I thirst for wisdom, for the deeper truths that Scripture holds. I want to experience more fully the transformed life we are promised. Thank you, God, for the light of Your precious Word! What is your story regard-

ing the Bible and your life? What does the Bible mean to you? When did you discover the power of God's Word? Are you grateful for the Word of God? It is never too late to pick up the Bible and let God lead you to the greatest gift your life could ever have.

Hinrichs is a member of Victory Free Lutheran, Park River, N.D.



FROM TOP LEFT: Tim Korhonen, father of Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, reads Scripture. Representatives from AFLC departments pray for Korhonen. Korhonen gives a brief response during the service. Pastor Peter Franz, vice president, gave the message. Outgoing president Pastor Elden Nelson, passes the baton.

Korhonen installed as president

Q **Would you give us a brief family history?**

A My parents are Tim and Iona Korhonen. My dad is 82 and mom is home with Jesus. I grew up in Esko, Minn., which is located between Cloquet and Duluth. I have been married to Linda (Moan) for 33 years now. We have been blessed with two adopted boys. Nathan is married and living in Chattanooga, Tenn., with his wife, Rachel, and their two children. And Joshua is living in a group home in Buffalo, Minn.

Q **How and when did you come to faith in Christ?**

A I was baptized as an infant and came to assurance of salvation at Park Lake Bible Camp with my dad as my counselor. I was somewhere around 10 years old. I thought I was forgiven, but not absolutely sure I would go to heaven if Jesus was to come or I was to die. Dad shared with me Romans 6:23 and explained that if I met God with my sin, eternal death would be my end. But if I had Jesus, eternal life was mine. What a joy to live knowing we are forgiven.

Q **Where did you attend college and how were you called to seminary?**

A I attended the University of Minnesota-Duluth, and while in my sophomore year was not prospering in my major. I began to wonder if I was running from God's call. I went home and asked mom what she and dad would say if I thought I was sensing a call to ministry. She said she was wondering when I was going to tell her. She knew before I did what God was up to. How does God do that with moms?

Q **Where have you served since your ordination?**

A From 1983 to 1990 I served with the dry land farmers in Culbertson and Brockton, Mont. I have served at Cokato, Minn., since 1990.

Q **What would you say have been the distinguishing characteristics of parish ministry for you?**

A The distinguishing marks of parish ministry have been a desire to preach exegetical messages and seek to apply them to where the men and women in the working world are. Along with that, I have loved to build, repair, hunt, fish, camp, and cut trees with men. Visiting and finding creative ways of evangelism also have been very important.

Q **How has this work prepared you for your new calling as president of the AFLC?**

A I guess we will see. I have a real heart to understand where pastors are at. I look forward to discussing ministry, praying together about issues they are facing, and rejoicing with them in what God is doing.

Q **Had you thought about the possibility of having your name presented for nomination before coming to conference? Did you sense God leading through this process?**

A Two weeks before Annual Conference I was preaching on Genesis 12 and the call of Abram. I had told the Lord for many years, "I am willing to go wherever You want me, but You must make it very clear." I believe my flesh is so prone to thinking that the grass is greener somewhere else. During the 23 years I've been in Cokato, I never had the sense that my work was done. Now in this Genesis text I told the Lord that if my name came up for election, I would not remove it, because it would have to be His hand if I were ever to be considered for this position. When the vote totals were first posted, I was shocked to see my name listed second. When others began withdrawing their names from consideration, my mind and stomach began to turn. When the vote totals began to increase after my name,

I felt an unbelievable tearing and ripping. I had to get on my knees alone and pour that out to God. I had said I was willing and could not withdraw my name. Thursday night was a long night. Do you know the birds start singing around 4:20 a.m.? With the dawn of Friday, I was exhausted and still could hardly believe what was happening. I knew this was God's doing, because this Finlander preacher would not be elected in any other way.

Q **What are your thoughts about leaving parish ministry?**

A It is God's time to leave. My emotions had all spilled out at the ARC. I will miss rubbing shoulders and working together with my close friends in Cokato, but I can't wait to start rubbing shoulders with my fellow pastors.

Q **Do you have any hopes for your time serving as president of the AFLC?**

A My hope would be that as I seek to serve our pastors, we can together be faithful to preach the Word and live the Word as His servants.

Q **What are your short- and long-term goals for the AFLC?**

A My short-term goal is to visit with our pastors. I want to encourage them that they are part of the greatest work on this earth. They are part of building a kingdom that will never end.

My long-term goal would be that we as an AFLC could maintain being Lutheran in our doctrine on paper and in practice and remain vitally concerned that our people have a personal relationship with Christ. People who have an assurance of salvation that is based on the inerrant Scriptures are stable people, able to love others into the kingdom of God as the Holy Spirit works through them sharing the Word.

AFLC purchases home for president

Members of the AFLC Coordinating Committee recently voted to purchase a home adjacent to the AFLC property in Plymouth, Minn. The home has been designated for use by the AFLC president. Pastor Lyndon and Linda Korhonen moved into the property after his election to the presidency in September.

The Korhonen's write:

"It is a beautiful home right next to the Bible school soccer field at the very east end of our AFLC property. ...

"We moved into the house on Sept. 7, with Lyndon's installation as president on Sept. 15. We call it our Ephesians 3:20 house, and we want to thank the entire AFLC for giving us the privilege of living here.

"Our goal is to share this house with as many of our AFLC friends as possible. If any of you are here at our AFLC campus, we extend an open invitation to come and see it or to stay overnight if you have that need. We have four bedrooms available for guests. It is an incredible blessing to be living right on campus. ... Pray for us as we serve the Lord here."

Half of the purchase price for the home was paid through capital investment funds, with the rest needing to be raised and

paid when possible. Anyone wanting to give to this project may designate it as "president home."

To contact the AFLC or Pastor Korhonen, call (763) 545-5631 or e-mail president@aflc.org.



Boyertown, Pa., congregation dedicates church building



Members of Living Faith Lutheran, Boyertown, Pa., dedicated the congregation's new church building on Sept. 29. The Home Missions congregation, which had its first service in the newly purchased building in June, is served by Pastor David (Vicki) Johnson (pictured at left).

WMF installs new officers

Esther Hylden

First Vice President
Bethel Free Lutheran
Grafton, N.D.

It was a cold, March day when I received the call. Earlier that morning, I had prayed, "Now that my boys are adults, and my days of hands-on parenting are over, what would you like me to do with the rest of my life? How would you like me to spend my days?" Not hearing a crash of thunder, or seeing a burning bush, I went on to put a load of clothes into the washer. One hour later, the phone rang. Carol Mackey introduced herself, and asked if I would consider being nominated for the position of first vice president of the WMF. I stammered something, I don't know what, but inside I was thinking, "God sure answered my prayer, and fast!" I told her that I would pray about it and get back to her, but in my heart I knew that I would say yes.

Did I say yes because I am a super organized person with wonderful ideas? Did I say yes because I am the most dedicated WMF lady ever? No, actually I am an expert at procrastination and have never really felt confident in how to make coffee in that big coffee pot in our church kitchen. I often know the good that I should do, but so often do not carry out my good intentions. As I pondered the many responsibilities that I would have, I felt inadequate, too busy, and not ready for the task.

Do you ever feel that way? On that cold, snowy day, I bowed my head and turned in my Bible to the well-worn pages of Romans 12. Verse 11 seemed to burn in my heart, "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."

I know God will be faithful. He will enable me, a middle-aged nurse, mother, wife and farm business owner, to carry out the duties of the job. And He will enable you to carry out the task that He is calling you to. Is He calling you to teach Sunday school, serve in your local WME, or be a loving witness to the kids who show up unannounced at your door day after day? Whatever He is calling you to do, He will give you strength. Nehemiah 8:10 is one of my favorite verses: "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Not the joy of Esther (that runs out), but the joy of the Lord is my strength and yours. Let us go and serve the Lord together.

JoyAnn Dahl

Recording Secretary
Our Saviour's Lutheran
Thief River Falls, Minn.

My name is JoyAnn Dahl, and I am the new WMF recording secretary. I am excited to start this new adventure, and I am hoping I can be a useful tool for Christ. I know I will be learning many new things, and I am looking forward to guidance from the other board members.

Like many of you, I have several jobs. I work full-time as a special education teacher for my local school district, and part-time for Sanford Health. At home, I am head of laundry, baking, room painting, and flower gardening.

My family includes husband, Steve, sons Ben and Cristian, and daughters Emalynn and Marquelle. Steve is employed full-time at Digi-Key, an electronics company, and part-time for Great Lakes Aviation.

Our oldest son, Ben, is a Parish Builder in Camarillo, Calif. He is employed at Oaks Christian School and enrolled as a student at Moorpark College. Ben's fiancé, Debora, who is Brazilian, was recently approved for an American visa. We are continually amazed at how God answers prayer. God is so good.

Our oldest daughter, Emalynn, is in her second year at AFLBS and works as a nanny. She had such a wonderful experience this past summer being on the Foundation summer team.

Our youngest daughter, Marquelle, is a junior in high school. She enjoys competing with the Prowlers Cross Country Team and connecting with her friends. I am so thankful I have her as a willing chauffeur in the house to run errands for me, and to bring her brother to sports practice.

Cristian, our youngest son, enjoys playing football, using electronics, riding his dirt bike and swimming.

Being involved with our church family is important to me, and I work closely with our youth group, printing the monthly newsletter, planning activities, and helping with choir and other events. I attended the FLY Convention in July, and was very encouraged in my faith.

"... I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world" (Romans 1:7-9).



Schmitke ordained

Pastor Irvin Schmitke was ordained on Sept. 22 during a joint service at Norland Free Lutheran and Roseau Free Lutheran, Roseau, Minn. Officiating at the service was Pastor Elden Nelson, then president of the AFLC. Schmitke has accepted a call to serve the parish.



Honoring those married 50 years or more

Members of Peace Free Lutheran Church, Canal Winchester, Ohio, honored those in their congregation who had been married for 50 years or more during a special service on Oct. 6. A total of 18 couples in the congregation, including three pastors and their wives, have been married between 50 and 63 years. As Scripture tells us, "Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:32).

The services were focused on honoring Christ in marriage, especially long-term marriages. Pastor Curtis Emerson's message was titled, "Old-Fashioned Institution: What is the Bible's Design for Marriage?" The service closed with each couple reciting and renewing their vows to each other and to God.

A reception was held after the service to honor the couples. Congregational members said they hope to never forget the faithfulness of those who have now grown older and the commitment that they have shown. They are thankful for the witness these couples are to them as they uphold the biblical design in marriage.

Trinity Free Lutheran celebrates 50th anniversary

Members of Trinity Free Lutheran Church of Grand Forks, N.D., celebrated the congregation's 50th anniversary on Sept. 8. Pastor Robert Lee, past president of the AFLC, was the guest speaker at the morning worship service, after which a dinner was served. The afternoon service of celebration and thanksgiving included greetings from former pastors John Abel, Gary Skramstad, and Kerwin Sletto. Many musical selections were also enjoyed throughout the day.

Trinity began when 10 families withdrew from Sharon Lutheran, which had been a part of the Lutheran Free Church, but was then joining the newly formed ALC. First meeting in homes, then later renting the Seventh Day Adventist church, the group was served by Pastor John Abel, and then by student pastors Robert Lee and Gary Skramstad (who were attending the University of North Dakota), and Pastor Hans Tollefson. Other pastors who have served Trinity are George Schuster (1965), Trygve Dahle, layman Gordon Johnson, David Molstre (1966-1970), Roy Bredholt (1970-1973), Harvey Carlson (1973-1981), Kerwin Sletto (interim 1981-1982), Bruce Dalager (1982-2004), and Terry Olson (2005-present).

Construction of the first unit of the church building was completed in May 1968. This included the present fellowship hall (previously used as the sanctuary), kitchen, narthex, pastor's study,



and library. By 1988, having outgrown its facilities, the congregation proceeded with construction on the next phase of the original building plan. This included a new sanctuary and additional Sunday school rooms, dedicated in November 1988.

Now, 25 years after the completion of the building and 50 years after its beginning, Trinity continues to be reminded of the truth of its anniversary theme verse: "... God's faithfulness continues through all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

The Uganda leadership team

BY PASTOR NATE JORE

In January of this year, a four-person leadership team was put in place to provide oversight for the Ambassador Institute of Uganda. In the same month, 71 Ambassador Institute students from eight different classes graduated from the two-year training program. Soon after, 22 new classes began and 21 teachers joined the seven original teachers.

The members of the leadership team are passionate for God and His Word. They have taken their roles seriously. I would like to introduce them to you.

Pastor Wilson Musasizi is the chairman, and for good reason. As the eldest of the group, his wisdom, dedication, and experience provide excellent leadership for the team. One day, we were scheduled to co-teach the class in Kagoma. Because we were coming from different directions, we agreed to meet at the class. Shortly after arriving, I was surprised to see Wilson arriving on foot. When I asked him why he had not used his bicycle, he said it needed some repair. He had walked for two hours. It was of vital importance to him to bring God's Word to the students who had gathered, despite the time and inconvenience it cost him. More recently, Wilson began teaching a class in a remote area called Galilaya. It is a seven-hour journey that he makes every other Thursday. He teaches on Friday, and then returns home on Saturday. When I visited Galilaya, his students expressed their appreciation for the humble, yet bold, godly man who was giving them the opportunity to be students of the Word of God. Wilson said: "I spent very many years serving the devil, so now I want to give my remaining strength for serving the Lord."

John Bosco serves as the secretary of the leadership team. Bosco is from northern Uganda and lived through the period of unrest brought on by the LRA rebel leader Joseph Kony. During that time, Bosco fled to the south to look for work. He is now a committed Ambassador Institute teacher, teaching in his mother tongue among other northerners who have relocated to the south. Bosco has translated and recorded the Bible stories into his language, and is working on translating the curriculum, as well. Bosco recently endured the suffering of being deserted by his unbelieving wife. Though the pain is great, Bosco is resting in the strength of the Lord.

Tracy Omara is the treasurer. From the beginning, we have sought to keep the training from becoming dependent on outside funding. One night, Tracy was walking in town late at night and saw a friend dressed as a prostitute. When she asked her what she was doing, the friend admitted that she was offering herself to someone for 20,000 shillings (\$8) to settle a debt. Tracy shared the gospel with her, invited her to her place, and gave her the money to clear her debt. Tracy has the gift of giving. I remember discussing with her one time the meaning of biblical tithing (giving one-tenth of one's earnings). After doing some calculating, Tracy got an incredulous look on her face. "Only that much?" All



Pictured (front row, from left) are Pastor Wilson Musasizi, John Bosco, Pastor Nate Jore, Luke Erickson, and Pastor Del Palmer, (back row, from left) Micah Berger, Tracy Omara, Andrew Olson and Pastor George Bagatya.

of the funding for the training (transportation and printing costs) comes from the treasury. Money in the treasury comes from the leadership team's own gifts, as well as school fees from the AI students (10,000 shillings (\$4)/term).

What title is left for the fourth member of the AI leadership team? Intercessor. Pastor George Bagatya has filled this position well. We in the West have a lot to learn from our brothers and sisters in the third world when it comes to prayer. For Bagatya, prayer is as common as breathing. When he was informed that he had been appointed as the intercessor, he got a huge smile on his face. "I have been appointed to the best position, because nothing moves forward without prayer." His first move as intercessor was to call for a day of fasting, culminating with an all-night prayer meeting. Opposition had been mounting and he was aware of the spiritual battle being waged. That prayer meeting literally saved the life of one of our members. I mentioned above the problems that Bosco has been facing in his marriage. On the day we were fasting, Bosco's wife had planned to poison him, but his fasting kept her from carrying out her plans.

I thank God for raising up this leadership team to oversee the training. Our goal is to continue to work alongside of them, encouraging them, and offering guidance, and eventually to hand over the training entirely to their leadership. Please pray for them, and for us.

Jore is an AFLC Missionary serving in Jinja, Uganda.

People and Places

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tulia, Texas, was formally disbanded after 65 years of ministry in its Texas Panhandle community. Founded in 1947 as an LCMS mission, the congregation became independent in 1978 and joined the AFLC in 1992. It was served by AFLC pastors Joseph Schultz, Jan Horne, and Tom Baker. Mostly recently an LCMS pastor, Gerald Petsch, served the congregation on a part-time basis.

With the sale of their property, members have established the Christ Lutheran Church Scholarship for students at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School after having happy memories of the summer teams that taught vacation Bible School there.

“We wanted to extend the ministry of Christ Lutheran in the future by helping AFLBS students in a significant way,” said Rev. John Chandler, consulting pastor for the congregation.

Pastor Lynn Qualm has accepted a call to serve United Lutheran, Laurel, Neb.

Pastor Richard Erickson is serving as interim pastor at Mt. Zion Lutheran, Kasson, Minn., and Zion Lutheran, Dexter, Minn.

Pastor Mark Brophy has retired from serving Alsace Lutheran, Reading, Pa.

Members of **Hauge Lutheran**, Goldfield, Iowa, recently voted to formally disband.

Licensed Pastor Paul Kneeland resigned from Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church, Tucson, Ariz., where he has served since 2008

Correction: The October WMF column was written by Candace Johnson, Stanley, N.D. The author was incorrectly identified. We regret the error.

The **ARC Scandinavian dinner** and bake sale has been scheduled for noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 24.

The ARC is located near Osceola, Wis. For more information on the event, visit the ARC web site at www.arc-aflc.org or call (800) 294-2877.



Zion Lutheran celebrates 125 years

Members of Zion Free Lutheran, Green Township, rural Valley City, N.D., celebrated the congregation's 125th anniversary on July 20-21. The theme verses for the occasion were Hebrews 13:7-8: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

Former pastors present for the event were Robert Lee, Curtis Emerson, Terry Olson, and Joel Rolf. Former pastoral intern Shane McLoughlin brought greetings, together with Pastor Robert Rieth and Chaplain John Rieth, both of whom grew up in the congregation. The congregation, which is served by Pastor Steve Mundfrom, dedicated a new fellowship hall following the celebration.

Mellgren remembered for compassionate care

Pastor Dale Allen Mellgren, 68, passed into the loving arms of his Savior on Friday, September 27, 2013.

Born July 29, 1945, in Benson, Minn., he was the son of Oscar and Lillian (Johnson) Mellgren. He was the youngest of 11 children.

After serving in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War (1963-66), Dale married Mary Thonvold on Feb. 8, 1969. Shortly after, he answered the call to be a shepherd of men. He graduated from the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1975. Over his lifetime he served at a three-point parish in Abercrombie, N.D., Stillwater Free Lutheran in Kalispell, Mont., Zion Lutheran, Tioga, N.D., and Spokane, Wash., and finally a two-point parish in McIntosh, Minn. (Mt. Carmel Free Lutheran and Trinity Lutheran). His ministry was defined by his kind and compassionate care of the flocks entrusted to him by the Lord. He was a humble servant ever aware of his need for the grace of God.

Surviving are his wife, Mary, of McIntosh; three daughters, Alison (Jeremy) Opdahl, McIntosh, Janelle Mellgren, Bloomington, Minn., and Cassie (Kevin) Subbert, St. Louis Park, Minn.; three brothers, Merle Mellgren, Watertown, Minn., Gene (Ethel) Mellgren, St. Louis Park, and Dean (Karen) Mellgren, Murdock, Minn.; two sisters, Tiny (Wayne) Estby, Delano, Minn., and Connie (Gordy) Peterson, Kerkhoven, Minn., and three granddaughters.

The service was held Oct. 2 at Calvary Free Lutheran, Fosston, Minn., with Pastor Bruce Dalager officiating and Pastor Phil Haugen giving the message. Interment was held at Trinity Free Lutheran Cemetery, rural McIntosh.

Memorials may be directed to the HIS Fund at the AFLC, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441.

A tale of two youth ministries

BY PASTOR JASON HOLT

Joe and John are youth leaders in two different local congregations. They have the same strong conviction on God's Word. They have a similar amount of training—not too much. They have a serious burden for the spiritual lives of teenagers.

What is different for them? The congregations they serve.

Joe's congregation hired him to be the youth director. The job description was in place. The youth and parent committee was well established. The focus was linked to the congregation's mission statement. The teens were excited to see him come. But within a couple of months, everyone was frustrated.

Joe was not happy because the teens did not listen to him. The teens complained to the parents that he was not fun enough. The parents were concerned, because the teens complained. The pastor concluded that Joe wasn't the right guy for the role, because in his words, "We hired Joe to do this, and he is not doing it."

What Joe's congregation did not recognize is that the "pied-piper youth pastor" is not the biblical example of healthy ministry. Playing a few games, being in your 20s, and strumming a few praise songs will not line up today's teenagers to follow the mustached youth guy to maturity.

Being a youth leader shouldn't lead to a hero complex; it is a heavy calling.

John's congregation called him to be the youth director. While other useful communications pieces were in place, there was a difference. John's position was only the beginning of involvement in the lives of the congregation's teens.

John and the pastor met periodically to pray for one another and for the teens and their families. The parents encouraged their children in congregational life and modeled their faith in their

homes. John recruited caring adults to connect with teens to provide a consistent, biblical expression of following Jesus.

If congregations want a healthy youth ministry, its members should seek to actively intersect with teenagers' lives.

One of the most common objections I receive in our AFLC family on youth ministry is this one: "But Jason, we just don't have any teens in our congregation."

My questions in return are, "Do you have one in your congregation? How about your community?"

Somewhere along the line we equated attendance with significance. This approach seems contrary to our Savior King in Luke 15:3-4, "So he told them this parable: 'What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?'"

We need a reformation of our hearts to Jesus' priority for the significance of the one.

The concerned pastor asks, "What can I do? I have all these congregational responsibilities." The weary parent asks, "What can I do? I have all these family commitments." The caring adult asks, "What can I do? I have all these limits on my time."

AFLC Youth Ministries partners with congregations to explore those answers. Let us be John's profile of a congregation, relying on God's Word and being led by God's Spirit

to connect with this generation of youth—one teen at a time.

"Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

Holt, a member of Living Hope Church, St. Michael, Minn., is the director of AFLC Youth Ministries.



AFLC memorials: September

AFLBS
 Elroy Kleven
 Ruth Claus
 Willard Quiram
 James Wolla (3)

AFLTS
 Dr. Francis Monseth
 Barb Loomis
 Carroll Hove
General Fund
 Dr. Francis Monseth

Ebenezer Free Lutheran marks 10 years

Members of Ebenezer Free Lutheran, Humboldt, Tenn., celebrated the congregation's 10th anniversary on Sept. 22. The congregation, which is currently seeking a pastor, was formed in 2003.

AFLC pastor's conference set for January 21-23, 2014

The 2014 AFLC pastor's conference will be held Jan. 21-23 at the Association Retreat Center, located near Osceola, Wis. Meeting under the theme of "Strengthening," pastors and their wives are invited to take part in several workshops and Bible study sessions. Pastor Peter Franz will lead the morning Bible hour, and Dr. Steven Lombardo will speak on a special focus on the joys and struggles of ministry based on the life of Charles Spurgeon. Workshop sessions will include "Fresh Hope" led by Pastor Brad Hoefs, a session on marriage led by Pastor Jerry Nelson, financial planning led by Tom Johnston, and Pastor Gary Skramstad will lead a session on grief.

For more information, contact the AFLC at (763) 545-5631.

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/s/ Ruth Gunderson, Managing Editor

Sanctity of Human Life resources available

Lutherans For Life's 2014 Life Sunday resources are now available to order and download. The LFL theme for 2014 is LIFE—Living In Faith Everyday.

"The assaults on our faith come daily from the world in which we live and from our own sinful nature, which lives in us," said Lowell Highby, executive director for Lutherans For Life. "But something else—indeed, Someone else—also lives in us, Christ's Holy Spirit. We Live In Faith Everyday (LIFE) because Christ lives in us. Sexual sins and the erosion of marriage and family present especially difficult challenges."

These materials can be used to address life issues and provide resources to help your congregation members live out their faith. Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is planned for Jan. 19, 2014.

For more information on LFL and to access resources for your congregation, visit www.lutheransforlife.org/store-life-sunday-2014.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1-Sept. 30, 2013

FUND	REC'D IN SEPTEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$22,446	\$246,878	\$222,988
Evangelism	8,522	98,535	101,626
Youth Ministries	5,628	76,852	64,015
Parish Education	18,478	117,812	81,634
Seminary	11,696	199,633	159,423
Bible School	21,251	370,806	318,352
Home Missions	21,396	324,665	339,579
World Missions	18,911	274,380	288,196
Personal Support	43,940	333,890	354,393
TOTALS	\$172,268	\$2,043,452	\$1,930,206

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

A reformation pastor

The pastoral theology class at our seminary recently considered the results of a survey that was administered to 5,000 Lutherans more than 30 years ago. The results zeroed in on five “pastoral perspectives,” or what people are looking for in a pastor. The first was personal faith and spiritual depth; the second was a person for others, with a dedication to people that was clear to see; third,

people wanted a pastor with a critical awareness of Lutheran heritage and theology. The last two were negatives: people didn’t want a pastor with a domineering spirit or one who engaged

in “ministry-defeating behavior.”

The focus of this editorial is on the third pastoral perspective: a critical awareness of Lutheran heritage and theology. What does this mean? This is a question that should sound quite familiar to any past or present confirmation student.

A reformation pastor believes and teaches the centrality of justification by grace through faith, for this is the teaching on which the Church stands or falls. Yes he does not look to his faith in times of stress and affliction; he looks to the object of his faith, Jesus Christ. He is a sin-and-grace/law-and-gospel preacher. The message of God’s love revealed to us in Jesus Christ through His sacrificial death and resurrection is the sweetest when the killing work of God’s law has accomplished its mission within us. But he seeks to let the gospel predominate, knowing, as the old hymn declares, that “those who know it best seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest” (“I Love to Tell the Story,” by Katherine Hankey). The joy of the Lord is

his strength, and it is clear from his words and demeanor that he was not baptized in vinegar.

A reformation pastor is committed to the means of grace, with a high view of Holy Scripture as the inspired, inerrant Word of God. He is a man of the Word, striving to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), and the Bible is his chief textbook. He takes great delight in the privilege of participating in what God is doing, as He convicts of sin and convinces of grace, as He moves mightily through the washing of water with the Word (Ephesians 5:26), or Holy Baptism, and nourishes the faithful through His Holy Communion, the Sacrament of the Altar.

A reformation pastor is convinced by the witness of God’s Word and his own heart that a Christian is both saint and sinner. He doesn’t have to be told that he is not perfect; he knows it full well. Conscious of his own fallen nature, he believes and teaches that “I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him” (from the meaning to the Third Article of the Creed), because my will is in bondage to sin and self. Because of this paradox, he sees the importance of God’s law as a guide to the believer, always seeking to make clear that the imperatives or commands of Scripture are to be obeyed with gospel motivation and Spirit empowerment. The love of Christ compels him (II Corinthians 5:14). He is also grateful to have *Luther’s Small Catechism* as his textbook for making these truths plain to himself and the young people of his parish.

A reformation pastor believes in the priesthood of all believers, which relieves him from bearing the burden of ministry

alone. God has provided gifted servants to walk with him, so that “the whole body, being fitted together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:16). He seeks to fulfill his calling as pastor-teacher by “the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, to the building up of the body of Christ” (4:12). Christian fellowship is dear

Yes he does not look to his faith in times of stress and affliction; he looks to the object of his faith, Jesus Christ.

to him, and his love for the brethren is an active commitment to their physical and spiritual well-being.

Is there something else that you might add to the above propositions?

Let the closing words of an old Swedish sacristy prayer be said of all true reformation pastors:

May the words of thy mouth be
the seed of salvation,
Thy walk show others the way;
Thy prayers give Satan a rebuff;
And may thy death be the entry of
a good and faithful
servant into the joy of the Lord
and Saviour.



Pastor Robert Lee

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

Periodicals

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NOVEMBER 8
WATERS IN
THE WILDERNESS

“For he that hath, to him shall more be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath” (Mark 4:25).

Here is a wonderful promise to the child of God; there is more to be received from our heavenly Father. We are to be faithful to the light which He has given us, and He will give us more light. There is an echo here from the statement in the Sermon of the Mount to the effect that it is the meek who shall inherit the earth. One might think that it is the very aggressive persons who forge ahead in the Kingdom of God. He that has meekness may not be aware of the fact himself; he has nothing of which to be proud, so he simply lives his Christianity rather than to speak about it.

This verse also has a solemn warning; there is a possibility of losing that which we have received. It was God's intention that we

as branches on the true vine should bear fruit for Him. He comes one year and the next to seek fruit, but He finds none. He tends the tree and prunes it. But the time comes when He will no longer have patience with the tree; He has it removed from the orchard. Why should it take up room and moisture to no avail?

The tree that is planted by the river grows upward toward heaven. Its moisture is never dried up. As it grows upward, and sees its reflection in the water, it seems to be growing downward. This is real growth in grace.

Doris Persson, Astoria, Ore.

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