

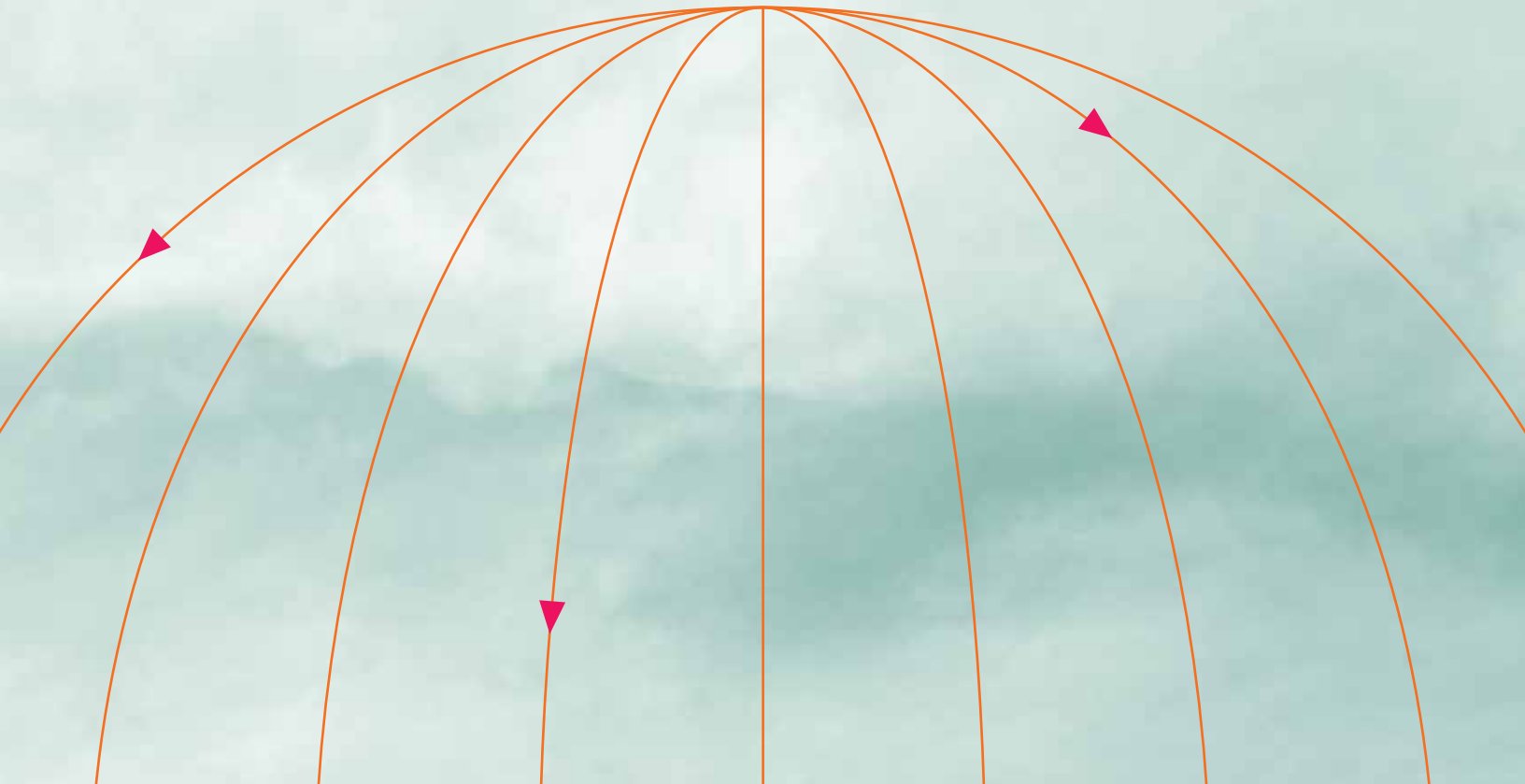
THE LUTHERAN 

OCTOBER 2013

AMBASSADOR



THE
Kingdom
OF GOD



America's mid-century revival

BY JONATHAN ANDERSON

In Ezra 9:7-9, the word “revival” is used of God’s restoration of His people from captivity that they might rebuild His house. So awesome was God’s deliverance that His people “were like those who dream” and were filled with laughter and singing (Psalm 126:1-2). “The LORD has done great things for us,” they exulted; and even the heathen agreed (126:2-3). Thus does God’s reviving power always inspire praise, and so it did in mid-20th century America.

The years 1908 to 1948 had been times of general moral and spiritual decline in the U.S. Thousands of churches had closed. Out of this brokenness grew an interdenominational prayer movement among pastors in many major cities. In Minneapolis, prayer retreats in 1948 and ’49 were breaths of Pentecost, and retreat leader J. Edwin Orr prophesied that revival would soon break out in Minnesota.

Indeed it did—through Orr’s preaching at Bethel College in April 1949. Marked by prayer, confession of sin, restitution, and conversion, revival touched 95 percent of the 600 students. The movement traveled to Northwestern College, where conviction for sin grew until it became imprudent to continue airing chapel services over KTIS. College and local revivals began proliferating nationwide. Then the floodgates opened.

In Los Angeles that fall, God’s Spirit moved so extraordinarily at the evangelistic crusade of a young Billy Graham that crowds overflowed a 9,000-seat tent, and services ran eight weeks as 3,000 were saved and another 3,000 restored. Revival became national headlines. The scene was replicated in January 1950 as all of Boston surged to hear Graham’s fiery preaching, and 3,000 received Christ within 18 days. The work of evangelists everywhere began flourishing, and several years of national revival ensued.

In Minneapolis, thousands attended the Lutheran Evangelistic



Movement’s 1950 Deeper Life Conference. God’s Word quickened hundreds of Christians, many dedicating themselves to Christian service, and numerous unsaved were awakened and converted. For five years following, LEM regularly witnessed revival among its dozens of annual Bible conferences. For example, so many were transformed at a 1951 Estherville, Iowa, conference that one local pastor had to relocate weekly Bible studies and prayer meetings to his church’s sanctuary to accommodate more than 100 people of all ages. Sometimes God touched entire regions. Northwest Minnesota was one. A 1952 LEM conference in Fosston nearly filled the church every night and impacted the whole community. McIntosh saw several years of continuous revival, with joyful new converts flooding LEM conferences where yet more souls were saved. Many other towns could be mentioned.

What was the revival’s impact nationwide? Hundreds of thousands were saved or renewed. Church membership and attendance soared. The Revised Standard Version Bible was non-fiction’s best-seller from 1952-1954. Future Christian leaders like Jerry Falwell and D. James Kennedy were converted. The rate of divorce was cut in half and that of crime held in check. Congress added “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance (1954) and made “In God We Trust” the national motto (1956).

For these wondrous acts, our Christian forerunners raised a joyful chorus of praise to God. Let us join their chorus. And let us put our hope in the same God who moved then, believing that He is able to do as mighty a work today in our own hearts, churches, and country.

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.)

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Evangelism outreach planned

Event will coincide with Graham's 95th birthday

BY PASTOR TOM OLSON

I like the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and have worked with them since my seminary days of telephone counseling during crusades 30 years ago. When I received an invitation to learn about the 2013 "My Hope" evangelism outreach in America, I was interested.

According to BGEA, out of 100 of your average neighbors, seven struggle with depression or suicide, seven abuse or are addicted to drugs or alcohol, fourteen feel crippled or trapped by fear and anxiety, eight are struggling with the loss of a job, three are grieving the death of a loved one, and 60 don't profess to be born again/saved.

So what hope do we have for them? People need Jesus Christ and the life-changing Word of God. That is the only hope for the human race.

The theme verses for BGEA's "My Hope" outreach are Matthew 9:9-10: "As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples."

We make evangelism too difficult and scare people away from sharing their faith. When I was saved in the 1970s Jesus People youth revivals, it was simple. People just told other people what Jesus had done for them and thousands were saved. All sorts of canned evangelism programs popped up later, and before long we found out that we had to memorize dozens of Bible verses and learn how to "defend the faith" in order to be witnesses. As a result, people quit witnessing out of discouragement.

BGEA has gone back to the old way of witnessing based on Matthew 9:9-10. Matthew met Jesus and his life was changed. Matthew invited people to his home to meet Jesus and their lives were changed. There were no classes to attend, no verses to memorize, no piles of literature to pass out and explain, just a chance to meet Jesus and hear Matthew's testimony.

Here are the simple steps of the "My Hope" outreach. First, look around and see your friends who need Jesus. Second, look up and pray every day for them. Third, look out and build relationships. Fourth, look forward to hearing Billy Graham's television sermon in November, and tell your friends your testimony in three minutes or less. Fifth, look after those who give their lives to Christ and help them grow in their faith.

If you want training and more helpful literature you can contact BGEA. They have helpful DVDs and follow-up materials for those who want to open their homes like Matthew did.

MY HOPE
AMERICA
WITH BILLY GRAHAM

"Working together with local churches and Christians like you, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association will hold a massive, nationwide outreach in November called "My Hope with Billy Graham," to coincide with my father's 95th birthday. We will proclaim the only message that can change our communities and transform our nation—the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The need is urgent. Will you join us—before it is too late—to lift up Christ so that "in his name the nations will put their hope."

—Franklin Graham

In November you have four simple things to do:

- First, invite those you have been praying for to your home for dessert and fellowship.
- Second, watch the program featuring music, real-life stories and a short message by Billy Graham (Nov. 7 on TBN, and Nov. 8 on Fox).
- Third, share briefly how Jesus gave you hope and what He is doing in your life today.
- Last, ask your friends if they would like to make the same decision you did to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and pray for them.

This is doable, isn't it?

It is God's simple commandment to go into all the world and share the gospel.

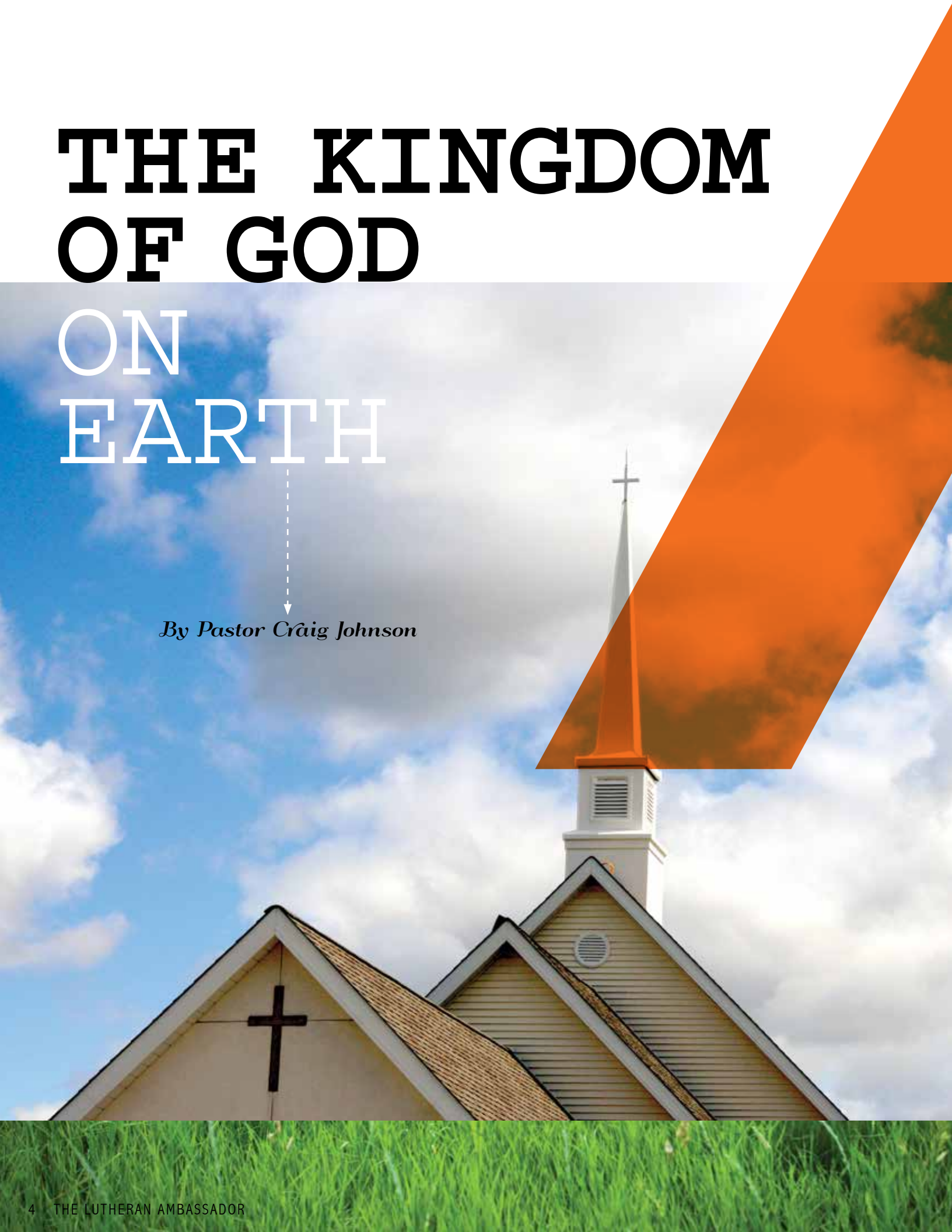
For more information log on to www.myhopewithbillygraham.org or call 1-877-7MY-HOPE (1-877-769-4673). Start today by writing down names of lost loved ones and praying. It is that simple.

Olson serves St. John's Lutheran Church, Newark, Ohio.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

ON EARTH

By Pastor Craig Johnson





once visited the Royal Palace in Madrid, Spain. It is a huge place with some 3,000 rooms surrounding an immense courtyard. It is the kind of building you picture when you think of kingdoms.

A struggling church that has to consider how much they have in their checking account before turning up the thermostat—that doesn't seem like a kingdom. A small group with a vision of starting a new congregation, renting space wherever they can on Sundays and meeting in homes during the week—what kind of a kingdom is that?

Our congregations don't look much like the Royal Palace. But our Association of Free Lutheran Congregation's first Fundamental Principle states: "According to the Word of God, the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth." The congregation, even though it is far from perfect, even though it may seem insignificant in the eyes of the world, is the Kingdom of God on earth.

The New Testament is the story of congregations being planted and cared for. "... the Christian congregation is so central in the New Testament. It was for the sake of the congregation, Paul suffered and labored; it was to strengthen, lead and build up congregations, he wrote his epistles; it was the congregations that he expected to carry the Gospel, to be God's house on earth, the pillar and foundation of truth. It was the congregation he considered to be Christ's body, Christ's bride. We stand in awe as we consider Christ and the congregation" (Rev. John Strand, *Free and Living Congregations: The Dream*

That Would Not Die, p. 71).

The ornate throne room of the Royal Palace elicits awe from tourists. The New Testament picture of the local congregation should fill us with awe.

In the Book of Revelation the apostle John was given an incredible vision of the King. This "revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place" was to be sent to seven churches (Revelation 1:1, 11). The first recipients of this amazing book were seven local congregations.

John saw the One who is far more glorious than any earthly royalty. "His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance" (1:16). This splendid One was seen standing among the

The congregation is not the kingdom because of impressive buildings or programs, but because the King has graciously chosen to make the local congregation His dwelling place.

seven golden lampstands. The Lord said, "... the seven lampstands are the seven churches" (1:20). The King who reigns forever is found among the congregations.

The congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth because this is where the King is found. A palace becomes a palace not because of its decorations or architecture, but because royalty take up residence there. The congregation is not the kingdom because of impressive buildings or programs, but because the King has graciously chosen to make the local congregation His dwelling place.

The congregation in Corinth had a number of struggles. Yet in spite of their sins and because of God's grace, Paul says his letter is going "To the

church of God in Corinth" (I Corinthians 1:2). Later in the letter Paul says, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple" (I Corinthians 3:16-17). The use of the plural you, as well as the context, indicates that Paul is speaking about the group, the congregation. That mixed up congregation in Corinth didn't look like a royal palace, but Paul, under the inspiration of God, said they were the sacred dwelling place of the King of kings.

The founder of the Lutheran Free Church movement, Georg Sverdrup, wrote: "And, since it is an irreversible fact that the New Testament speaks with the deepest reverence and the most sacred earnestness concerning just these local congregations and calls them God's congregations and God's temple, the body of Christ and the bride of Christ, it behooves us also to speak with all reverence and respect of this divine institution among us and deem it very highly

for the sake of Christ and God (*Free and Living Congregations: The Dream That Would Not Die*, p. 78).

The congregation has more power than any earthly kingdom, for in the gospel it has the power of God for salvation. The congregation has more hope than any earthly kingdom, for it is founded by Christ who says not even the gates of hell will overcome it (Matthew 16:18). The congregation is to be more revered, loved, and cherished than any earthly kingdom. The congregation, that we by God's grace get to be a part of, is the Kingdom of God on earth.

Johnson serves Bethany Lutheran, Astoria, Ore.



he first time I saw a pearl necklace I thought that it was one of the loveliest things ever. Several years after my great-

grandmother, Olinda, passed away, my grandma, Joyce, gave my cousin, Tanya, and me some of her jewelry. Among a gorgeous beveled locket, owl pins, and pastel strings of beaded jewelry was a double-stranded, pink costume pearl necklace. The clasp is old and it needs to be restrung, but there is something elegant and sophisticated about pearls that no other gem or jewel quite matches.

Matthew 13:44-46 says, “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

Have you ever found something of great value? From the time of Jesus to now we understand what a marvel it would be to find hidden treasure or a rare pearl. As children we dreamed and imagined great adventures of hunting for pirate’s gold or finding pearls as we combed the beach for shells. Even if some of the dazzle of such dreams fade as we grow up, we still understand the value attached to finding these things. Jesus told the two parables of the treasure hidden in a field and the pearl of great value to give us a picture of how greatly the Kingdom of Heaven is to be valued.

When my grandma first gave us her mother’s jewelry it seemed old-fashioned to me, but I’ve grown to love vintage jewelry and antiques. As I have worn her necklaces I have begun to cherish not only the pieces themselves, but also the tie to my family that they represent. There is an earthly value that I have attached to them. It is easy for us to place a high

value on the things of this earth; we become attached to them. Jesus, however, warns us in Matthew 6 against storing up treasures on earth because they are destroyed and stolen. Instead, He said to store up our treasures in heaven because where our treasure is, there our hearts are, as well.

Think of everything you own. When we die we leave it all behind. What about right now? Matthew 19:21-22 records Jesus’ response to a rich young man who wanted to follow Jesus: “Jesus said to him, ‘If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.” Even though this young man couldn’t take these things into eternity, he was not willing to give them up on earth in light of eternity. His struggle, like ours, became about his perspective on what is to be valued. Are we willing to give it all up for the sake of Christ?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, put it this way, “Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.”

We find two important things to focus on in these parables. First, they help us gain an eternal perspective. I John 2:17 says, “The world

and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.” Because Christ followers have an eternal perspective, we live our lives seeking God’s will and ways. We cease to be earthly minded and become heavenly minded. Second Corinthians 4:16-18 says, “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Second, we see that the Kingdom of Heaven comes at a great cost. The parables communicate that His kingdom is of great value. If we recognize this value we see the importance of possessing it. The cost was paid by Jesus Christ, who gave up everything to give us this treasure. Philippians 3:7-8 says, “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.”

We must count the cost, too, of following Christ in this life and into eternity, so that no earthly treasure is so dear to us that it stands between us and our Savior.

Andrews is a member of Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Camarillo, Calif.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

PEARLS & TREASURE

By Naomi Andrews

THE TWO *Kingdoms*



cripture distinguishes between Satan's dominion and Christ's kingdom. "He has delivered us

from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13, ESV).

Martin Luther initially interpreted this text to say:

"The kingdom of the world is the kingdom of sin, death, the devil, blasphemy, despair, and eternal death.

But the kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of grace, forgiveness of sins, comfort, salvation, and eternal life into which we have been transferred by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Luther distinguished God's "left hand"—the secular realm, whose gifts are temporal and of no value—from his "right hand"—the spiritual realm, whose goods from his righteousness have eternal value. Accordingly there are two kinds of people: all believers in Christ belong to the kingdom of God, the others to the secular kingdom of this world—the kingdom of Satan. God deals with all simultaneously—the former in the light of eternity and the latter in world history. As Luther's understanding developed he also saw secular governments as instruments of God's goodness through governmental laws, protection, leadership, marriage, and property as expressed in his Small Catechism.

Law and Gospel

Luther's doctrine of two kingdoms is rooted in the distinction between law and gospel. Those without faith are lost and belong to the kingdom of the world, subject to the commands, judgment, wrath, and punishments of God's law. Those forgiven through their faith in Christ are no longer under the law and have no need of the law of the sword, but belong to Christ's kingdom of the gospel—God's grace in Christ.

God rules in both

In 1520 Luther presented five treatises describing his Reformation teachings and their applications. His understanding of the two kingdoms had been expanded by further study of Scripture to show positive ways God's authority and power rule on earth through both

secular and spiritual means. Jesus declared that Pilate was appointed and empowered by God (John 19:11), to which Luther commented, "Governmental authority is from God, and whoever resists [governmental] authority resists God." Jesus also maintained that His kingdom was outside the temporal domain (John 18:36). Therefore, Luther didn't simply distinguish the two as secular/bad and spiritual/good, but that God simultaneously establishes and rules through both. In both God-appointed domains, as with law and gospel, secular and spiritual domains exist at the same time. The kingdoms are not separated, but harmoniously intertwined. The secular realm punishes evil and injustice, and protects the people. In the spiritual realm one receives God's grace while enduring the evil and injustice of the cross he is called to bear. The gospel commands the functions of both realms. Christians dwell in both, obeying God indirectly through the secular leader appointed by Him and directly through Christ, the Lord of the Church. Non-believers dwell solely in the secular domain.

Application

In his treatises Luther proclaimed from Scripture that through baptism all Christians are consecrated priests, and therefore are charged by the community to execute their office on behalf of others. The church of the papacy has "almost destroyed the wondrous grace and authority of baptism and justification." Therefore, the baptized who exercise God's appointment in secular duties are to be considered as priests and bishops who serve in the community of faith, and should be free to serve over all, whether layman, priest or

pope. So as "the temporal has become a member of the Christian body it is a spiritual estate, even though its work is physical."

Both law and gospel require Christians to live in love in the temporal and spiritual realms. Luther described how Christians live and serve in both realms, which God established for our current earth-bound times.

From his life experience, Luther used the activities of the princes, popes, and ordinary daily life to describe problems. For example, Luther opposed business practices that allowed for extravagant profits beyond the regular cost of doing business. Rather, because of their freedom, Christians are released to live by the law of love in both domains, trusting and honoring God-appointed leadership to properly fulfill their responsibilities. However, he warns that leadership in either realm can expect proper opposition from their constituencies if they move outside the boundaries of their God-appointed duties. If the prince rallies troops against the Turk, rally under his banner. If a bishop tries to rally such troops, run in the other direction.

Summary

A Christian lives in both realms under the gospel's command to love all and Scripture's command to honor secular authorities established by God—and to serve in a secular position if enjoined to do so. In all things our Christian call is to obey those established by God according to the mandates and teachings of Scripture.

Hall, St. Paul, Minn., is an adjunct professor for the 2013-14 school year at the AFLC Seminary.



Georg Sverdrup worked for the freedom of the congregation—free from synodical hierarchy above the congregation and free from hindrance to the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word within.

Some scoffed at the notion, believing that a congregation freed from the larger church body's control would only result in chaos and anarchy. Others believed that a freed congregation should be made up of only "true" believers—only those who could make a public profession of the saving grace of Christ. While one group believed Sverdrup had gone too far by freeing the congregation from control of the church body, the other believed he had not gone far enough by not requiring the congregation to root out hypocrites. This latter group believed that in order to have a truly "living congregation" one must "determine who the believers are ... and assemble these into a living congregation."¹ For if the congregation is "the Kingdom of God on earth," then it follows that its membership should be made up of true believers only.

They had a point. If the congregation is indeed the Kingdom of God, why does it have so many problems? Could it be the result of too many unchristian members? If that is so, why don't we organize our congregations with only professing Christians and remove the rest?

The answer to some degree may be found in "The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares," or as some prefer, "The Parable of the Weeds" in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43.

In this parable, we see the Kingdom of God likened to a field where a man sowed the good seed, the wheat, but while he slept, an

evil enemy came and sowed tares or weeds in his field. Commentary writers believe the tares in this parable refer to a common Middle Eastern weed called Bearded Darnel. The unique characteristic of darnel is that it is a grass-like weed that looks much like wheat while growing in the field. Furthermore, at the time of Christ, the sower would scatter seeds from a sack hung around his neck. As a result, the seeds sprouted in random patterns, not in the straight rows we are accustomed to seeing in fields seeded with grain drills. Thus if someone in Christ's day scattered tares among the wheat, he would also use the same random motion, making it almost impossible to tell which was the wheat and which was the tares when they sprouted. One must wait until harvest. Then the darnel kernels could easily be distinguished from the wheat kernels.

And so it is with the congregation. In a series of articles entitled "Can We Know Who the Believers Are?" Sverdrup wrestles with the problem of unbelievers in the congregation. Just as it is almost impossible to distinguish between the wheat and the darnel while they are growing in the field, so it is just as difficult to discern between the true believer and the hypocrite in the congregation. In his explanation of the Fourth Fundamental Principle, Sverdrup concludes that the congregation "cannot judge the secret condition of the heart."² Furthermore, some may have begun a life in Christ, but have fallen away, while still retaining their membership in the congregation.

In the parable, the servants ask the owner if they should try to pull out the weeds. The landlord says, "No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them." Good advice, for Sverdrup also points out that once a congregation takes it

upon itself to separate believer from unbeliever, the struggle begins over defining who is holy and who is not. And once these judging battles begin, the turmoil in the congregation never ends. The congregation suffers, the cause of Christ suffers, and the Evil One rejoices. For humanly speaking, who is able to discern the hearts of fellow members with any accuracy? Who is able to pull out the darnel without harming the wheat?

No, according to Christ's explanation to the disciples, it is God who is the judge. The landlord (God) advises to wait until harvest (the end of the age), and then He will send out the harvesters (angels) to gather the tares and bind and burn them (judge and cast the weeds into hell) and gather the good seed (true believers) into his barn (heaven). The task of deciding should be left to God.

But this does not mean the congregation can be slack in its response to unbelievers in its midst. For the very reason that we in the AFLC believe the congregation is "the right form of Kingdom of God on earth," it becomes even more important for the congregation to preach the Word in such a way that unbelievers are driven to repentance and faith in Christ, or, if the inner pressure gets too great, they will leave on their own accord. This is the essence of the true preaching of law and gospel within the Lutheran congregation. In that way the congregation will be purified.

It is the "quickenning preaching of the Word of God" that convicts, purifies, and makes the congregation holy, not by the feeble efforts of its members.

Dyrud, a member of the AFLC Schools Board of Trustees, is a member of Our Savior's Lutheran, Thief River Falls, Minn.

1 Georg Sverdrup, "Can We Know Who the Believers Are?" trans. Larry Walker in *The Sverdrup Journal* 9 (2013): 62.

2 Georg Sverdrup, "Concerning the Fundamental Principles of the Lutheran Free Church," trans. James S. Hamre in *The Sverdrup Journal* 3 (2006): 61.

Wheat & tares

By *Loiell Dyrud*





They KINGDOM come

By *Liz Tonneson*

It was 1:30 a.m. on a Saturday morning and I was being wheeled into the operating room at Methodist Hospital.

In a few minutes, a surgeon would cut open my abdomen to remove an intestinal malformation that had become infected and burst. It was Meckel's Diverticulitis, a problem that only a fraction of the population will ever have. And the only way to fix it was to cut out the infected tissue, staple the hole in my intestine shut, and pump antibiotics through my body for a week to get rid of the infection.

My body had been sending me signs in the form of a cramping, distended abdomen and flu-like symptoms for a few days before I ended up in the hospital, but I had no

idea how to interpret them and didn't know what was wrong. I had plans for the weeks around the surgery. I wanted to finish moving into our new apartment, cook yummy food for my new husband, and sort through boxes of wedding decorations and other stuff I'd accumulated over the years. I was also going to go to work, help out with VBS at my church, and get outside in the beautiful, mild summer weather.

But all those plans changed when the doctor in urgent care felt a mass in my abdomen. I was not planning on having a CT scan that night, or ending up in the emergency room awaiting surgery. I was not planning on spending the next four days in the hospital recuperating and getting IV antibiotics dripped into my body.

Thankfully, because of advances in modern medicine and the abili-

ties of my surgeon, the problem was fixed and I am almost completely well again. The surgeon knew what signs to look for, and he had the tools (CT scan, laparoscopic camera, God-given talent and ability, scalpels, and anesthetic) to take care of the problem.

In Luke 17:20-37, Jesus talks about the kingdom of God and how, unlike my Meckel's Diverticulitis, His return to the earth will not come with observable signs in the future. There isn't a second-coming-o-meter somewhere in the world with a countdown to when Jesus will come back. Instead, similar to my experience of starting the day at work and ending it in the emergency room, it will be completely unexpected and happen suddenly like a lightning flash. Life changing in an instant. The comment from a doctor that there is a mass in your abdomen. The surgeon telling



you that they need to operate. The people in Noah's day being destroyed by a flood that seemed to come out of nowhere (v. 26). Those in Sodom and Gomorrah on the day fire and brimstone rained from heaven (v. 28). And on the day when the "Son of Man is revealed" (v. 30).

In a way the kingdom of God came to earth when Jesus walked upon the cobblestones in Jerusalem. It was fulfilled in His death on the cross. Jesus is now living and reigning in each one of us who believe in Him. But the kingdom is also still to come, when Jesus returns in glory—the confusing paradox of the already-but-not-yet of the kingdom of God. And that future return will be a surprise, it will happen in an instant. All of our carefully laid plans will disintegrate. Those boxes needing to be unpacked will be left, the pizza fresh out of the

oven will get cold, and our chance to choose Christ will be gone. He will be here, in power and in might, like lightening flashing across the sky (v. 24).

Jesus' first coming was foretold by prophets hundreds of years before He was born. He is coming again, and although there are some signs that show the time is growing nearer, we don't know the day or the hour of His return. Will we be taken, or will we be left? Will we lose our lives because we insist on living for ourselves and rejecting Christ, or will we gain eternal life through his grace (v. 33)?

My situation this summer is nothing compared to the unexpected return of Christ. In the space of a few hours I went from taking orders at a restaurant to barely being able to turn over in bed. But in the whole span of my life it was just a blip of

inconvenience. Right now Christ's reign is somewhat "undercover" as He works through His Church and His followers. But when He comes for the second time, it will completely change our lives and end the world as we know it. He is coming to reign in power and might, visibly and undeniably.

So be ready for that day. Look forward to it, anticipate it, and rejoice in His current and coming kingdom. He is at work. Let us be faithful and alert as we watch and wait, thankful for His saving grace that allows us to be a part of his already-but-not-yet kingdom.

Tonneson attends Faith Free Lutheran, Minneapolis.



A team of six students (all girls) and two leaders traveled to Jinja, Uganda, July 24-Aug. 9. Team members joined AFLC Missionaries Pastor Nate and Rhoda Jore, as well as several short-term missionary assistants. Team members volunteered at Amani Baby Cottage, the Jinja Pregnancy Care Center, the Jinja Children's Hospital, as well as participating in Ambassador Institute classes. The students share their thoughts after returning from what many consider a life-transforming experience.



When I was about 12 years old, God put the desire in my heart to go serve in Africa. When I was asked to go on this trip I knew immediately that this was something God had placed in my path. After being in Uganda for a week it was still surreal that I was actually in Africa living what I had been dreaming about for years. I felt uneasy about being there. I knew God brought me there, but my heart still felt troubled. I loved everything we had done and experienced, but I longed to know why God placed me in Uganda for two weeks at the age of 16.

Our second weekend there, we split up into groups and went to three different villages. I had the privilege of going to the village of Butagaya and stayed with a pastor and his family. Sunday's activities included going to church, visiting some members of the congregation who were unable to attend church due to physical ailments, and spending time playing with the neighborhood children. Mercy, one of the neighbor girls, who couldn't have been more than 5 years old, came running over to where we were playing and joined in on the silly games. We went on a little walk, and all of the kids followed right along. Mercy came over, timidly grabbed my hand, looked up at me, and smiled the most beautiful smile I've ever seen. At that moment I got tears in my eyes, and it was like God was saying, "Madi, this is what you're here for. I brought you here for this moment. This is right where you belong."

It may sound really insignificant that the highlight of my trip was a little girl holding my hand, but God uses the smallest things to teach His children. Praise God for his perfect timing and perfect plan. *Katonda yebazibwe* (God be praised)!

- Madi Carley, junior, Brainerd, Minn.

[PURPOSE]

The goal of AFLC Student Missions is to equip, challenge and enable students to work alongside established missionaries. Our students serve God through work projects and relational ministry, while learning from people who do it everyday. They learn teamwork, trust, and servant-hood. And they grow in their love for the Lord and for people. We hope to challenge each student to grow in their faith as they serve God.



Uganda is a place where Christians are fervent in their love of God. The first church that we visited was in a small community. A woman with a microphone was on her knees crying out to God, praying with everything she had in her being. The sight brought me to tears. I could not

stop myself from being moved by her deep-rooted love for our heavenly Father. I later found out this lady's name is Tracy. She is a leader in the church and was taught in the Ambassador Institute. I consider myself blessed to have met and gotten to know this wonderful woman.

- Hannah Lautner, senior,
Deshler, Neb.



Everyone always says going to Africa will be a life-changing experience. We got to go work with children and pregnant women and share the living Word of God with others.

Sometimes when going on a mission trip it is easy to feel like you are going to a godless nation. This trip showed me quite the opposite. Going to Uganda helped show me that God is working everywhere—in the minds, hearts, and bodies of all of His children around the world. I encourage anyone who is considering mission work to keep this in mind. You may bring the gospel to godless people, but you are only planting the seed that the Lord will grow!

Remember to not just focus on what hasn't been done in other countries, but to recognize all the beauty and blessings. God is at work everywhere.

- Trinity Williams, junior at
AFLBS, Kalispell, Mont.



God undeniably blessed me with such a stunning experience through Student Missions Uganda, and I was able to acquire much knowledge

about God, the people of Africa, and being a true servant. One of the most vital things God taught me was that all that He requests me to do is simply plant seeds by sharing the gospel. We can note that in Mark 4:26 Jesus teaches us that as followers of Christ we don't need to fret about the process of bringing people to Christ. Jesus reveals that

God will take care of them and all we need to do is share the gospel.

On our last day in Jinja, we were in the market and, like always, I had children wrapped around myself, but in particular a young girl named Jamime. Prior to leaving I shared the gospel with her in a few short sentences, ending with "Yesu loves you!" Unlike the other children I shared with, she had an expression of awe. Finding it hard to leave her, I was comforted in knowing God will take care of her.

- Taylor Groby, senior, Zumbrota, Minn.



Our world is filled with people who have no hope for tomorrow and have not yet heard the good news that there is a Savior Who loves them so dearly.

Looking back on my experience in Uganda, I know that I will always have a strong love for the people of Africa. My heart was swiftly stolen in the two short weeks we were there. Yet, it was also shattered and broken through what I experienced.

During our time in Uganda, we visited the Children's Hospital in Jinja to pray for those we came in contact with. We prayed for a number of children, but there was one in particular who captured my heart. My eyes connected with the biggest, darkest, and emptiest eyes I had ever seen. These eyes belonged to a baby boy facing death, and he was lying still in his mother's arms. He was dying. But in his eyes I saw the love of Jesus, who loves the brokenhearted and cares for them. I don't know if I will ever see those eyes again in this world, but I have hope that I will see this precious child running up to me in Heaven some day.

There are so many people who are in the same situation as this little one. But Psalm 34:18 says, "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Let us all have hearts that are broken for the things that break the heart of our Lord.

- Amanda Flechsig, junior, Pleasanton, Texas



[THE TEAM]



Amanda Flechsig



Trinity Williams, Hannah Lautner, Taylor Groby



Brandon Marschner



Madi Carley and Kirstie Schierkolk



Ruth Gunderson



liotya, Nyabo,” we greeted the woman sitting in the waiting area of the children’s hospital. After asking what her name was, and the name of her daughter, we went straight to our purpose: “Can we pray for your child?”

I had prayed for people before. I had prayed in public, in private, for family and for friends, but I had never openly prayed for a stranger. I had never just walked up to someone and asked if I could pray for the baby in her arms. I admit, I was nervous. But when the woman nodded yes, and Ruth Gunderson and I laid our hands on that little girl, something happened in my heart.

The best way I can describe it is to say that in that moment I felt deep in my soul just how much Jesus loves that child. I saw Jesus in agony on the cross for the sake of this little girl. I could picture Him bending down to listen to our pleas for the health and salvation of this baby. I had tears in my eyes as I thanked God for letting me be a part of this child’s life for those three minutes, for giving me the opportunity to pray His blessing upon her.

After we finished, Ruth and I moved on to the next mother, and the next, until we had prayed for every child in the room. Laying our hands on all those precious African children reminded me that prayer is a beautiful and powerful gift from God, and that He knows and cares for every person in the entire world.

As our Ugandan brothers and sisters say, “*Yesu yebazibwe!*” Praise the Lord!

- Kirstie Schierkolk, sophomore, Jerez, Zacatecas, Mexico

Mrs. Who?

Inspiration from an unnamed female servant

BY LORI WILLARD



Is there a woman in your life who truly inspires you? Has a woman challenged you to move outside your comfort zone and allow God to use you in service to Him? In our culture, women who are often emulated are independent, powerful, and self-confident. Though I have been influenced by many women, recently I gained a new appreciation for a woman I've heard about for many years. God has used her life to inspire and challenge me.

One of the most incredible aspects of her life is that she has lived in the shadow of others. What is also incredible is that I don't even know her name. Not even her first name.

You might ask, "How can you be influenced by someone and not even know her name? Wouldn't that be one of the first things you would have asked when you met her?"

I'm influenced by her because God chose to include her in His inspired Word. And, I don't know her name because the all-wise God chose not to reveal it. Though nameless in this world, I am confident that God knows her name. We will simply call her Mrs. Noah.

Let me explain why Noah's wife is such an inspiration. She was a sinner, like all human beings, living in a time when her neighbors and friends preferred to revel in the wickedness of the world rather than surrender to the will and way of their Creator. But her soul had been saved by God's grace through the finished work of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer.

I am particularly inspired because she was a woman who lived out her faith with no indication of grumbling about her circumstances. She was married to a righteous man. Though she must have been well aware of her husband's imperfections, there is no indication that she doubted that he had a vibrant relationship with God. Her loyalty and submission to her husband's leadership had to have been observed by all, especially her three sons and

daughters-in-law.

I'm also inspired and challenged by her namelessness—her anonymity. Her namelessness did not mean she was insignificant or irrelevant. Her supportive role in God's plan has been recorded so all generations can observe the character of a godly and submissive woman.

Noah's wife is just one of many unnamed people in the Bible. Rarely, if ever, is she recognized for her participation in the preparation of the ark or for the role she played in caring for the people and animals in the ark during the flood. She was the greatest female zookeeper of all time. Scripture reveals that Noah "found favor in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8), however, the quiet obedience of his wife to her husband's leadership suggests a strong faith of her own. Nowhere in Scripture does it indicate that she questioned her husband's God-given directive to build the ark. Nor does it allude to any criticism on her part for Noah's obedience to God's calling on his life.

Almost everyone knows Noah's name. But in the annals of history, Noah's wife will remain nameless. Her significance in history is derived solely from her relation to someone else—Noah.

I believe you and I can genuinely relate to Noah's wife. Does it sometimes seem like nobody knows your name? Does it seem like you live in the shadow of your husband, children, parents, sibling, employer, teacher, student, or friend?

To the world, it is unattractive to live namelessly in the shadows of others. However, to the believer, it is most attractive to live "in the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1), where the God of the universe knows your name.

Willard, the second vice president of the WME, is a member of Calvary Free Lutheran, Everett, Wash.



Remember your keys

BY STEVE KVALE

If something is locked, blocking your way, you must find the key, right? We often tend to assume the answers and forget that God has a design for our lives. His Word is filled with keys that unlock life's mysteries when we have a perspective that is not in line with His intentions. That perspective can limit our joyful service to Him.

After working in the field of Information Technology (IT) for 15 years, I was shocked when I was suddenly fired. I questioned my faith, self-worth, abilities, gifting, and God's will for my life. As God revealed that He was never leaving me but changing my course for the better, words cannot describe the provision and healing miracles that unfolded before me. During this time I called a former pilot for Wycliffe Bible Translators and asked about training for aviation, thinking that I would leave the field of IT altogether. He highlighted my gifts, challenging me to look into IT instead of retraining in another field. He also challenged me to trust God even though I felt burned and used up.

I have followed the Lord from that moment, and found a use for my gifts in IT through Wycliffe six years ago. It is hard to describe the peace I've experienced since then. Jesus is the key to salvation, translation is the key to giving God's Word to all people, and literacy unlocks the Bible for everyone. I like having an eternal investment in people's lives through the field of IT.

Do you suffer from burn-out in your service? Be encouraged. Align your occupation or service with your God-given gifts, as

described in Romans 12. This key aligns with obedience and the promises given us in John 15:11, "your joy may be complete," John 14:27, "My peace I give you," Matthew 16:25, "whoever loses his life for me will find it," Matthew 11:28, 30, "I will give you rest," and "My yoke is easy, my burden is light." Do you wonder how the persecuted stay sane when you hear their testimonies? These truths are manifested in their minds and hearts.

When people failed me, I confused that with not being in God's will. That is not where our joy comes from—our joy comes from the Lord. We also find joy in using the skills that He has given us for His glory. Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." I enjoyed my job in the corporate world and I enjoy to the fullest working for the Lord of the Harvest continually with my gifts. In fact, sometimes I feel like I can't do enough.

Whether you are a child, youth, adult, or elderly, being a child of God with child-like faith remains the key to happiness. Carry on, dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, for His glory.

Kvale, an AFLC missionary on loan to Wycliffe Bible Translators, serves IT support needs from his home and attends Christ the King Free Lutheran Church of Pipestone, Minn.



The student body of the 2013-2014 class of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School gathered outside of Heritage Hall for their official group picture. One hundred and fourteen students have registered for the school year.



Hosanna Free Lutheran celebrates 25th anniversary

Members of Hosanna Free Lutheran, St. James, Minn., celebrated the congregation's 25th anniversary on Aug. 4. The theme for the celebration was taken from Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." The congregation is served by Pastor Joe Faldet. Pastor Richard Gunderson, assistant to the president of the AFLC, was the guest speaker.

Nash granted sabbatical leave

Pastor Paul Nash, director of Home Missions for the AFLC, has been awarded a three-month sabbatical by the Home Missions Committee, recognizing his ministry of more than 18 years in his current office. The sabbatical is primarily for the purposes of spiritual and physical rest and rejuvenation and will extend from Sept. 30, to Jan. 5, 2014. Pastor Elden Nelson will serve as part-time interim director of Home Missions while other Home Missions staff members will assist in carrying other necessary responsibilities during Pastor Nash's absence.

We look forward to Pastor Nash's return to his full duties after the first of the year and ask that you join us in prayer that this sabbatical be a time of rich blessing to Pastor Nash as well as his wife, Laurie. During this sabbatical period, please direct all of your communications regarding the ministry of Home Missions to the Home Missions office, and not to Pastor Nash personally.

A summer at The Net

BY PASTOR JEFF SWANSON

Each year we see thousands of visitors come to our community to fish for and process salmon in local canneries. In an effort to reach these visitors, during the past couple of summers we gave away ice cream on Saturdays from the back of a pickup in a parking lot. We also handed out hundreds of Bibles and tracts in a few hours.

This year we felt the Lord leading us to have a more permanent place and schedule to reach out to folks. Through the work of prayer, we were able to rent a building in a perfect location where nearly everyone walks or drives by at one time or another. A team from Ishpeming, Mich., helped us get the building ready to serve people. As the word went out to AFLC congregations of our summer plans, coffee, creamers, cookie mixes, Bibles, tracts in many languages, and quilts began pouring in. We have been overwhelmed at the response and interest in this ministry. Individual and family volunteers also came to help staff The Net.

I praise God that we had more than 1,000 people visit this outreach/hospitality house. We have gone through all of our quilts, many pounds of coffee, hundreds of dozens of cookies, hundreds of Bibles, and thousands of tracts. We have spent hours and hours visiting with people about Jesus, the Bible, and every other topic you can imagine. Fishing was not good this season. Many people were on the streets with little to do, increasing our opportunities to share Jesus.

Visitors at The Net came from almost every state in the U.S., as well as from Libya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Brazil, Bolivia, Sweden, Norway, China, Czech Republic, Croatia, Philippines, Samoa, Mexico and several Central American countries. We have a map on the wall where people put a pin to note their home; it is very full and colorful.

We have many pages worth of stories to share. Here are three:

Two brothers from Oregon were fired from their jobs here and spent a lot of time at The Net before going home. They ended up staying in our church basement. When they left they said they came to work and make money, but now they recognized they had come to Naknek to meet God.

A lady from the Czech Republic who was very cold came in and received a sweatshirt, a quilt, some tracts and a Bible. She



Pastor Jeff and Jane Swanson stand outside The Net, an outreach and hospitality center located in Naknek, Alaska.

read to me a tract in Czech which had on its cover a graphic picture of Jesus on the cross and translated, "All this He did for me." (Our quilt supply is exhausted, so if your WMF groups need a place to send those quilts, we have that need.)

A lady from Mexico attended our church after being invited when she visited The Net. At church she heard about our planned vacation Bible school, and came to work as a volunteer because she was cold. At VBS she heard Bob Lee share during the missionary time about his time in Asia working with the Jesus Film Project. Bob showed a part of the film, and when she learned it was available in Spanish, she asked about showing it in the evening at her cannery in the lounge. She also took many Bibles and tracts to give out at the showing. From The Net, to church, to VBS, to showing the *Jesus Film* with Bibles and tracts, God did above and beyond what we could ask or think!

The Net is now closed for the season. We are so thankful for all of your support this summer. Thank you for the quilts, coffee, cookies mixes, and gospel literature that have given us the opportunity to share the love and truth of Jesus in word and deed.

"Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious Name" (I Chronicles 29:13).

Swanson, Naknek, Alaska, serves the Alaska Mission congregations in Naknek and South Naknek.

AFLC memorials: August

AFLBS

Dr. Francis Monseth (3)
Jim Papillon
Joseph (Skip) Milton
Phyllis Peterson (7)
Edsel Anderson
Grace Claus
Toveylou Talley
Ruth Claus

AFLT

Dr. Francis Monseth (4)
Phyllis Peterson

Home Missions

Marie Mathison
Allen Anderson
Thordis Danielson

Miriam Infant Home

Phyllis Peterson

Parish Education

Phyllis Peterson

WMF

Margaret Elhard
Evelyn Fisher
Eileen Iverson
Florence Magnuson
Glen Enger
Lillian Johnson
Phyllis Peterson (4)
Rosemary Nilson
Will Schofield
Dr. Francis Monseth (2)

World Missions

Phyllis Peterson

... in honor of

World Missions

Edith Gudim

People and Places

The 2013 **National Conference of Lutherans For Life (LFL)** will be Nov. 8-9 hosted by Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Urbandale (Des Moines), Iowa. Among the speakers and workshop leaders is Attorney John Talley, Newark, Ill., a member of the AFLC Schools Board of Trustees. For further information and to register, go to www.lutheransforlife.org/conference.

Pastor Walt Beaman, East Grand Forks, Minn., has announced his retirement as a chaplain with Valley Memorial Homes.

Pastor Michael Johnson, Alexandria, Minn., accepted a call to serve Abundant Life Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, Minn. He previously served Chippewa Lutheran Church, Brandon, Minn.

Pastor Lyle Aadahl, Hayfield, Minn., resigned from Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Kasson, and Zion Lutheran Church, rural Dexter, Minn., where he has served since 1994.

Pastor Mark Brophy, Reading, Pa., has announced his retirement as senior pastor of Alsace Lutheran Church, Reading.

Parish Builder **Amanda Bellefy** will be going to Jerez, Mexico, as a Short Term Mission Assistant working alongside the Pastor Todd Schierkolk family. Having served in Mesa, Ariz., Bellefy will leave for Mexico in January with the intention of serving for as many as two years. Bellefy served her internship for the Ministry Training Institute in 2010 in Jerez. She will help with the Kids' Club, youth group, and Sunday school.

Pastor Irvin Schmitke was ordained Sept. 22 at Roseau Free Lutheran, Roseau, Minn., with Pastor Elden Nelson officiating. He has accepted a call to serve Roseau and Norland Free Lutheran Churches.

From our president: Thank you

To our AFLC family and friends:

It was 44 years ago this past summer that I first set foot on the campus of the AFLC schools and headquarters. I remember well that meeting with Dr. Iver Olson, dean of AFLTS. It was obvious to me that day in visiting with Dr. Olson and others of the AFLC staff that I had been led to the place where the Lord was calling me. A month or two later I returned to begin my first year of seminary. It didn't take long to become acquainted with the seminarians and faculty members, to become very confident that I was with people of like-mind, and to realize that the Lord had brought me there.

One of my fears when I came to faith in Christ was that I would lose *all* my friends. Little did I know how the Lord would increase my circle of friends. In looking back, that circle was so very small compared to what it is has become over these past 48 years as I have walked with Him who called me to Himself and with you, my brothers and sisters in Christ. My heart and mind are flooded with wonderful thoughts and memories of how He has privileged me in becoming a part of this AFLC family.

Proclamation of the gospel is indeed a great responsibility and privilege, and my wife, Faith, and I express to all our AFLC friends our gratitude and appreciation for your partnership, friendship, and fellowship in such a great task over the years. Your kindnesses to us have been such a blessing. The reception for us and the Gundersons on Thursday evening of conference was a very memorable time. Thank you one and all for good memories of experiences and relationships that we carry with us into the days ahead, trusting Him for His continued blessing and direction in whatever more He might privilege us to do. We are so thankful that we don't have to say good-bye to our brothers and sisters; we simply say thank you and we'll see you again.

In His Service,
Pastor Elden and Faith Nelson



AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1-August 31, 2013

FUND	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$24,037	\$224,432	\$202,189
Evangelism	9,272	90,013	90,069
Youth Ministries	9,549	71,224	54,836
Parish Education	28,160	99,334	74,647
Seminary	15,448	187,937	143,749
Bible School	32,396	349,555	290,062
Home Missions	41,956	303,269	304,791
World Missions	19,495	255,469	253,548
Personal Support	30,840	289,950	311,957
TOTALS	\$211,152	\$1,871,184	\$1,725,848

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

A unique Lutheran family

The October or November issues of *The Lutheran Ambassador* often have a Reformation focus, and this monthly theme, the Kingdom of God, is clearly related to our distinctive evangelical heritage. The article on Martin Luther's teaching of the two kingdoms instructs us concerning the balance that believers, who are in the world but not of the world (John 17:14-16), should seek to maintain toward the powers that are

over us. The first Fundamental Principle of the AFLC is the subject of one article, identifying the local congregation as the "right form" of the Kingdom of God among us. Another article



Pastor Robert Lee

addresses church membership from a Kingdom perspective, and others seek to explain some of the New Testament Kingdom parables.

The AFLC is a family of Lutheran Christians, with a commitment to local congregations that seek to be, by God's grace, both free and living. We are theological conservatives, emphasizing the infallibility and inerrancy of Holy Scripture. Yet another important aspect of our uniqueness is that we might also be called "revival Lutherans," for the free Lutheran movement in America was born in spiritual awakening.

One might describe the following as a combination editorial/book review, as it strongly recommends a new book from Mercy and Truth Publishers entitled, *Our Fathers Saw His Mighty Works: The Lutheran Evangelistic Movement and a Forgotten Mid-20th Century Revival*, by Jonathan D. Anderson, the author of our "Encouraging Word" column. In the opinion of your editor, this book is extremely important in any attempt to understand

and explain our unique AFLC identity.

The author briefly describes in his first chapter an awakening that swept our country during the 1940s and '50s, and in the following chapters we learn of the Lutheran phase of this important movement, especially related to the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement (LEM). Older readers may remember the names of the early leaders: Enoch Scotvold, J.O. Gisselquist, Jens Halvorson (a former pastor of the Newfolden, Minn., parish), John Carlsen, Joseph Stump, A.W. Knock, Maynard Force, Evald Conrad, and G.W. Busse.

An important center of the movement, hosting some of the largest evangelical Bible conferences in North America, was Mission Farms, just up the road from our AFLC Schools campus on Medicine Lake in suburban Minneapolis. This was also the site of several Lutheran Free Church national youth gatherings.

The awakening was rooted in prayer, including a connection to a national revival prayer movement. Conferences were deliberately called "deeper life," emphasizing that the normal Christian life should be and could be a Spirit-filled one. Full-time evangelists traveled under the auspices of the LEM, and annual area conferences were conducted in South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kansas, Washington, California, Arizona, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Saskatchewan. A growing radio ministry reached thousands of people, and *Evangelize* magazine at its height had almost 8,000 subscribers.

Anderson researched the issues of the magazine during these years of awakening, and one notes that a number of the areas and communities reporting revival are the home of AFLC congregations today: northwestern Minnesota, Bagley, Fosston, McIntosh, Fertile, French Lake

(near Cokato); Forest City, Iowa; Sioux Falls, Madison, Sinai, and Oldham, S.D.; and Newark, Ill. Perhaps some of our readers may recall these seasons of refreshing, or even look back to one of them as the beginning of new life in Christ.

It was especially interesting to read in the first appendix of the eastern phase of the LEM that developed during the 1970s centered in Cleveland, Ohio. An AFLC pastor, the late Herbert Franz, was one of God's instruments in this area during

Copies of *Our Fathers Saw His Mighty Works* by Jonathan D. Anderson are available from the AFLC Parish Education bookstore or from www.lemdeeperlife.org.

these years, and Pastor Gene and Beverly Enderlein are examples of the fruit of the awakening. Closer to our time is the story of the youth awakening during the 1960s and 1970s in the third appendix, with the huge Youth Days during the January mid-winter conferences, and the move of the summer Deeper Life camps from Medicine Lake to the Lake Koronis Assembly Grounds near Paynesville, Minn.

Why did the awakening end? Years later two of the older leaders were overheard concluding that "God limits most spiritual movements to one generation and reaches out to the next generation with a new movement" (page 229). Another is quoted as saying, with a slight rewording of John 3:8, "the Spirit bloweth where it listeth."

What does God have in store for our generation? The reading of this book should not be a mere nostalgic journey, but rather a call to prayerful commitment ... and expectation. This is our unique heritage.

association retreat center

God's Word & the kingdom

BY PASTOR KARL ANDERSON

In the second petition of the Lord's Prayer we pray, "Thy kingdom come." *Luther's Small Catechism* explains that this happens "When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and live a godly life here on earth and in heaven forever."

A kingdom is the domain over which a king rules. Earthly kingdoms are defined by geographic boundaries. An earthly king only reigns over the land within the borders of his country. Jesus said in John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world." All who believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord become part of God's kingdom. In other words, whenever we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we are praying for personal salvation, both for ourselves and for others.

Jesus taught about the kingdom of God in many parables. He explained, in the parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32), how it starts small and grows big. He illustrated how it permeates our lives by comparing it to the leaven in a lump of dough (Matthew 13:33). He highlighted the importance we should give to the kingdom by comparing it to a pearl of great price (Matthew 13:45-46), worthy of selling all we have to obtain it.

Through similar parables Jesus also taught that not everyone is part of God's kingdom. He spoke of wheat and tares growing up together that could not be separated until the harvest (Matthew 13:24-30). He spoke of fish caught in a net that would be sorted so that the good would be retained and the bad thrown out (Matthew 13:47-50).

For those not in the kingdom of God, Jesus spoke of great regret, demonstrated by weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew

13:42). He described it as outer darkness and a fiery furnace. Because we believe in a gracious God who desires all to be saved, we pray in the Lord's Prayer for His kingdom to come—that God would grant us faith to believe in the gospel and thus be saved.

The fourth *Fundamental Principle* of the AFLC recognizes the need for the kingdom to come when it states, "Members of the organized congregation are not, in every instance, believers, and such members often derive false hope from their external connection with the congregation. It is therefore the sacred obligation of the congregation to purify itself by the quickening preaching of the Word of God, by earnest admonition and exhortation, and by expelling the openly sinful and perverse."

Both our *Fundamental Principles* and *Luther's Small Catechism* remind us that the primary means of grace, the channel by which God's kingdom comes, is God's Holy Word. Therefore, wherever God's Word is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit has opportunity to give the hearers grace to believe.

One of the great tools we have to facilitate the preaching of God's Word is the Association Retreat Center. Thousands of people, representing dozens of people groups, use the ARC every year to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life in order to hear God's Word proclaimed. This facility is maintained and operated because many of God's people give of their time, talent and treasure to support the ministry of the ARC.

Anderson, a member of the ARC Corporation, serves Alida and Rice Lutheran churches near Bagley, Minn.