



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

June 28, 1994



Facing
the challenges
of
family life

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

June 28, 1994 • Vol. 32, No. 13

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

is published biweekly (except for the first issue of July and the first issue of August) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

CONTENTS

My dad's most powerful sermon	p. 3
Being a brother to a prodigal	p. 4
Giving a godly heritage	p. 5
Helping children feel loved by God and others	p. 6
"Honor thy father and mother" doesn't have an age limit	p. 7

Subscriptions: \$15.00 year, U. S.
\$18.00 year, International

Write to:

The Lutheran Ambassador
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Send all communications concerning this magazine to: Solveig Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor, Box 423, Faith, South Dakota 57626. Phone (605) 967-2381. Fax (605) 967-2382.

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota, and additional mailing office.

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

Rev. Craig Johnson, Editor
Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor

Editorial Board:

Rev. John Mundfrom
Dr. Craig Jennings
Mrs. Oryen Benrud

Light on the Way

Raising Cain

I was thinking about the first family and their problems — no, not the Clintons or the royal family in England. They do have their family problems, but I was thinking about the very first family; Adam and Eve and their boys. While thinking about them, it struck me, "They raised Cain!" Yes, I had heard the expression before and had used it myself in conversation, but it never dawned on me where it had come from. I was not really sure if it was spelled "cane" or "Cain." Since this idiomatic expression had a biblical origin, I opted for "Cain." I went to a dictionary and there it was: "To raise Cain — to create an angry fuss (after Cain, in the Bible)."

The first family's problem was indeed more than "an angry fuss." Genesis 3 is perhaps the saddest chapter in the Bible followed by the profoundly tragic fourth chapter. It made me literally cry as I thought about it. Here we have it: Mom and Dad and their very first baby, a boy whom they named Cain. Then their second baby, also a son, Abel. Behold, what a family mess! They raised Cain — a murderer! They raised Abel — a martyr. Yes, I believe Abel died because of his faith. But before Cain killed Abel there must have been a lot of division in that household stemming from anger, bitterness and hatred. There was no coming together in prayer; no forgiveness.

Surely Adam and Eve were believers. True, they had sinned, but they were restored, forgiven and clothed. They were clothed in skins, quite likely in the skins of a slain lamb, God from the beginning demonstrated that salvation would come by the sacrifice of a very special Lamb. Now if Adam and Eve were

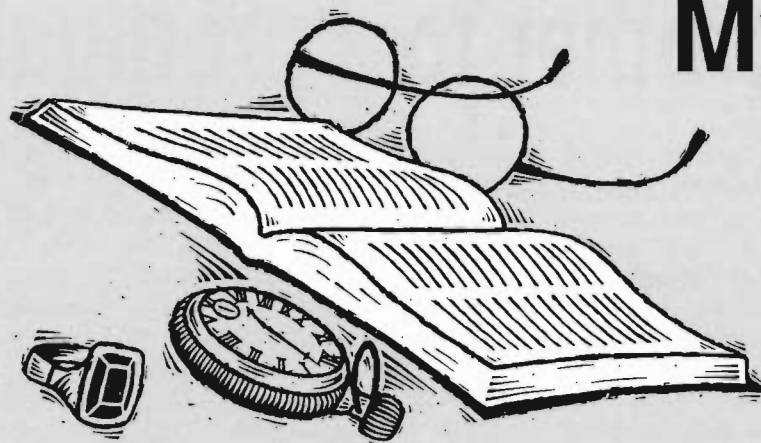
saved, then why did their first child turn out the way he did? Did they not teach him about God's wonderful promise and plan of salvation? Did they not tell him of God's goodness? Did Cain not understand what had happened to his parents in the Garden and the devil's subtleties and his lies?

Did Adam and Eve fail to use the rod (the cane) on Cain? Perhaps they failed to show him enough love and affection? I am sure Adam and Eve must have cried out: "O God, we deserve punishment for our sins, but why, oh why, God, this? Why did you give us Cain?"

Eve had said when Cain was born, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man." Later when Seth was born, she said, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." In spite of her heartbreak, Eve relied on God, trusted Him and was thankful. God mercifully granted Adam and Eve a new family, a different kind of family than Cain and his offspring. Their son, Seth, began a family of worshippers.

Why do some children in Christian families turn out right and others not? Why are there Cains, Abels and Seths in the same family? Surely the Bible teaches that we, as Christian parents have certain responsibilities, and likewise children must respond to their parents and to God. This is most certain: those parents whose children are true Christians dare never boast in their own goodness or abilities. All of us together — those Christian families with Cains and those without — must trust in God's sovereign purposes, rest in God's forgiveness and glory in God's grace!

— by Odell Kittelson



My dad's most powerful sermon

"It was about putting God first"

My Dad's most memorable, most powerful sermon of 1967 still sticks with me. It was about putting God first, about the priority of a daily time of intimacy with God — what some people call their devotions. Dad had undoubtedly preached sermons on lots of other topics in 1967, such as tithing, the inspiration of Scripture, consecration, prayer. But I don't remember any of those other sermons from 1967.

Dad didn't preach this sermon in a pulpit. In fact, it wasn't even in a church building.

That summer, Dad and Mom rented a pickup camper, loaded up five of us boys, and drove to the World's Fair "Explo '67," in Montreal, Canada. They reserved a spot in an RV park so they could drive into Montreal every morning for a week.

Each morning all seven of us would wake up (inevitably more or less simultaneously), then dress, eat, and finally roll into Montreal. Oh boy, the World's Fair! This is what we boys assumed would be the schedule. But Dad had an extra element in his schedule.

With seven of us squeezed into the pickup camper, there was no way for Dad to wake up ahead of us and have his private time with God, reading his well-worn Bible and praying. When he got up, we **all** got up, too, of course. We boys dressed quickly and were ready for some food, **now**. We wolfed it down, then we were ready to roll to the World's Fair. We had traveled two days and hundreds of miles for this.

But Dad wasn't ready to roll, yet. He hadn't had his time with God. He'd had his stomach's food, but not his soul's. So, with five antsy boys waiting, Dad took out his Bible. I don't remember how long the delay actually was; it seemed about ten hours. Ten hours to notice Dad's priorities. The next day, the same sort of circus: boys tumbling over each other to get dressed, eat and roll, **now**. Again, we delayed our morning departure to the World's Fair and waited for Dad's time alone with God. And the next day.

And that was Dad's most memorable sermon of 1967. Not in a church building. Not in a pulpit. Not even a sermon of words, really — but a sermon of deeds.

This Father's Day, I want to say "thank you, Dad" for that sermon in 1967, and all the times you've preached it since! (Good sermons are always worth repeating.)

And on this Father's Day, June 19, as I am having a frantic day returning from the U.S.A. to Ethiopia, changing planes, wrestling with baggage, shuffling passports, I hope I can preach the same sermon to my kids.

— Pete Unseth
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Being a brother to a prodigal

Question:
How can I, as a Christian, relate to my brother or sister who has wandered from the faith?

I confess ... I don't always "practice what I preach." It's easy to tell people to reach out to unsaved family members in the name of Christ. But how to go about it? That's another story! Of course, it doesn't pay to argue. To win an argument is not the way to win a soul. Everybody knows that, right?

Wrong! During my college days, I found myself assuming the role of a spiritual life-guard, scolding my older brother for straying into the deep water rather than tossing him the life buoy. I assumed that if I could just straighten out his theology, everything else would fall into place. It's not always that simple.

The lesson in all of this: *Our rope of concern for a backslidden or erring brother or sister must be accompanied by the life buoy of a right spirit if we hope to rescue them.* In other words, the way in which we approach people makes a world of difference.

What doesn't work

A "preachy" argumentative spirit seems to be a primary pitfall of many a willing witness. At least that's true for me. It can happen when the friendly neighborhood cult member knocks at your door; or when you attempt to reach out to help a family member who has slipped. One mother confided to me concerning her son that "it never paid to argue with him." A daughter confessed that the way she quoted Scripture to her mother didn't help.

We should know better. Yet we find ourselves confronting one we love with harshness or an argumentative spirit. One can only lament with the apostle Paul: "... the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish" (Romans 7:18-19; NASB).

Beware lest your zeal drive a wedge between you and your brother or between him and the Lord. Don't let your good intentions become the devil's tool.

What does work

My own personal interview survey yielded an array of helpful suggestions. Several emphasized the need to show love and con-

cern for an unsaved brother or sister by one's actions. Be a true friend to them. Love them unconditionally regardless of their response.

Love also implies honesty. Avoiding the issue is not the loving thing to do. One pastor felt that a time of confrontation is needed, where one can say what is on his heart. Then, continue to pray and show interest in the things which interest them. "Make the most of fishing and hunting trips — your time together," he added. But allow them to initiate conversation about spiritual things.

A young man echoed the need for personal interest: "Value and use the common interests you do have. Make the most of these things." Not a bad reminder! Build bridges, not walls. Earn the right to be heard.

Let's be practical

Do you have a pen handy? A personal letter is an effective (yet often overlooked) communication tool. Maybe you have difficulty expressing your feelings verbally. A letter allows you to prayerfully express your concern, carefully choosing your words.

How about gifts? Christian tapes or videos convey a message in a non-threatening way. Or why not invite a niece or nephew (or grandchild) to Bible camp? Offer to pay their way. Include them in opportunities which will open spiritual doors for them.

Let's apply God's principles

1. Discard an argumentative, nagging approach. Peter instructs Christian wives to live in such a way that their unsaved husbands "may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior" (I Peter 3:1, 2). In other words, realize that you can harden people toward Christ by a hounding, argumentative spirit.

2. Demonstrate a spirit of gentleness and love. Galatians 6:1 calls upon those who are spiritual to "restore" one who has fallen "in a spirit of gentleness." Like a doctor who is about to set a broken bone — do it with gentleness and understanding. The Bible

When the Apostle Paul wrote his second letter to his "beloved child," Timothy, he made an interesting observation. He said: "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice, and now, I am sure, dwells in you."

There are many godly, wholesome influences that grandparents pass on to their grandchildren. Some of those are virtues such as love, caring, patience, trust, forgiveness and wisdom. Grandparents may not always realize the legacy of virtues to be emulated, but it does happen quietly and without fanfare.

Following are some responses from grandchildren, grades 2-8, when asked to share their impressions about their grandparents. Some of these grandchildren live close to their grandparents and others live hundreds of miles away.

David: When I think of grandparents I think of love. You always feel welcome and secure when they're around.

Andy: My grandpa is important to me because he loves me. He reads me stories from the Bible.

Sarah: My grandparents are very special to me for many reasons. They're fun to be around and talk to. They take us places, they understand many of the things

Giving a godly heritage

I'm going through. They laugh at my mistakes and don't scold often. My grandma's house always seems to smell like a bakery. She has taught me how to cook certain things. They both like to play games and they are always patient with me. My grandpas like to show me things and talk about life. Sometimes I find it boring but I know I should take their advice.

Luke: Grandmas are soft and loving. They're the kind that would tuck you in with a warm kiss and would only spank you with a pillow. She can tell you lots of things about the world today.

Serene: Having God-loving grandparents throughout my

childhood has definitely been very special to me. They have always set a good example for me and encouraged me to be the best Christian that I can be. They have showed their faith in God through love, kindness, and generosity towards others. I have always tried to follow their examples. Their love for God has certainly helped me in making decisions in my life. It will leave an imprint on my life that I will carry on into adulthood.

Katherine: My grandparents are important to me because they taught me how to fish and they show they love me. They also care for me. And best of all they are them.

Rachel: Whenever I'm with them, I get the feeling that they are there to share things with me.

Erika: My grandparents always make each time we spend with them a memorable one. Talking with them and as my G'ma would say, "discussing," is something they don't mind doing with me. They are also patient with me. No matter what they are teaching me, they are patient.

Maybe we can learn something from these grandchildren!

— by Rev. Walter G. Johnson
First Lutheran
Camarillo, California



says, "A soft answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1).

3. Devote yourself to the ministry of prayer (Colossians 4:2). Do you really believe that the work of the Spirit of God is the key to opening the heart of your unsaved loved one? Then talk to God in earnest on their behalf. Even if you don't know what else to do or say, you can pray. Pray no matter how dim things might look. Pray for a right spirit. Pray that God would guide others across your loved one's path to reach out to them.

4. Don't ever give up or quit caring. Remember, a soul is at stake! Take to heart the encouragement we find in James

5 (NASB): "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much ... My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins."

Believer, don't give up on the "prodigal" in your life. Let God use you, imperfect as you are. When D.L. Moody was criticized for his methods, he admitted: "I don't like them too much, myself. What method do you use?" When the critic said that he used none, Moody replied, "Well, I think I like the way I do it better than the way you don't."



— Rev. Jerry Moan
Bethel Lutheran
Minot, North Dakota

Helping children feel loved by God and others

How to help children know and feel love from God and others is one of the most difficult but significant tasks in parenting. Our children need to understand that they have a purpose and are of great worth even when the world's standards would tell them otherwise. Our children need to feel the warmth of the unconditional love that we desire to give as parents. This is only truly demonstrated in the perfect example of the love of Jesus.

Oswald Chambers wrote: "There is only one Being who loves perfectly, and that is God. Yet the New Testament distinctly states that we are to love as God does, so the first step is obvious. If ever we are going to have perfect love in our hearts we must have the very nature of God in us."

This is where we, as parents, must start. As our lives show the importance of knowing God's Word, attending worship services and fellowship in the company of the Lord, then we can teach our children. Only as our spiritual priorities are in order can we expect our children to share them with us. Many parents allow their children to choose whether or not they will attend Sunday School, church or the youth group. This does not signal a sense of value but rather gives the message that our children are not worthy to receive the supreme love and acceptance of the heavenly Father.

"These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in the house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up."

***Deuteronomy
6:6, 7***

A daily devotional time is crucial to developing an understanding of God's love in the hearts and minds of our children. Routine situations throughout the day often provide opportunities to discuss God's Word. It is the parents' and primarily the father's responsibility to point out through God's Word that each child is deeply loved and valued by God. The Bible creates beautiful word pictures for children to grasp. Think of Jesus holding children in His arms (Mark 10:16). Isaiah 40:11 paints this picture: "He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart." Psalm 139 reassures children that God knew them even when they were in their mother's womb.

We all desire homes where children are loved, secure, and free from conflict or

negative experiences. We seek places where all the "life isn't fair" situations can be dealt with and resolved in an atmosphere of perfect harmony. This ideal home is perhaps more accurately described as a place where Christ's love is experienced daily. This love can do more to pull together the pieces of our lives than any human effort or desire. We show His love by respecting each person in the home. As we do that, we can respond to the hurts of one another, pray for each other, and have a genuine interest in each other's activities. With respect, individual gifts, talents and interests are recognized in a positive way.

Our public school system often teaches that evolution is law, that we evolved from nothing and our existence is an accident. This degrades children and causes them to doubt their self worth. They do not learn that a Divine God has a plan for their lives. Young people need adults that are fair, kind, loving and have expectations high enough to encourage and challenge each child.

Our society, and even the church at times, is obsessed with superstar performance. We place a high value on the successful, rich and talented. We need to remind our children they are each a very precious gift from God. After years of separation, Esau met Jacob and saw the women and children. "Who are these with you?" he asks. Jacob answers, "The children who God has graciously given his servant" (Genesis 33:5). When we realize that our children are a gift from God, made in His image, possessing an eternal soul fit for nourishment by God Himself, our attitude and conduct towards them will be affected.

In his book, *How to Raise Your Children for Christ*, Andrew Murray writes: "Parents, God's Word is your child's heritage from the Father in heaven. You are commissioned to lead them into the knowledge and the love and the possession of its treasures. Make it a matter of earnest prayer that you may wisely and rightly do it. Let that word dwell richly in you in all wisdom."

— by Rev. Jim and Jane Rasmussen
Victory and Grace
Free Lutheran Parish
Park River, North Dakota

How do I say thanks for the things you have done for me?" are familiar words from a song written by Andre Crouch. I humbly express those words to my parents and in-laws. The love they have given me cannot be repaid, just passed on from generation to generation.

I find myself in the "sandwich generation," being in the middle of concerns with the needs of our young adult children on one hand and our elderly parents on the other. How do we show special care and love to our parents as they encounter changes and new limitations in daily living? Not only are they having to adjust, but the children also are having to learn as together we travel on this new path.

Aware of the needs

To make these years as meaningful as possible, there must be a growing awareness that our elderly loved ones are becoming increasingly vulnerable. Give generously the love and security they are needing in their weaknesses and fears. Do so with respect, treating them as adults moving into a new chapter of life. Encourage contact with others and the outside world to keep them vital and alert, rather than apathetic and withdrawing.

In our desire to help, we often try to do too much. We need wisdom to know when to let them meet challenges and do for themselves. Part of their transition is to acknowledge losses and deal with them. Someone said, "Their dignity lies in struggling well, not in avoiding the struggle."

Caring may also involve loving through practical ways: seeing that meals are adequate and nutritious, personal hygiene maintained, washing and cleaning kept up. These things, along with frequent phone calls to check on them are only a few of the ways to express love. It is always the time to be bountiful with visits, hugs and a listening ear.

"But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" 1 Timothy 5:4, 8.

"Honor thy father and mother" doesn't have an age limit

Family can provide good fellowship and happy laughter while protecting their need for quiet and solitude. As age increases, routine in daily habits and schedules provides a sense of stability.

A difficult subject to discuss is the future and options available. Investigate possibilities of future care before a crisis. They will have to weigh the various options that best meet their needs. Research the available social services.

Aware of the privilege

With the eruption of the self-centered generation of the '90s, too many lives are crammed with secondary things. Children are losing touch with their parents and the elderly. Time and care spent in reaching out to our parents often gets lost in the tyranny of our schedules. Scripture shows that we are to have a completely different attitude; providing love and care may even include sacrifice. The Fourth Commandment is a positive command to honor, respect and prize our parents highly. We cannot change the prevailing lifestyle around us but we can be transparent in our lives and attitudes as we allow the love of Christ to flow through us.

Our parents are the roots of our lives. They have given us our heritage and foundation. As middle-aged parents, we are building a "root system" for our children to pass on the heritage. Shakespeare said, "Sharper than a serpent's tooth is a thankless child." May our lives demonstrate gratefulness for the wisdom and value of the older generation so that the loving chain of gratitude may be continued.

In the different stages of life, family relationships often grow stronger. Even in the midst of tensions, we learn to bear each other's burdens. In *Moody* magazine, I read this statement: "a wise doctor gave this advice: 'You can provide for your parents' comfort, but not for their happiness. You cannot control their state of mind or their responses, only your own.'" Knowing this frees us to love unconditionally. To love and honor our parents — what a privilege! What a ministry!

— by Barbara Skeie
Medicine Lake
Lutheran
Plymouth,
Minnesota

Reading, children, parents, God's Word — how these go hand in hand! Many of us could testify, "Some of my most precious moments have been snuggled up with a good book in one hand and a child in the other." As a mother of four and an avid reader myself, I am delighted and challenged to discover good books with our children.

We hear the phrase, "Reading is the key to take you where you want to be." That is, of course, within the framework of Jesus Christ being the book cover, "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 21:6). God speaks to us in a variety of creative avenues. His Word being the number one way, we need to instill in our children, grandchildren, our neighborhood children, the joy of reading the Bible!

In our home we have spent the past 11 years encouraging reading by playing the alphabet game while traveling, frequent trips to the library, older siblings reading to the little ones, copying the school's D.E.A.R. time after lunch (Drop Everything And Read), and getting into the habit of reading before bed. How relaxing! We also have a devotional time before the school bus comes and take turns reading the Scripture verse, reading from Child Evangelism Fellowship's *Daily Bread for Children*, and prayer. This may sound rather scheduled, but there really is much flexibility in our home.

We have a variety of literature in our home. One must be careful what is brought in from the outside. Be choosy. Preview the best you can. Here are a few books or series that have graced our home over the years:

- The Happy Day Book Series; various topics, great illustrations, easy for the beginning reader.
- The Little Golden Book Series: includes biblical stories, classics; some are educational and some are not appropriate because of content.
- Alice in Bibleland Series;

Raising a reader



poetic in form, Old and New Testament stories.

- Precious Moments Series; great character qualities and pictures.

• Children's Bible and Devotionals; a great variety is available. Most have good pictures, are easy to read and some have questions for thought. *My Little Bible* is our Jessica's favorite especially when we know a song to go with the story. Also, she needs her Bible for Sunday School just like the older ones. Your family has its special Bible version; ours being the New International Version and the New King James Version.

- Dr. Seuss books.
- Beatrix Potter books.
- Mandie Series; (4th-6th) pioneer life with biblical insights.
- Ladd Family Adventure Series.
- The Ten Commandments Mystery Series.
- Elizabeth Gail Series.
- Boxcar Children Series; (I have not read all of them) they portray good character qualities

and are a real favorite.

- C.S. Lewis, *Chronicles of Narnia*; fantasy, includes biblical insights.
- Andy Ant Series; appeals to our first grader, superb character building situations.
- Agapeland books; biblical insights, fun story lines and tapes and songs to learn from.

As I look over this short list I see money invested. But it really

"If you want your children to turn out well, spend twice as much time with them, and half as much money."

— unknown

does not have to take a big budget; be creative. Give books as gifts. Use your local libraries, and ask your public librarian for a book or series. You might be surprised what your request will do especially if you come with addresses and catalogues. Use and build up your church library and exchange books with other families in church. Last summer Focus on the Family sponsored a summer reading program where several of our Sunday School children received free books and T-shirts for their accomplishments.

Here are a few addresses from which you may receive free catalogues to browse through. You never know what you might discover!

-
- Christian Book Distributors
P.O. Box 6000
Peabody, MA 01961-6000
 - Melton Book Company
P.O. Box 140990
Nashville, TN 37214-0990
 - Christian Book Bargains
P.O. Box 1009
Dover, OH 44622
 - Focus on the Family
P.O. Box 35500
Colorado Springs, CO 80935-3550
-

Show your children how important books are by letting them see you reading and enjoying it! Share a book review with them, explain your values and the book's approach to the story line. Discuss how God's Word gives understanding and is our guide. Ask questions about the books your older children are reading. As with every aspect of our lives, remember to pray for your children's reading situations, their book choices and for God's Word to become engraved in their hearts and minds. Happy reading this summer and always!

— Julie McCarlson
Tabor Lutheran Church
Webster, South Dakota

He smiled at me

Luther's *Small Catechism* says, concerning baptism, "*Water by itself is only water, but with the Word of God it is a life-giving water which by grace gives the new birth through the Holy Spirit.*" On March 23 something special happened in the sanctuary of Triumph Lutheran Church that helped confirm the validity of those words. I realize it will never be recorded in an immense volume of a dogmatic book, but on that day something personal happened to me, and I want to share it with you.

I had scheduled a private baptism for two boys, aged 11 years and 22 months. They arrived with their mother, grandparents, and sponsors on time, and we walked into the sanctuary. I explained to them what we would be doing and asked if they had any questions. I shared John 3:16 with them and briefly explained what it meant to live a Christian life.

First I baptized the older boy. While I was baptizing him, the younger boy felt free to run around and explore the sanctuary. He was a healthy and normal toddler — he didn't like to sit still. Then it came time to baptize him. His mother picked him up and carried him to the baptismal fount. He was squirming and yelling, and it was evident he wanted to be set down. But his mother had a firm grip on him. He wiggled and fussed as I asked his moth-

er, "Do you promise to instruct this child in the Word of God, and to nurture him in the chastening and admonition of the Lord?" He continued to struggle as I prayed, "Receive the sign of the cross upon your brow and upon your breast as a token that you shall believe in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ." I wasn't sure we were going to make it!

Then it came time to baptize. His mother finally held him over the water in the fount with his face pointed down instead of up towards me. "Tevin Arnold Overland, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." As the water touched his head, he stopped squirming. I laid my hand on his head and prayed, "Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has made you His child in Holy Baptism, and has received you into His believing Church, strengthen you with His grace unto life everlasting. Amen." While I was praying, Tevin reached down with one hand and stirred the water, and then it happened! He lifted his head up, water dripping from his nose and chin, and *he smiled at me*. He was a new child, born of the Spirit and water. God had done a marvelous work, and I was allowed to see it take place.

— Rev. Joel Lohafer
Triumph Lutheran Church
Ferndale, Washington

Obituaries

Agna Helland, 93, of Willmar, Minnesota, passed away on February 16, 1994.

She was born on March 23, 1890, to Clara and Peer Storeyard at Walnut Grove, Minnesota. On June 5, 1926, she married Rev. Jonas Helland. They served Lutheran Free Church parishes in Lansford, North Dakota; Hawley, Minnesota; Carpio, North Dakota; Calvary in Everett, Washington; Satersdal parish in Thief River Falls, Minnesota; Ny Stavanger, Buxton, North Dakota; and as interim pastor at Crow Lake and Sunburg in Broton, Minnesota. Agna was active in the congregations as an organist, choir member and a Sunday School teacher. She worked as a nurse in Thief River Falls and Hillsboro, North Dakota.

She was preceded in death by her husband on July 30, 1979.

Funeral services were held on February 18, with Rev. Henry Johansen officiating.

Agna is lovingly remembered by her daughter, Rachel, of Willmar, and one brother and sister.

Dr. Morris Watkins, 70, the founder of Lutheran Bible Translators and a well-known authority

on world missions, passed away on May 19, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He leaves behind his wife, Lois, three daughters and four sons.

Morris and Lois Watkins served as missionaries in Nigeria for six years. They were forced to return to the U.S. in 1964 after a tropical epidemic took the life of their youngest child, Mary Ann, and nearly killed two of their other children. They returned home with an ongoing passion for overseas gospel ministry, especially ministry conducted in the heart languages of people groups overseas. Within months of their return to the U.S. they started Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT), a group devoted to helping people receive Scripture printed in their own language.

In 1972 he left LBT to help start All Nations Literacy Movement, now known as All Nations Literature. According to Dr. Paul Muench, LBT's executive director: "It was 30 years ago this month that Dr. Watkins founded LBT in order to get Lutherans involved in the task of bringing Christ to Bibleless tribes. We rejoice that he has received his crown of righteousness, but we mourn the loss of this dedicated servant of the Lord."

AFLBS receives IMPACT funds

The Association Free Lutheran Bible School has recently received \$5,555 from Lutheran Brotherhood's IMPACT/IMPACT PLUS programs (Inviting Member Participation in Aiding Lutheran Colleges and Theological Seminaries). The latest payment covers 64 gifts of Lutheran Brotherhood members made during the first quarter of 1994.

The IMPACT/IMPACT PLUS programs match Lutheran Brotherhood members gifts of \$25 to \$100 per year to Lutheran institutions of higher education nationwide.

Since the beginning of the IMPACT matching gift program in 1979, \$166,348 in IMPACT/IMPACT PLUS funds has been received by the AFLBS. During that same period Lutheran Brotherhood has allocated more than \$19.6 million on behalf of the 69 participating Lutheran colleges and seminaries.

Lutheran Brotherhood is a fraternal benefit society with headquarters in Minneapolis. It provides insurance and other financial and fraternal benefits to nearly one million nationwide.

Mitchell, South Dakota — Over 100 youth and adult chaperones met at the Mitchell Holiday Inn for a South Dakota District Youth Weekend on April 9-10. Segments of Dr. James Dobson's video series "Life on the Edge" were shown. Recreation time included the facilities of the Holiday Inn Holidome and a lock-in at the Mitchell Recreation Center. Rev. Tim Hurley, Bruce, was the speaker at the Sunday morning service. Pastors Mike Brandt and Wes Johanson coordinated the weekend.



Fairbury, Nebraska — On Saturday, April 30, Faith Lutheran hosted the Nebraska-Kansas district Youth Lock-In. The theme was: "Walking the Walk, Living the Life." The feature was a mock trial to determine whether Jesus is God. The Gospel team *Life Light* from AFLBS in Minneapolis joined the 24 youth who are pictured above.

Comfort one another

A friend's husband leaves her for another woman. A sixteen year old is diagnosed with leukemia. Whatever the circumstance, we lament, "What do I say to them?" This is the question we ponder as we try to minister to those who are hurting. There is an answer in the Word. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our afflictions, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

Let us briefly examine what comforting is not. It is not expressing our views or opinions about the circumstances of another. Scripture is instructing us to share and minister the comfort we received from our heavenly Father in our trials. Sharing particular verses or passages of Scripture that have touched us can be powerful tools used by the Holy Spirit to uplift a hurting soul.

If we are unable to share from our struggles, there are other ways to minister. It is important to just be ourselves around those who are hurting. They need us to fill the place that we normally have in their lives. To avoid or shun a person because of our inadequacies is not the course for us to follow. We can also avail ourselves to prayer which lifts our loved ones to the heavenly throne of God's grace and mercy.

It is important to note that we will at times fumble in our attempts to do and say the right thing. Do not be dismayed for God uses them as beautiful opportunities to extend and accept forgiveness from one another. Now that is comfort — and shares much about what our Christian walk is all about.

— *Leslie Schmidt*
Christ Lutheran
Savannah, Georgia



Pipestone, Minnesota — Pictured is Barb Hubner (center) receiving an honorary membership pin from Chris: the King WMF. Barb is preparing the 1997 Bible study for the National WMF. Also pictured is Lorraine Johnson (left) and Jeanette Larson.



Shevlin, Minnesota — Landstad Free Lutheran recently held their Cradle Roll program honoring children of the Loren Julin and Arlen Larson families. Pictured with these families are (center) Rev. Bill Goodman and Cradle Roll secretary, Sharon Knutson.

Womens Mission Federation Spring Rallies

Illinois District WMF Rally was held April 16, at Helmar Lutheran near Newark. The theme for the rally was "Life with a Purpose." Linda Korhonen, Cokato, Minnesota, past president of the National WMF was the guest speaker. During the afternoon session, she showed slides from a family trip to visit the Dan Giles family in Mexico. With 125 in attendance, this was the largest WMF rally in the Illinois District since joining the AFLC.

Eastern North Dakota WMF held their spring rally at Bethel Free Lutheran in Grafton. II Chronicles 7:14 provided the theme: "If My People ..." Missionary candidate David Nelson was the guest speaker.

West Coast District WMF held their rally at Triumph Lutheran in Ferndale, Washington. The theme was: "Let Us Assemble Together for Renewal," from Hebrews 10:25. The morning speaker was Jeannie Borgen, Sumas, Washington, and Rev. David Hinrichs of Everett spoke in the afternoon.

letters to the editor

To the Editor:

He was one of the first to come through the doors. He was young, probably 12, maybe 13. He did not have to say a word. His face said it all. Just a few minutes earlier, Jimmy (not his real name) realized he was a sinner, bound not for heaven, but for hell. He now knew of his need for the Savior and he wanted to grab on. He thought the call came from the guest speaker. His reddened eyes, still moist from the tears of truth, confirmed answers his mouth confessed.

"Jimmy, do you know you are a sinner?"

"Yes."

"Jimmy, do you want to claim Christ as your Savior?"

"Yes."

How beautiful it is to witness one coming to Christ. How pure. How simple. How uncluttered the way of salvation is. No need for deep theological questions to ponder. No need for formalities. Just a submissive heart and a healing Savior. For Jimmy it happened between slam-dunking a basketball and eating pizza. And while we might be occupied with the issue of prevenient grace, the mechanics of how he was saved; the angels, well, they are having a

ball. "Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10).

In a recent issue of the *Ambassador*, I saw a suggestion to brush up theologically on the issue of prevenient grace. Brothers and sisters in Christ, are we to take issue with one another over that which we have no effect? Should we not be like the blind man healed by Christ; the man who was thrust into defending the very nature of Christ in a theological debate with the Pharisees? Consider the simple argument God provided the man to defend His Son: "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: though I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).

I am like the thief nailed to the cross beside Christ. I have stolen much from God. Mostly what I have stolen is time; time wasted while lost. What did God do? He gave me His Son. He gave me freedom. He gave me more time. Unlike the thief, He has granted me a longer stay of time between accepting Him and physical death. To do what? "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations."

Pete Ward
Zumbrota, Minnesota

To the Editor:

Thank you folks for picking as your conference theme the words: "Stand Firm in the Faith." May God bless you all as you spread the message far and wide. The devil is hard at work, harder than ever.

Thank you for the *Ambassador* and calling out to as many as you can reach with the message of the gospel. I grew up in the Lutheran Free Church and I praise God for the work you are doing; spreading the Word of hope and salvation far and wide.

Pastor Lawrence Rasmussen
Whitewater, Wisconsin

To the Editor:

With this letter I hope to help some, perhaps new Christians, find some contemporary Christian music that may appeal to their taste. I know I had a real struggle finding Christian music that I liked for many years after becoming a Christian.

How can I help some new Christians find contemporary Christian music that appeals to them? Well, I've found an interesting relationship: people who enjoyed the so-called "classic" rock artists such as Kansas, Led Zepelin, Bob Dylan, Neil Young and

New column writers

With this issue a new contributor to the Light on the Way column begins his service, former missionary to Bolivia, Mr. Odell Kittelson. We are very thankful for the writer of this column for the past six months, Rev Jerry Holmaas of Chassell, Michigan. We are also appreciative of the contributions of Rev. Jim Ritter of Bloomington, Minnesota who shares his final Last Word column with us this issue. Rev. Todd Olson of Pipestone, Minnesota will begin sharing in that space in our next issue.

Paul McCartney, tend to enjoy certain Christian artists.

Who are these Christian artists? Here they are with, in my opinion, some of their best works and approximately the year each recording came out:

- Larry Norman: *Only Visiting This Planet*, 1972; *In Another Land*, 1975; *Home at Last*, 1989.

- Phil Keaggy: *Find Me in These Fields*, 1990; *Crimson and Blue*, 1993; *Way Back Home*, 1986.

- Mark Heard: *Eye of the Storm*, 1983; *Second Hand*, 1990.

- Keith Green: *For Him Who Has Ears to Hear*, 1977; *No Compromise*, 1978; *Songs for the Shepherd*, 1982.

- Randy Stonehill: *Welcome to Paradise*, 1976.

- AD (with Kerry Livgren): *Art of the State*, 1985.

Note that some of the titles are difficult to find because either they may be out of print or many Christian book stores simply do not normally carry them.

Andrew G. Webster
Great Falls, Montana

Light on the Way writer Odell and Margaret Kittelson served as missionaries to Bolivia, South America with the World Mission Prayer League for more than 25 years. In 1978, Odell founded Cup of Cold Water Ministries, an organization dedicated to proclaiming the gospel and providing loving service to a needy world at home and abroad. He has ministered in Bible schools, radio outreach and the pastorate. Their two sons are in Bolivia and their two daughters are in the United States. They have eight grandchildren. The Kittelsons are members of Helmar Lutheran Church, rural Newark, Illinois.

Deshler, Nebraska — Seminarian Randy Nelson has accepted a call to serve Abiding Word Lutheran through the summer as their interim pastor beginning June 1, following the completion of his internship in that parish.

Lutherans for Evangelism — a servant of the church. In 1937 God laid it on the heart of an Augustana Lutheran pastor, Evald J. Conrad, to be concerned about evangelism with his church fellowship. Like-minded pastors began to serve as a resource for local pastors and congregations. In 1945 the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement was officially incorporated.

Today we have a new name — Lutherans for Evangelism. We do not desire so much to be a movement as a catalyst and resource. Our support base of individuals and congregations is found in the AALC, the AFLC, the CLB, the ELCA and the Missouri Synod.

Our focus has shifted slightly. Our main emphasis is on equipping individuals, both pastors and laity, to be about our God-given calling of evangelism. We offer training, helps and motiva-

AFLC - Canada holds 11th Annual Conference

The 11th Annual Conference of the AFLC-Canada was held April 8-10 at Living Word Lutheran Church in Vernon, British Columbia. The theme was: "Wake Up, Behold the Bridegroom Cometh" from Ephesians 5:14a and Matthew 25:6b.

The host church provided a memorable weekend with their hospitality and outstanding music. A large youth choir, a male chorus, a 13-member violin ensemble and an incredible violin and piano duet were some of the music gifts offered by the Living Word congregation.

Friday afternoon was filled with the WMF annual meeting and conference committee meetings. The opening service Friday evening was led by Pastor David Hesje with President Gene Sundby bringing the message. He shared that a good start does not mean a good ending. Baptism is a good

start, but it does not ensure a good ending. He encouraged us not to let our oil run out and to be ready for the return of the bridegroom. A communion service followed.

On Saturday morning, Evangelist Olaf Friggstad led the Bible study. At 10 a.m. the business sessions began with devotions by Pastor Collin Hauch. The conference elected Eric Jensen to the Coordinating Committee; Rev. Gerald Gettis, vice president; John Attwood, secretary; Carol Friggstad, Eric Jensen, Dan Kallevig, Pastors Kelly Henning and Collin Hauch to the Nominating Committee; and Pastors David Hesje and Collin Hausch, Ron Leis and Calvin Schindell to the Resolutions Committee. Olaf Friggstad was officially recognized as the Canadian evangelist for the AFLC. A paper on "The Holy Spirit" was presented for examination to be brought up again at the 1995 conference. Pastor Martin Christensen concluded the morning session with a time of sharing and prayer. The business sessions ended at 3:30 p.m. Saturday.

The Saturday evening banquet was hosted by Pastor Jim Winter. The evening service followed with Pastor Kelly Henning preaching on the conference theme. His title was the 4 Re's: Return, Responsible, Rejoice and Relevance. The Sunday worship service at Living Word was led by Pastor Gettis with Pastor Leslie Johnson bringing the message. He encouraged the Christian to be ready to meet the Bridegroom and said many people will go to heaven feet first because they are hanging on to the things of this world so tightly. The conference concluded with lunch.

Many of the conference delegates went to Salmon Arm for the evening where Pastor Kelly Henning was installed as the new pastor of Emmanuel Free Lutheran.

— Pastor David Hesje
Bethel Lutheran
Frontier, Saskatchewan

tion for developing a ministry of evangelism tailored to each local congregation that requests such help. We offer workshops, retreats and seminars for pastors and seminary students. We seek to be an encouragement to the pastor. We meet with church councils to discuss priorities in the ministry along with evangelism committees to brainstorm and develop specific plans. We offer workshops and retreats for training the laity in how to share their faith.

We have a colleague list of 25 pastors who will go out for us for special meetings on evangelism, renewal and growth. We seek to be a clearing house for like-minded Lutherans who are concerned about evangelism in the church at large.

Lutherans for Evangelism would like to be of service to you or your congregation. Write LFE, 2717 E. 42nd St., Minneapolis, MN 55406; phone 612-721-4804.

Rev. Gordon Graze of Dexter, Minnesota was removed from the clergy roster at his own request by action of the Coordinating Committee at their May meeting.

Rev. Robert Schemm of Columbia City, Indiana was accepted on the AFLC Fellowship Roster. He previously belonged to the Missouri Synod. He currently serves as pastor of St. Andrew Evangelical Lutheran Church, Churubusco, Indiana.

Victor Young, a 1994 seminary graduate, has accepted a call from Green Lake Lutheran, Spicer, Minnesota. He will begin his ministry there in July. He was ordained on June 12, at Faith Lutheran in London, Minnesota.

Rev. Edwin Iverson, pastor of Trinity Lutheran, Boscobel, Wisconsin, was placed on the regular clergy roster of the AFLC by action of the Coordinating Committee.

Michael Peterson has accepted the call to serve as pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Pleasanton, Texas. He is a graduate of the Free Lutheran Theological Seminary and recently completed an internship at the AFLC parish in Thief River Falls, Minnesota. He will begin serving in his new position in July.

Cloquet, Minnesota — St. Paul's Sunday School's mission project this year was taken from an idea shared in *The Lutheran Ambassador* by Bethel in Minot, North Dakota. St. Paul's children collected three-fourths of a mile of pennies to furnish a room or rooms in the AFLC Bible School girls' dorm in Brazil. The amount was \$635. The enthusiasm and interest of teachers and students rose through the year. Another blessing was that the regular Sunday School giving also increased.

The ARC Board has appointed **Bob and Carol Dietsche** interim directors of the Association Retreat Center (ARC), replacing Ken and Bev Hokkanen who left the position in May.

Rev. Joseph Schultz, Tulia, Texas, accepted a call from Abiding Word Lutheran, Deshler, Nebraska. Pastor Schultz, who has served Christ Evangelical Lutheran in Tulia since 1985, will begin his new ministry in August.

Rev. Gary Skramstad, Osakis, Minnesota, accepted a call from Granite Free Lutheran in St. Cloud, Minnesota, where he has been serving on a part-time basis. He and his family will continue to live in Osakis through the next school year.

Tim Hinrichs, a 1994 graduate of the Free Lutheran seminary has received a call from the AFLC World Missions to serve with the East European Missions new work. He expects to serve a congregation in Hungary.



Home Mission congregation dedicates building

On Sunday, March 20, St. John's Free Lutheran Church at 3701 West Arrowhead Road, Duluth, Minnesota, dedicated their 4,000 square foot facility. Approximately 170 people attended the 3 p.m. service. Home Missions Director Rev. Elden Nelson was the guest speaker. Other participants were Rev. Tony Stockman, Brandon, Minnesota; Pastor Don Norr, Proctor, Minnesota; and Mr. Cliff Johnson from nearby Esko.

The theme verse was "For the people had a mind to work" from Nehemiah 4:6. The members of the congregation did most of the work in building the new facility. After a days labor the ladies brought supper on site many times and the fellowship and growth together was fantastic.

Quoting the pastor, Rev. Steve Kneeland: "It's amazing what can get done when people strive towards the same goal! The people of St. John's have seen God's hand of provision throughout its existence. Throughout our ten-year history, God has been faithful."

The church is located on seven acres of beautiful property near the Duluth airport. Within two years of purchasing the property, the congregation paid for it. During that time, God brought new people into the fellowship who had gifts in carpentry and organization. God's provision for the completion of this project was obvious. Soon a steeple will go up. The summer project is the parking lot. All glory goes to the Lord!

If you are visiting the Duluth area, please worship with St.

Passionate, not just professional

I recently had the privilege of attending the Evangelical Press Association National Convention in California. Part of what made for a very encouraging and educational experience was the opportunity to hear some excellent Christian speakers. As I thought back on their messages I asked myself the question, what makes them so interesting to listen to? Why do they have such a powerful impact?

The speakers varied a great deal from one another in terms of style and areas of emphasis. They shared something in common, however, which helped to make each one effective. They each had a passion for the message they were sharing. It was displayed in different ways. Some had a rather forceful style while others would be described as soft-spoken. All of them, however, spoke from the heart. This was not just a job they had to do. They really believed what they were saying, and they wanted their audience to believe it too.

Joni Erickson Tada spoke on how life has value, even when the body is disabled and going through intense pain. Her heart for the subject is strong, while beating within a body paralyzed from the neck down. His experience of suffering much physical and verbal abuse, simply because he is black, has contributed to John Perkins' conviction that all Christians need to care about those in the inner-cities of this country, no matter what the color of their skin may be. Cal Thomas does not write his nationally syndicated column and speak about political, religious and moral issues because the pay is good. He believes these things are of vital importance to the future of our nation. Luis Palau travels throughout the world, telling people about Jesus, not because he enjoys the attention, but because, like the Apostle Paul, he is "compelled to preach" (I Corinthians 9:16). He is consumed with sharing the good news of the new life available in Christ.

You do not have to be a Christian very long to start becoming a "professional." We know how we are to act. We figure out how the game is played. We follow the rituals, we observe the traditions, we keep the routine. How quickly we can lose our first love (Revelation 2:4). We can start living the Christian life, doing our Christian service, out of habit instead of passion.

In I Corinthians 13 we read of the many things that people can have, but we are told that they are

all nothing without love. The Church in America has an incredible abundance of talent, technology, resources and knowledge available to it. Sadly, however, we often fall for the temptation of relying on those things and making them an idol that is worshiped, instead of a tool that is used. What is lost in the process is a passionate love for Christ.

Jesus is not primarily asking us today if we are competent, effective professionals in whatever area of service we have been called to in the body of Christ. He is asking us the question He asked Peter in John 21, "Do you love Me?"

Honest about the family

A crucial, but often neglected step in approaching family problems is to be honest. We probably all have our image of the perfect family, and ours doesn't match it. If you could get a glimpse inside the home of that seemingly perfect family in your congregation, you would see that they do not exactly meet the mark either. They have their struggles too. No parent has had all their kids turn out perfect. No child is thrilled with everything their parents have ever done. No one is in total agreement with every choice their brothers and sisters have ever made. Though we do not want to admit it, because our families are made up of people, our families are made up of sinners.

We must not place expectations on our families that are unrealistic. The early Christians recognized in Acts 15:10 they should not place on the other members of their church family a yoke that not even they could bear. This does not mean we excuse sin or lower standards. It means we are honest about ourselves, our relatives and our fellow Christians. We forgive them for being sinful human beings, and we do not expect them to be something other than that.

Another step of honesty we must make in regards to our family is admitting our limitations. As much as we would like to, we can't fix all of our loved ones' problems. We bring them before God, who can do so much more than we can. Our confidence and hope rests in Him and not ourselves.

God knows our families are not perfect, and neither are we. Still, He loves us. Still, He died on the cross for us. Still, He welcomes us into His family.

The Last Word

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Second-Class

What's so special about the Christian Faith?

If I were to ask you what you thought made the 1994 Winter Olympics so special, we might receive a variety of interesting answers. Some might conclude, "Well, we finally got to see the whole Nancy Kerrigan — Tonya Harding saga played out." Others would conclude it was Dan Jansen who, after four tries in Olympic competition, finally received his gold medal, or that Bonnie Blair set a woman's record of winning five gold medals in her Olympic career. Some might say it was the combination of all those things, all occurring in Lillehammer, Norway, that made the Olympics special!

What makes Christianity special? Is it all the wonderful and miraculous deeds that Christ did? Is it that the greatest event ever to take place occurred in Jerusalem at the garden tomb? Although one might argue that these events make Christianity special (and they do), what sets Christianity apart are the wonderful invitations that God extends to people like you and me. They are some very unique and special invitations not found in any religion except the Christian faith.

The first invitation which God extends to us is *fellowship* with God. I Corinthians 1:9 tells us, "God is faithful through whom you have been called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." The word *call* is a word which means to extend an invitation, to address or name someone. A loving God has extended an invitation of divine fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ. The almighty God of the universe wants to have a relationship with **you**. *God wants to be known!* That fact is unique and different from any other religion. Every other religion teaches about doing enough good things so that a god will hopefully accept you based on

your achievements, but this is foreign to the God of the Bible. In Luke 19:1-10, we have the story of Zaccheus who was out of fellowship with God; he needed Christ in his life. He was curious about Jesus Christ the day Christ came to Jericho. Jesus spotted Zaccheus in the sycamore tree and said to him, "Hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." Christ extended an invitation to Zaccheus and talked to him about his sin and need for a Savior. He responded to Christ's invitation of fellowship with God and Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house."

Another invitation God extends to us is a *ministry* that forever changes people's lives. When Jesus was just beginning His ministry, He invited some fishermen to help Him tell others about the joy of having a saving relationship with God through Christ. "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men," Jesus said. Jesus challenged these men to give their lives to something more than just a career or occupation. He extended an opportunity for them to have a part in changing people's lives for an eternity. God extends that same invitation to any believer in Jesus Christ today as well. If you have responded in a faithful way to God's first invitation of fellowship, He further calls you to tell other people about how they can have that same saving relationship with God as well.

The third and very special relationship that God extends to us is *friendship*. In John 15:15 He says, "... but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you." When you think of some of the stronger friendships you have acquired over the years, perhaps you have found as I have that your real friends are with you not only in good times, but in the painful, heartbreaking times as well. That is what is so special about friendship with Christ: He is with me in times of rejoicing, but He has also chosen to be a faithful Friend when the paths I am on are difficult, uncertain, and hazardous as well. It's in those difficult times when the Evil One will work overtime to persuade me that Christ doesn't care, or that He has left me; but I know that He hasn't. He remains faithful!

Have you responded to all the invitations God sends out? Have you RSVP'd? Christianity is unique from all other religions because God invites you to fellowship, ministry partnership and friendship for the long haul.



— by Rev.
Jim Ritter