


# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

FEBRUARY 2005

A young fern plant with delicate, feathery fronds is growing out of a dark, rectangular block of soil. The soil block is placed on a weathered wooden surface. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall mood is one of growth and new beginnings.

Evangelism's  
stories  
of life

**H**ave you ever heard of Herbert Brown? Neither had Robert Stewart, the great revivalist of the early 1900s. One night, after a series of revival meetings conducted in Newcastle, England, Brown came to the front of the meeting hall and announced the Lord was calling him to quit his paint business and co-labor with Pastor Stewart in evangelism. The first words from the pastor's mouth were, "No, you must be mistaken!" Herbert was hardly the sort of evangelism partner Pastor Stewart would pick; he suffered from a war wound that made him stutter severely. In addition, he had to pump his leg up and down in order to even stutter his words out. What would people think?

**The Bible teaches that we find victory over fears of inadequacy by looking to the cross and dying to self, dying to the praise of men, and surrendering our comforts.**

Pastor Stewart quickly realized, however, that Brown possessed a quality far more important than stage presence — he was surrendered. When he prayed, the Spirit moved, and when he shared the gospel, albeit haltingly, men and women responded.

Hearing testimonies like Brown's, I'm reminded that God *delights* in conducting His kingdom mission of spreading the gospel, not through the strong, but through the yielded (II Corinthians 4:7). My natural tendency is to "work for God to the limit of [my] incompetency, [rather] than to the limit of God's omnipotency," as missionary Hudson Taylor said.

When my friends and I plan a downtown witnessing adventure I feel bold and impassioned with the gospel. Then we arrive. I look at the menagerie of

people milling around and I'm flooded with an embarrassing tide of mental excuses to sit out. "I'm not educated enough to know all the answers; I'm not outgoing enough, not humorous enough, and my knees are knocking. People might yell at me, or worse yet, be turned off to Jesus. I need more training, practice, and time to prepare." Fear keeps me clutching tightly to self. How do we let go?

We must die. The Bible teaches that we find victory over fears of inadequacy by looking to the cross and dying to self, dying to the praise of men, and surrendering our comforts. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die" (I Corinthians 15:36). When we die the Holy Spirit spills His new life and light in us and through us (John 12:24). Look at nature — even a flower must drop its silky petals and fling back everything in order to scatter seeds of new life.

Dying to self is not natural or glamorous. Sometimes it means going out when I would rather stay put, or, like Herbert Brown, speaking the truth when it's more comfortable to be quiet. It may mean praying rather than playing, listening rather than talking, or putting my priorities aside in order to serve. The apostle Paul said, "I die daily ... for some have not the knowledge of God" (I Corinthians 15:31, 33).

Death precedes life. It is one of the most glorious kingdom miracles. Is there some opportunity for me to die to self today? Oh, that we would run to the old rugged cross and learn from Jesus what it means to die to self, so others might live.

— Christie Ballmann  
Word of Truth Free Lutheran  
Glen Rose, Texas

February 2005  
Volume 43, Number 2



## THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

**Editor** Pastor Craig Johnson  
craigj@teleport.com

**Managing Editor** Ruth Gunderson  
ruthg@afic.org

**Editorial Board** Pastor John Mundfrom  
Oryen Benrud  
Pastor Jerry Moan  
Pastor James L. Johnson

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

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

**Subscriptions rates:**  
\$15 a year, Group Rate, U. S.  
\$16 a year, Individual, U. S.  
\$18 a year, International  
Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, MN, and additional mailing office.

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

Most of the unchurched can easily tell the difference between “drive by” evangelism and a person who really cares.

— Twyla Fagan

**The ultimate goal of the church isn't to be successful. It is to be influential.**

— Robert Lewis

As strange as it may seem to a churchgoing Christian, the church intimidates the unchurched person. They do not think they can fit in a place they have never attended. And they are uncertain about church protocol. They just fear that they will feel out of place.

— Thom Rainer

Sometimes the problem is churches aren't willing to try new things. If we've been doing evangelism the same way for 20 years and people aren't coming to Christ, why do we keep beating our heads against the wall?

— Mark Mittelberg





# L HOOP DREAMS

**A**s a congregation located in a suburban area, we are always looking for ways to reach out to and become more visible in our growing community. One of the ideas for evangelism God gave us was a basketball camp.

Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran is located in Lakeville, Minn., one of the fastest-growing areas in the Twin Cities Metro. Boasting five professional sports teams and many highly competitive col-

**Pastor Todd Erickson** lege sports programs, the Twin

Cities is a sports Mecca of sorts. Our idea took root during March Madness 2004, when the University of Minnesota's women's Gopher basketball team went as far as the Final Four.

By April our plan to host a basketball camp in mid-July was in full bloom as God brought direction and the right people. We received a grant from Thrivent through AFLC Evangelism, and rented a 30-by-40 foot sport court. God also blessed us when Walter Bond, a former Minnesota Gopher and eight-year NBA basketball



player (Dallas Mavericks, Utah Jazz, and Detroit Pistons), agreed to be our special speaker.

We chose to narrow our field of youths down to 8- to 10-year-old boys, mainly because this was our first time and the size of court we had could accommodate a maximum of 20 youngsters this age. Also, we wanted to do a good job of teaching first-rate basketball skills. A one-square-mile area immediately surrounding the church was canvassed with fliers. Members took fliers to their own neighborhoods, as well. Included in the packet was an invitation to our vacation Bible school, which began the week following camp.

When the first day of camp arrived, God blessed us with 12 young campers and great weather. From 9 to 11:30 a.m. for the next five days the first Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Basketball Camp went off with a great time of learning basketball skills and getting to know some young guys and their families. The guys were excited to invite friends and family on the last day to hear an inspirational and motivational message by Bond. Some 70 people came to hear Bond share about “digging deeper” and about how important it is to have a personal relationship with Jesus. Bond’s encouraging, inspirational, thought-provoking and humorous message enlightened and encouraged everyone. His presentation was followed with a free meal and a great time of fellowship.

We have learned much from diving in and trying this endeavor, and we look forward to building upon it this coming year as we again continue to reach out to our community. It was also great to see God bringing out the talents and abilities of various people in our congregation in planning this event. Through this experience, God has given us a unique opportunity to host a basketball camp at a gospel mission in downtown Minneapolis. We look forward to seeing how God can use these opportunities.

We encourage you to dive in and dig deeper. How can *you* reach out to and touch base with people in your immediate community? We have a long way to go here, but with God’s help we’ll keep trying. Remember, when a relationship begins, God can use it and will open doors. More than anything, God loves people — even those who play hoops.

Erickson is associate pastor at Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran, Lakeville, Minn.





THE MAN WHO LIVED

KINGSGATE PARK

By Pastor Ken Moland

**K**ingsgate Park, just across the street from our church in Kirkland, Wash., is a large, undeveloped wooded area with hiking trails. We had never thought of it as a ministry area, but God taught us a lesson one Sunday morning.

I took note, when, with a duffel bag in hand, a visitor walked into worship service one Sunday. Brian looked like he might be homeless, an unusual occurrence in our suburban community. When Brian returned the following Sunday, our congregation began to learn a remarkable story of how God had reached down into a remote part of our community to redeem a lost soul we couldn't have found on our own.

I never did find Brian's tent in Kingsgate Park, even though he lived there for some time after he started worshiping with us. But God, in His wisdom, knew where and how to answer a faithful mother's prayers for her lost son. When Brian died unexpectedly this past fall, I was reminded once again of how graciously God searches for those sheep who are lost.

You see, Brian walked into our church that first morning as a believer. As I came to understand his past life and struggles with addiction, I wanted to know who had reached him, what means God had used in his conversion. What I learned is that sometimes God just lets us watch His power to save — without inviting us to play an active role. No one from our church had knocked on Brian's tent door, but God had knocked on his heart's door, and the power of the gospel had been unleashed unto salvation.

As we evaluate evangelism in our congregations and wonder how God brings a person from death to life, Brian's story reminds me that it is Jesus Christ who seeks out the lost and draws the helpless to Himself. God found Brian in a location that was beyond our vision. Our plan for outreach didn't reach into the dreary, wet confines of his encampment. Only God knew where he lived and what the deep needs of his heart were. Methods and innovative techniques may have their place, our own zeal and persistence are important, but it is God who acts to bring people to saving faith.

The other lesson, which was so clearly reaffirmed in our experience with Brian, is the importance of prayer. His mother, who lived thousands of miles away, lifted Brian up in prayer, knowing that only God could rescue her troubled son. She could not walk down into the recesses of this large park, but she believed that God knew where Brian lived. Most always, when I have the privilege of talking to someone whose heart is open to spiritual things, I eventually discover that someone somewhere is praying. I have the opportunity to be a part of God's plan and watch Him work His miracle of grace. The one who plants, and the one who waters, and the one who prays then can rejoice together as God brings

His harvest home. We can have a part in His plan of evangelism as we hear and heed His call to pray to the Lord of the harvest.

When Brian contacted his mother to notify her of his conversion, she suggested that he should find a church to attend. Our Redeemer Lutheran Church was right across the street from the entrance to the park. We had the privilege to welcome Brian into baptism and the fellowship of our congregation. He grew in faith, and his witness to God's ability to save was a great encouragement to other believers. As he began his work in adult care homes in our neighborhood, he brought many residents to worship with us. His testimony brought hope to many who were discouraged.

On many Sunday mornings, Brian would physically push wheelchairs for those he invited to church, sometimes making two trips so more could come. His heart of service was motivated by a deep gratitude for what God had done for him, and he served tirelessly. Such a dramatic change in his life could only be accomplished by a miracle of transformation, the miracle of a new birth in Christ.

His life of service continued at a neighboring congregation near where he had found a new place to live. His memorial service there was a powerful witness to what God had done. Brian's ministry had dramatically affected his family of believers there, and his legacy of faith will continue in the lives he touched with the gentle love of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Evangelism, the proclamation of the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, is a work that proceeds from the loving heart of God. Thankfully, He can and will find even those who seem to be out of our reach. As God's people pray, He will act to bring His lost sheep home to His fold as He did in the life of Brian, our homeless neighbor.

Moland is pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran, Kirkland, Wash., and a member of the AFLC Coordinating Committee.

**Brian's story  
reminds me that  
it is Jesus Christ  
who seeks out  
the lost and draws  
the helpless  
to Himself.**



An illustration of a person skateboarding, rendered in a stylized, almost ethereal manner. The person is wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, dark pants, and a dark beanie. They are in a crouched position on a skateboard. The background is a soft, painterly blue and green wash, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall style is artistic and modern.

# Let yours love

**By Pastor Alan Arneson**



# Self

**W**e were watching the Super Bowl when my then-fifth-grade son Brady got a phone call from a friend. He said it was James, and explained that he lived in the homeless shelter with his mother.

My heart ached. A young boy my son's age had no home to go to. The shelter didn't open until 7 p.m. Where did he go after school? Were his physical needs provided for? What could we do to help?

We called the woman who supervised the shelter. When I asked what we could do for James, her answer surprised me. She said James needed social interaction. His only social outlet besides school was with the residents at the homeless shelter.

So we began having James over several days a week after school. We have three young sons, and our house tends to be the neighborhood hangout. So James fit right in. It was fun to watch him play ball in the backyard or play computer games. At our house he could be the normal kid he so desperately wanted to be. But it broke my heart to bring him back "home" to the library or the Salvation Army.

So we began having James stay overnight in our home every Wednesday night. Then he could attend our Wednesday night children's ministry at our church. Kids for Christ became a highlight for him. He was learning Bible stories he had never heard before, and he was eager to participate in discussion.

James also went with us on family outings and to ball games. He was becoming more and more a part of our family. We knew we couldn't fix James' life, but at least we could give him a chance to see what an average family life is like.

We had many good discussions with our boys. We talked about being responsible, paying your bills, and taking care of a family. We were so proud of our boys as they taught James, probably without realizing it,

about following rules, being fair, holding your temper, telling the truth, doing your homework, and keeping track of your belongings.

There were several organizations in town trying to help James and his mother. We found that because we had invested our lives in her son, his mother was more receptive to us, and we were able to help her in some ways become a more responsible mother.

One day James came over and said he would be moving. I wasn't sure it was true, but his mother confirmed that he would be leaving in a week for a town a four-hour drive away.

When James left that Sunday morning, our whole family cried. We had let ourselves love that little boy, and now he was gone. Would he be in a safe place? Would we be able to keep in touch with him? We didn't know the answers to our questions.

The circumstances of James' life haven't changed much. But James left our town with Jesus in his heart. We reassured him that if he ever felt like no one cared, he could know that God loved him. He also knew that our family loved him, even if we were miles away.

Have you ever walked by a homeless person on the street, or watched someone dig through a garbage, and wondered what you could do? Do you feel like if you give them money, you are just putting a Band Aid on a problem that isn't going to go away? There is more you can do.

People do need their physical needs provided for, but what they need more is you. They need you to let them into your life and show them by example how to make good decisions. They need to know that someone could actually love them. Volunteering at the homeless shelter and getting to know the residents would be a great place to start.

What they need most is Jesus. When people realize the God who created them loves them, they have a stronger desire to take care of themselves. They want to please God. But how can they know about Jesus unless someone tells them?

James was only a part of our lives for about 10 months. But our family will never be the same, and neither will James. Ask the Lord who you might be able to share God's love with today.

Arneson, pastor of Calvary Free Lutheran, Fosston, Minn., is chairman of the AFLC Youth Board.



# MUSLIM

*(neighbor)*

By Dr. Francis Monseth

*An international  
committee works  
to effectively  
reach Muslims  
for Christ*

Our neighborhood is growing. There are more than 6 million Muslims in America, and the numbers are increasing. The devout among them worship at more than 1,200 mosques that dot our landscapes, even on the prairies of North Dakota. Newly arrived Muslims from Africa and the Middle East are working at local convenience stores, gas stations, and fast-food restaurants as they seek to make the difficult transition to a different culture, language, educational system, and moral values. Most of the Muslims who have come to this country in the past several years are not subversives or terrorists. Rather, they seek a better life in a free and prosperous nation. They realized their dream of coming to a land where they can live under better economic conditions and raise their families without fear of interference or intimidation from government authorities and/or revolutionary groups.

September 11, however, has made a deep impact on the attitudes of many Americans toward these new neighbors, especially those who have come from the Middle East. Though for the most part unspoken, the attitudes range from considering Muslims “untouchables” to concluding that they are “unreachables.” These attitudes have had an effect on many Christians as well. The benign neglect of reaching out to Muslim neighbors with the gospel of Christ gives evidence of the inroads of this negative influence.





Recognizing the general indifference to sustained and effective evangelism outreach to Muslims not only in the United States but also throughout the world, 62 people from nearly 50 nations began corresponding by e-mail in the last months of 2003 in an effort to recover and restore the apparent great omission in the Great Commission — reaching out with the gospel of Christ to our neighbors, the Muslims. The Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization brought these 62 people together in preparation for an international forum on evangelism, held in October in Pattaya, Thailand. More than 1,500 pastors, teachers, evangelists, and church leaders from 127 nations met together for a week-long gathering to engage in worship, prayer, and discussions focused on more than 30 issues relating to world evangelization. I represented the AFLC at the conference and was a member of the “62,” the issue group dealing with evangelization of Muslims.

After so many months of correspondence with names without faces regarding Muslim evangelism, it was a thrill to meet our group personally and then to discuss earnestly our common evangelism focus face-to-face. Meeting from early morning to late at night during the first days of the conference, our issue group heard inspiring and informative testimonies of former Muslims who had been converted to Christianity, listened to research papers prepared by several of the participants, and then after prayerful and prolonged discussion, formulated a position paper on Muslim evangelism for presentation to the entire forum assembly. The following paragraphs represent a synopsis of the practical section of that position paper, all related to a call for renewed Churchwide efforts in effectively reaching our Muslim neighbors for Christ:

- Muslims have a right and a deep need to hear the Christian gospel. The Bible is very clear that Jesus came for *all* people and not a chosen few (“For God so loved the *world* that He gave us His only begotten Son ...” says John 3:16). Christ died for *all*, Muslims included (II Corinthians 5:15).

- The principle of witnessing to Muslims is an imperative. The Bible is clear in defining our role as Christians, which is that of *witnesses* (Acts 1:8). Rather than taking the role either of a judge or a lawyer for Christ, we are called as witnesses to testify to what we have seen, heard

and experienced (I John 1:1-3; Matthew 7:1-2; I Corinthians 4:5; 5:12).

- Key biblical themes that are effective in witness to Muslims include the reality of a *personal relationship* with a gracious God, Who has revealed Himself in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ (I John 1:1-3). Bible teaching as well as personal examples of *peace, love*, (including one’s enemies), *mercy, forgiveness*, and *holiness* also make a deep impression (John 13:35; I Peter 3:15).

- There is a need to disciple, support, and utilize the unique insights of former Muslims who have been converted to Christ. They usually speak the same language and share the same cultural background. The story of the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42) is a clear example.

She was the first person to whom Jesus introduced Himself as Messiah, and she became the first person ever to introduce the gospel to Samaria. What an effective introduction it was!

- An all-important part of evangelistic ministry among Muslims is mobilizing believers in prayer for the Muslim world. The truth of the matter is that we are engaged in spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:12). Our prayers should include persecuted brothers and sisters who are living in societies where Muslim authorities make it very difficult indeed to share the Christian message publicly (Hebrews 13:3; Ephesians 6:19-20). There is the need also to pray against the strongholds of the Muslim (Islamic) world that God will open the doors for sharing the gospel freely with these people. Even as people of the former Communist nations now have the freedom to hear the gospel of Christ, so God is able to throw open the doors for the gospel in Muslim lands as well. We must pray toward that end (Colossians 4:2-4; Revelation 3:8; Ephesians 3:20-21)!

“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any [including our Muslim neighbors] to perish but for all to come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9).

Monseth, dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary, is a member of Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn.





**H**ow do we RECEIVE FAITH? It seems that when an EVANGELISTIC message is preached, non-Christians are often urged to ACCEPT JESUS into their hearts by faith, but little, if anything, is said as to HOW they are to obtain that faith.

It was Martin Luther who said, in explaining the meaning of the third article of the Apostle's Creed: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him." We receive faith by reading and studying the Word of God and hearing God's Word as it is preached, letting the Holy Spirit enlighten us and work faith into our lives.

Continuing the explanation, Luther writes, "... but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith." There are non-Christians who, when strongly

**"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).**

**How do you**

urged by a message to accept Jesus by faith, are convinced it is what they should do. They are ready to accept Jesus but are at a loss as to how to do it by faith. They have doubt in their hearts.

On the other hand, there are non-Christians who at one time become somewhat acquainted with the Word of God and at a later time, through evangelism, become ready to accept Jesus into their hearts by faith, which is the only way we can accept Him. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

If someone has a little knowledge of Jesus and God's Word, never or seldom prays, and even wonders if God or His Son Jesus really exists, he would not be able to accept Jesus by faith.

It is with the Word of God, the Bible, that we must begin. It is as we prayerfully give time to acquaint ourselves with it that we become ready and able to invite Jesus into our hearts so that He can make a new and different person of us.

It is difficult and often impossible to have faith in a total stranger. The better I know a person and his good qualities, the better I am able to have faith in him. The same is true of God, of Jesus. The Word of God taught by the Holy Spirit is the sure way to obtain such knowledge, even to the point of trusting one's whole life to Jesus for a total remaking or renewing. The Holy Spirit will help us to understand God's Word and convince us that it is the truth.

— By Pastor Gerald Mundfrom  
1917-2003



## Prison ministry

**T**wenty-six years ago, Don Hanson went to prison. You could say the experience changed his life. He would. You see, that trip to the Montana State Penitentiary in Deer Lodge was the beginning of a life-long ministry to prison inmates.

Through Kogodus Renewal Ministry, Hanson puts on retreats on "Faith and Life." Sometimes referred to as a short course in Christianity, the retreats help inmates learn about being a better neighbor, the basics on the Apostle's Creed and becoming a servant of God.

Today, that ministry includes the North Dakota State Penitentiary in Bismarck, the James River Correctional Center in Jamestown, N.D., and a women's prison in New England. Hanson does two retreats a year at each facility, reaching hundreds for Christ.

More than the prisoners, Hanson has also inspired fellow believers to serve. He tries to get at least one new volunteer each time and figures that as many as 300 people have volunteered for this ministry.

"I believe the Holy Spirit is working in the hearts of men and women to get them excited about going into prison to help," said Hanson.

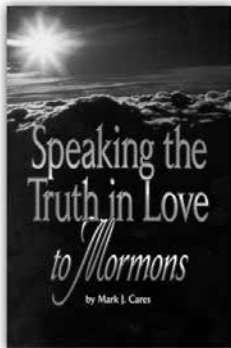
If you would like to be involved in Hanson's ministry, contact him at (701) 568-3528, or write to PO Box 116, Ray, ND 58849-0116.

# Evangelism [Parish Education]



## The John 3:16 House

A lonely boy finds what seems to be a secret password. This visual story gives children a beautiful picture of salvation and what Christ brings to every boy and girl who trust in Him. \$7, with tape \$9



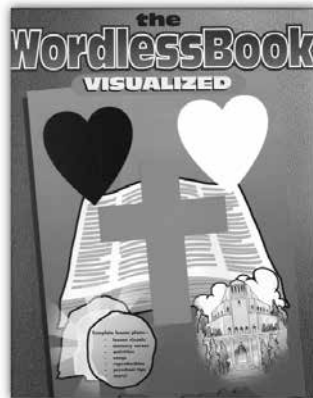
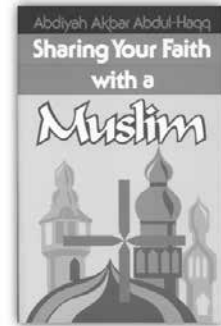
## Speaking the Truth in Love to Mormons

How to introduce Mormon friends to the promise of Jesus Christ with compassion, care, and understanding. Optional video features enlightening dramatizations, discussions, and practical examples. Book \$13.50; 40-minute video \$20.50

## Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim

A witnessing tool for those who wish to bring Muslims to Christ, looking at Christ in the Bible compared to the Koran. \$11.50

Also available: "Sharing Your Faith with a Hindu" (\$10.50) and "Sharing Your Faith with a Buddhist" (\$11.50)



## Wordless Book Visualized

Five Bible lessons teach the way of salvation to children, using illustrated flashcards. Memory verses, activities, songs, reproducibles, and preschool tips are also included. \$13.50

Other Wordless Book Materials: Mini books 2x3 (\$1.25) or 3x5 (\$2); Visual song (\$5.95); Tract (10 cents each or 50/\$4.25).

## New Life Study Series

**IN WALKS JESUS** helps participants see every day conversations and encounters as opportunities of eternal consequence as we tell others about Jesus and His saving love. Six-session study includes: The Skeptic, The Educated Seeker, The Social Outcast, Those Trapped in Immorality, Those in Affliction, The Grieving. \$6.25



**DARE TO BE DIFFERENT** offers encouragement and practical suggestions for those who desire to be more faithful in their life of witness. Sessions encourage believers to know the enemy, recognize the mission field at our door, have confidence in the power of the Word and Spirit, and let our lights shine for Christ. \$6.25

**WINNING FRIENDS FOR CHRIST** shows how you can help others become part of God's family by grace through faith. Sessions cover looking for opportunities, prayer, cultivating friendships, sharing Christ, and encouraging new believers in congregational life. \$6.25

Additional books, tracts, and other resources available from AFLC Parish Education at (763) 545-5631



# Remember

[Chaplaincy]

## THEIR NAMES

By Chaplain Kerwin Sletto

**E**vangelism reaches across the lines of race and nationality and unites us as brothers and sisters in Christ. Yet many times, denominational lines limit evangelism opportunities. A Lutheran evangelist is not asked to speak in a Catholic church, nor is a Catholic priest asked to speak in a Lutheran church. Yet, this is the exact opportunity that chaplains in nursing homes, hospitals, hospice, military and prison ministry have.

Even though I am a chaplain in a Lutheran facility, we have more Catholic residents than we do Lutherans. Catholics, Methodists, and Lutherans make up 75 percent of our residents. The rest are from seven other church affiliations. We all need the good news of Jesus Christ. But how do we overcome these denominational walls? By building relationships.

When a new resident comes into our facility, I try to meet with him or her and have Scripture and prayer. But thereafter, my visits are based upon residents' needs. As the only chaplain for 200 residents, I can't be everywhere at once. So I need to build relationships with my residents and staff so they will tell me when there is a need.

The first step to building a relationship is to remember a person's name. It's something so simple, and yet this is the start of every relationship. When you remember a name, new acquaintances become more than a resident or a patient, they become a person I care about.

Next, I meet them in their day-to-day lives by serving them their breakfast. They recognize my voice as I bring them devotions each morning, and they listen because they know me. They come to weekly Bible studies and worship services, and when they have spiritual needs, they call upon me to come. By being there they learn they can depend upon me. I listen, I talk, and I pray with them.

A few months ago a lady of the Catholic faith stopped me in the hallway. "Chaplain, I need to do confession," she said.

"I'll contact a priest for you," I responded.

"No, you'll do," she answered.

Needless to say, I was shocked. I'd never

had a request like this before. We went into a private room and she talked. At that point, I read I John 1:9, which says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us all our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I don't think this was the response she expected, but it emphasized forgiveness in Jesus' name.

These are the opportunities of evangelism, of proclaiming Jesus Christ — opportunities that take place because God works through relationships.

Each week, approximately 140

people come to our worship services. They come from a variety of church denominations. Some don't even have a church background, but they come because they feel loved and accepted. They hear the Word of God proclaimed. Nearly 80 people attend our Bible studies each week. Some attending are unchurched. God is touching peoples lives, drawing them close. Isn't that what evangelism is all about?

Evangelism begins by caring about people right where they're at. It's taking the time to get to know people and remember their names. God overcomes denominational walls. Take the time to build relationships and allow God to speak to us regardless of our church affiliation.

Sletto is the director of the AFLC's Division for Institutional Chaplaincy.



# India: DEVASTATION & RELIEF

THE RECENT DEVASTATING tsunami in south Asia affected the AFLC India. The headquarters of the church body is only three miles from the coastline. Reports received so far inform us that no members of AFLC congregations have been killed. The World Missions Committee sent funds to AFLC India the day following the tragedy. Another gift was sent in early January. Individuals and congregations are also encouraged to give to the organization World Relief by sending a designated gift through World Missions, or giving directly through their web site: [www.worldrelief.org](http://www.worldrelief.org).

A recent report by World Relief stated: "The destruction is indescribable. There is deep sorrow, shock, despair and fear among the people. The extent of the disaster in some remote

"There are other villages along the coast which were damaged. Fishermen lost their boats and nets. And some people lost their huts. Though they are not part of our AFLC, as Christians we should show our love toward these people."

Dr. S. Anand Kumar of the AFLC India has been attempting to provide medical relief to victims of the tragedy. He reported: "Many people in our congregations were affected by tsunami. They were very much disappointed. Medically we are trying to render services to them."

"We visited Elachetladibba, and we gave medicines in that village. We conducted a medical camp and gave 2,000 doses of preventive medicines. Another 8,000 doses were supplied to other villages. Medically, we must take care to prevent diseases like cholera, typhoid, malaria, jaundice, etc. We are trying our best to help medically."

"The people of the village cried and wept when seeing us. They said they are living by the grace of God. It was a fearful experience, they said. Everybody in that village is afraid of the tide. It reached their village. They have no information. It is a new experience to them. They have never seen this type of tide. Four people died near to that village."

"One day we visited Bapatla seashore to conduct a medical camp and to supply preventive medicines. Suddenly government officials came and announced that there is a chance of another tide in one hour. Everybody was afraid and ran away from the seashore. We stayed there for some time to see the situation. Red Cross people also came there. We worked together to send the people to a safe place. We returned from there after evacuation of all the people."

"All people in coastal areas are afraid of the tsunami. We are helpless in these situations. God is our only Protector. We are praying for this difficult situation in our area. We are very thankful for the American people. Their help and concern toward victims is very high and incomparable."

"The people of the village cried and wept when seeing us. They said they are living by the grace of God. It was a fearful experience, they said. Everybody in that village is afraid of the tide."

regions is not yet known, and rescue workers continue to discover bodies. There is an urgent need for medicines, doctors and medical teams, drinking water, food, clothing, and shelter. In Sri Lanka, rescue efforts in the North and East are hampered with uncleared landmines floating in the water. Millions of

people are homeless."

Pastor D. Luther Sastry, president of the AFLC India, wrote: "Our AFLC India has a fishermen congregation at Elachetladibba village. This village was badly affected by the tsunami. By the grace of our Lord our church members are safe. And at the same time men who went for fishing came back from sea safely. But the people who have homes made with mud walls and palmary leaves have lost their belongings. And they lost their homes. Fifteen homes were damaged by this disaster."





**Dr. Gavesh Examining a child in P.S. Palem**



**Carried Food Packs & Home needs in a Small Truck from Chirala to Elachetla Dibba**



Pictures above and below left sent courtesy of Dr. S. Anand Kumar of the AFLC-India. Money sent from the AFLC purchased 5,000 kilos of rice, 200 blankets and \$1,000 in medical supplies.

**LEFT:** Cleanup begins on the coast near the Indian city of Royapuram. Picture courtesy of YWAM.

**BELOW RIGHT:** YWAM Relief trucks begin to pour into the city of Chennai. Photo courtesy of YWAM.



**Medical Camp in POTTISUBBAIAH PALEM**





# CHARGE!

**T**here's a story of a military commander whose soldiers were camped on top of a hill one evening. In the morning the commander awoke, and as he looked east toward the rising sun, he noticed that overnight the enemy had camped at the base of the hill in that direction. Then he looked south and noticed that the enemy was camped there as well. Then, to his utter amazement, he looked west and found that the enemy had also occupied a position there. Looking north he found the enemy there also.

Have you ever felt surrounded like that, with nowhere to run?

To continue the story, the commander then awoke his troops. He announced to them,

"Men, for the first time in this campaign, we can attack in any direction and find the enemy!"

What an attitude! As we look at our culture, we see many enemies and influences surrounding us, attempting to squeeze out our faith. But friends, we are the Church Triumphant! We are the Church of Jesus Christ. Our assignment is to attack the gates of Hell. "Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it" (Matthew 16:18, NASB). We are meant to be a church on the move; a body of believers who are not passive but busy, using time, energy and resources to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to our neighborhoods, our friends, our acquaintances and our culture, so that they may experience the life-giving transformation that comes through meeting Him.

I think I've never seen a time since I came to the Home Missions office when all our mission congregations were under such a cloud of adversity and trial as they are right now. As I

pray through the congregational list, I see very few congregations that aren't going through unusual struggles. I would like to ask you to join us in prayer for our congregations — those without pastors, facing the calling process; and those who have pastors who were willing to leave families and friends to go to the front lines and establish new works.

I would ask you and your family to "adopt" a Home Mission congregation. Would you pray in your family devotions that God would lead this congregation, provide resources, and bless the message shared, so that together we will reach our culture for Christ?

James 1:2 says, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials." Philippians 4:4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" As we encounter the trials that come our way, may we rest assured that it will be worth it all when we see Jesus. May God find you faithful when Christ returns!

— Pastor Paul Nash  
AFLC Home Missions director



**Calvary Lutheran congregants Bonnie VanBruggen (center) and Lucy Pike (right) are pictured with Lisa Seitz, who recently came to faith in Christ through the Mesa, Ariz., church's ministry.**

# West Prairie church affiliates with AFLC

On Oct. 10, 2004, members of West Prairie Lutheran Church, rural Kindred, N.D., voted to terminate their relationship with the ELCA and affiliate with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations starting Jan. 1.

Members of the congregation felt that our church does have a mission to accomplish. That mission includes ministering to and educating its members, including youths. West Prairie Lutheran needs to spread God's message and witness to the area. It also financially supports other ministries and mission work throughout the world. The congregation decided that the best way to accomplish this mission would be by getting back to its conservative roots. They felt that affiliating with the AFLC would accomplish this goal.

West Prairie congregants believe that their first objective should be the worship of God and instruction from God's Word addressing everyone's personal salvation. The second objective is addressing people's earthly needs. They believe that they can accomplish these objectives by affiliating with the AFLC. The congregation is taking a big step in faith to do this, but if this is God's will and if we follow His guidance, new members will come and the ministry will be successful.

The first service was held on Jan. 9. Greg Schmitke, who works for KFNW radio, brought the message and Pastor Jim Christenson, who serves the Bethany and United AFLC congregations at Abercrombie and McLeod, N.D., provided other pastoral needs. A call committee will be formed later to extend a call to a full-time pastor.

— By David Strand, deacon

## Office furniture available through Home Missions department

Are you in need of office furniture? The Home Missions Department has received a generous donation from a local law firm, including bookshelves, desks, chairs, tables, carrier racks for folding chair storage, dry erase boards, filing cabinets, projection screens, appliances and divider panels as well as miscellaneous items.

For more information on a specific item, please call the Home Missions Department at (763) 545-5631.



Living Word Lutheran Church, Menasha, Wis., a Home Mission congregation of the AFLC, received Woody and Ruth Barthel into membership on Dec. 26, 2004. Pastor Duane Matz, right, serves the congregation.

**Pastor Jim Haga**, Shoreview, Minn., is currently serving as part-time pastor of Faith Lutheran Church of Running Valley, Colfax, Wis.

**Pastor John Dennis**, Bethel Park, Pa., announced his retirement as senior pastor of Ruthfred Lutheran Church, Bethel Park, concluding more than fifty years of ministry there.

**Reformation Lutheran** of El Cajon, Calif., recently moved into a new church home. Their new rented facility is part of a smaller shopping mall. It includes three rooms plus an office area. The six-year-old congregation has welcomed a Spanish-language congregation to use their facility for a midweek service and on Sunday evenings. Reformation Lutheran is served by Pastor John Kent.

**Eric Westlake** has submitted his resignation as director of the Association Retreat Center

(ARC). He has accepted a call to serve Our Savior's Lutheran, Zumbrota, Minn., as a lay pastor and will begin his ministry there at the end of the school year.

**Matt W. Nelson** has accepted a call from Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Cokato, Minn., as a youth worker. Nelson is a 2003 graduate of AFLBS.

**Tim Collins** has resigned as youth worker of Christ the King Lutheran, Pipestone, Minn.

**Pastor Kevin Olson** and family will return to the Minneapolis area on May 22. The Olsons are currently serving a nine-month sabbatical in Tanzania.

To reach **Pastor Jonathan and Tamba Abel** at their new ministry in Maringa, Brazil, write to: Caixa Postal 450, 87001-970 Maringa, PR. Or phone: (011-55) 44-225-8713.

From your home  
to the

www.aflcwomen.org

[WMF]

# Ends of the earth



Paul Borthwick, author of "How to be a World Class Christian," poses the following question, "If not you — then who?" If we don't accept the challenge of worldwide Christian outreach — *who will?*

Borthwick not only answers the "who" and "how" questions of evangelism in his book, but he also delves into the "why." Why should we care so deeply about people we may have never met?

Consider the areas where AFLC people are involved in missions — Brazil, Mexico, India, Kenya, Czech Republic, Tanzania, Uganda — why do we care so deeply? Or do we? Borthwick writes, "Alertness to the needs of others, concern for the broken people of our world, and ideas of how to respond practically give us a new sense of priorities. Rather than an unhealthy preoccupation with the question, 'Am I fulfilled?' we find ourselves asking how we can help others — and, in so doing, we find the fulfillment we were looking for in the first place."

Borthwick's book is the basis for a new WMF seminar that is now available for presentation in your church. We are each called to God's missionary people. In this seminar you will be challenged to be a global action — to go from being spectators to becoming participants. There will be hands-on activities and discussion groups, as well as discovering what the Bible teaches about our global involvement and prayer. This seminar can be a life-altering experience.

Several women across the United States are trained seminar leaders and prepared to present this Saturday seminar in your church. They include Lavonne Lundebreck, Spicer, Minn.; Arlys Jorenby and Elaine Kohl, Brookings, S.D.; Ruth Hinkelman, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Deanna Larson, Fairbury, Neb.; Ruth Wagley, Spokane, Wash.; and Lynn Wellumson, Williston, N.D.

The host WMF is responsible for planning, advertising, location, food, mileage and housing (where necessary) for the guest seminar leader. Suggested time schedule for a

Saturday World Class Christian Seminar begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. through 3 p.m.

Phone or e-mail me to get a full listing of presenters and to select the leader of your choice. Make arrangements for her to present the seminar in your church, and invite your friends and neighboring churches.

— Cheryl Skordahl  
National WMF President

## CONTACT

Cheryl Skordahl

(763) 497-5863

cheryl@aflcwomen.org



# [World Missions] CHRIST'S BANQUET

By Dr. Lyle Mattson

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins; in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. BUT GOD being rich in mercy ..." (Ephesians 2:1-4 NASB).

**E**very year, I need to take continuing education classes to keep my license. Several years ago, my wife, Corrine, and I ventured to the beautiful Canadian city of Montreal for a class. I attended the classes during the day and the evenings were ours to spend together. One evening, while we were walking and enjoying the sights together, we came upon a French restaurant. We entered and inquired if we could have dinner. The gentleman at the front asked if we had reservations — we didn't. He looked at his table list and responded that he did have a setting for two and escorted us to a table back in a corner of the restaurant. It was a perfect place to spend the evening, but we felt just a bit conspicuous as we were dressed in casual clothes while most of the other diners came in evening attire.

Our waiter came and gave us the menus — written completely in French, which neither of us understood. When the waiter returned, I looked at him and laughingly said, "Sir, we need help. I don't think I've ever been in as nice a restaurant as this before."

With a twinkle in his eye, he responded, "I don't think you have either!"

He graciously proceeded to help us order, and it's an understatement to say that we thoroughly enjoyed our evening there.

In the verses from Ephesians, Paul is writing about a place far more enticing than that restaurant — our place in Christ. He wants us always to remember what life was like before Christ — the sin, the lust, the hopeless desires, the death. Why does he want us to remember? Because our place in Christ was given to us. We are welcomed with open arms by our gracious, loving, merciful Host. We are welcomed not because of our great talents or abilities; we were hopeless. We enter, as Paul writes later, "by grace through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is a gift of God."

The whole purpose of evangelism and missions is to open new "restaurants" here or abroad, to invite others to join us at the feast prepared by Jesus. We on the World Missions Board are charged with overseeing the process. We must wrangle with budgets, and we must debate strategy. But we never, ever mess around with the menu. It is written in a language we cannot yet totally comprehend, but to our continued delight, the food from that menu is literally out of this world.

May our Lord find us faithful so that others may see their hopeless condition and feast at Christ's banquet table.

Mattson is a member of the World Missions Committee.



# Myhre accepts WMF coordinator position

Faylin Myhre, Abercrombie, N.D., has recently responded affirmatively to a letter of call from the National WMF board to become the Women's Outreach coordinator. Myhre will be prepared to travel to women's groups in newer AFLC congregations beginning March 1. It is hoped that women will want to become more involved in the WMF through Myhre's visits.

Needed — A Power Point set-up (computer and projector) for Myhre to use in presentations. Since the vast majority of WMF funds are distributed to various AFLC ministries, your gift, mailed to our treasurer and designated "Power Point" would help. Write to Lynn Wellumson, treasurer, 1814 8th Av E., Williston, ND 58801.

## [ABCDEFGG]

## What does it mean?

**AFLC:** The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, a fellowship of independent congregations, who have chosen to be interdependent for the purpose of accomplishing service in the Kingdom of God that cannot best be done alone. Founded in 1962 with headquarters at Plymouth, Minn.

**AFLBS:** The Association Free Lutheran Bible School, a two-year Bible school founded in 1966 by the AFLC with campus located in Plymouth, Minn.

**AFLTS:** The Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary sometimes called the Free Lutheran Seminary (FLS). Founded in 1964, shares campus with AFLBS in Plymouth, Minn.

**WMF:** The Women's Missionary Federation was organized in 1962 and supports AFLC missionary endeavors.

## AFLC memorials — December

### AFLBS

Steve Jacobson (2), Peter Velde Wall, Kathleen Walch, Audrey Anderson, Albert Bartsch, Flavian Tracy, Michael Davidson, Pastor Arnold Stone, Ed Nuquist

### AFLTS

Arnold Honl, Albert Bartsch, Ruth Breeding, Norris Fugleberg, Eugene Skavlund

### Evangelism

Roy & Beatrice Rasmussen

### FLAPS

Robert A. Olson

### General Fund

John & Myrtle Sundbagen

### Home Missions

Michael Davidson, Ragnhild Windingland, Lois Johnson, Cora Antal

### Miriam Infant Home

James Lueders

### Parish Education

Cora Antal, Lillian Nordvold

### Vision 2004

Steve Jacobson, Earl Hartsoch, Cora Antal, Jennie Solberg, Gloria Aasness, Lowell Strommer, Edith Hansen, Lillian

Nordvold

### World Missions

Pastor Palmer Wold, Michael Davidson, Mylan Ruud, John & Anna Gunnink

### WMF

Agnes Nelson, Marty Anderson, Burdella Johnson, Jen Christiansen, Jennie Solberg, Maynard Davidson, Marlys Larson, Jalmer Eldel, Cliff Jervik

... in honor of

### AFLBS

Ingvald and Valborg Berdal, Karen and Lyle Shephard, David and Dara Berdal

### Vision 2004

LeRoy and Phyllis Sletten, Pastor Mark Olson and family

### World Missions

Pastor Bruce and Phyllis Peterson

### WMF

Bennie McCarlson

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

### AFLC Benevolences (12 months) – January 1 - December 31, 2004

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN DECEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$288,771	\$38,076	\$313,328	109
Youth Ministries . . .	54,024	12,638	61,226	113
Parish Education . . .	82,062	16,281	97,918	119
Seminary . . . . .	154,195	21,446	184,437	120
Bible School . . . . .	264,089	79,770	355,933	135
Home Missions . . . .	287,115	46,295	288,959	101
Church Extension . . .	24,576	2,624	15,656	64
World Missions . . . .	256,326	59,749	252,863	99
Personal Support . . .	328,311	35,981	355,237	108
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,739,469</b>	<b>\$312,861</b>	<b>\$1,925,556</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>TOTALS 2003 . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,740,325</b>	<b>\$290,517</b>	<b>\$1,720,414</b>	<b>99</b>

### Goal 100%

The Evangelism Department received \$21,143 in December.

The office of director of Development received \$371 in December.

# welcome HOME

[Editorial]

A person usually doesn't go to a place where they think they're not wanted. It's not likely they'll knock on a door if they expect it will be slammed in their face.

In Luke 15 Jesus tells of a son who basically told his father he couldn't wait for him to die. He wanted his inheritance right then.



Craig Johnson

He "set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living" (Luke 15:13, NIV). He dishonored his father and hurt him deeply.

Times got tough. The son was starving and desperate. Life at his father's house was sounding pretty good. He got the idea to go back home, confess his sin and ask for a job.

He didn't expect to get the lavish welcome he received, but he did think his dad might hire him as a servant. It was a pretty bold thought after all he had done. A lot of sons would consider it pointless to even try to go back home.

This son expected his father would at least let him in the door. He didn't consider himself worthy, but he thought his father would be welcoming. He underestimated how gracious his father would be, but he did think his father would give him something. Before he left, his father must have treated him in such a way that he thought he could still go back home and at least get a job on the work crew.

Some prodigals wonder if the Lord will welcome them back. They know they've done wrong. They're

tormented by guilt. They long to be forgiven and in a right relationship with God. But they doubt that the holy God would ever receive a sinner like them. They think it would be a waste of time to try to go back home.

I read about a lady who had made a terrible mess of her life. She had done some horrendous things. Someone suggested she go to a church to find help. Her response was, "Why would I do that? I feel bad enough already."

Some might say she hadn't truly repented. That could be the case. Only God knows her heart. It could be, however, that she had repented. She might have come to her senses like the prodigal son, but she didn't think there was any point in going to the Father's house. The message she had heard and the treatment she had received had implanted in her the belief that there is a limit to how much God will forgive. She figured she had crossed the line, and it was now too late.

We don't want "comfortable sinners" in our congregations, living contrary to God's Word and thinking there is no problem. We should be concerned about ones who think because God loves them it doesn't matter what they believe or do.

We ought to be even more concerned, however, about the guilt-ridden sinner who is outside the church door. They have heard the law convicting them of sin, but they haven't heard the gospel offering them forgiveness. They think the church and the Lord have no interest in them.

If a congregation is teaching and preaching the Bible, that comfortable sinner is going to start

Some prodigals wonder if the Lord will welcome them back. They know they've done wrong. They're tormented by guilt.

getting uncomfortable. He is going to hear the Word, and God will work through that Word to bring conviction of sin.

That same kind of hope doesn't exist for the one who is outside the door. If they stay away because they don't think they'd be welcomed, then they won't be in the Word. They won't learn of God's love. They won't hear the good news that God "does not treat us as our sins deserve ... as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:10, 12). "And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14). If they are discouraged from entering where the Word is taught, how will they enter the kingdom of God?

Our calling is to let ones who are wrestling with guilt know that God and His church want to give them a surprisingly gracious welcome. May we live in such a way that the prodigals will be encouraged to come home.



## [Building the Base] Is it SO EASY?

I could hear the noise of the coupling braking and the air release. I braced for the sudden jolt of the train as it screeched to a halt. As the men hurriedly made repairs to fix the broken coupling, a group of us stood around in the dark watching. We were only a few miles out of Mazatlan, Mexico, heading for Nogales, Ariz. I shall never forget the evening.

How could I when I heard the words, “*Tan facil* (So easy)?”

I had struck up a conversation with a young man in the group. Boarding the train a short time later, the discussion shifted to the things of God. Showing even greater interest, the young lad seemed to be sincerely open to spiritual matters. It just seemed right to ask if he would like to know if he was going to heaven. He answered that he would. I showed him Scripture verses that explain the way of salvation. Each time he affirmed that he believed what the Bible said.

Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” A nod of the head. Romans 3:10: “There is none righteous, no not one.” “*Si*,” he responded. Proverbs 14:12: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” “*De versa* (really)?”

And then, praise God, I could share verses of hope and life. John 3:16-17: “For God so loved the world that he gave his begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.” Pausing, I could see that he was letting the truth of the Scriptures settle in. Then I shared verse 18: “Whoever believes is not condemned but whoever does not believe is condemned

already.” Commenting on the verse, I said, “The guilty sentence is lifted and life is offered instead of death.”

Then I read to him John 1:12: “But to as many as received him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.” So I asked him, “Would you like to receive Jesus in your life?” As we bowed our heads to pray, he asked Jesus into his heart. I cannot explain what a privilege it was for me to accompany this young man in prayer.

As he finished, he blinked and, looking up, said, “*Tan facil*?”

Yes, it is true. It is so easy for us to simply say, “Come into my heart Lord Jesus.” It was impossible for us to be saved from the deserved condemnation of our sin. To be forgiven and saved was made possible because of the death of Jesus on the cross, taking onto Himself the burden of our sin. When Jesus said from the cross, “It is finished,” He meant it. Our salvation is complete. There is nothing to add to it. Simply receive it. So easy!

**I had struck up a conversation with a young man in the group. Boarding the train a short time later, the discussion shifted to the things of God.**

— Pastor Richard Gunderson  
Cambridge, Minn.