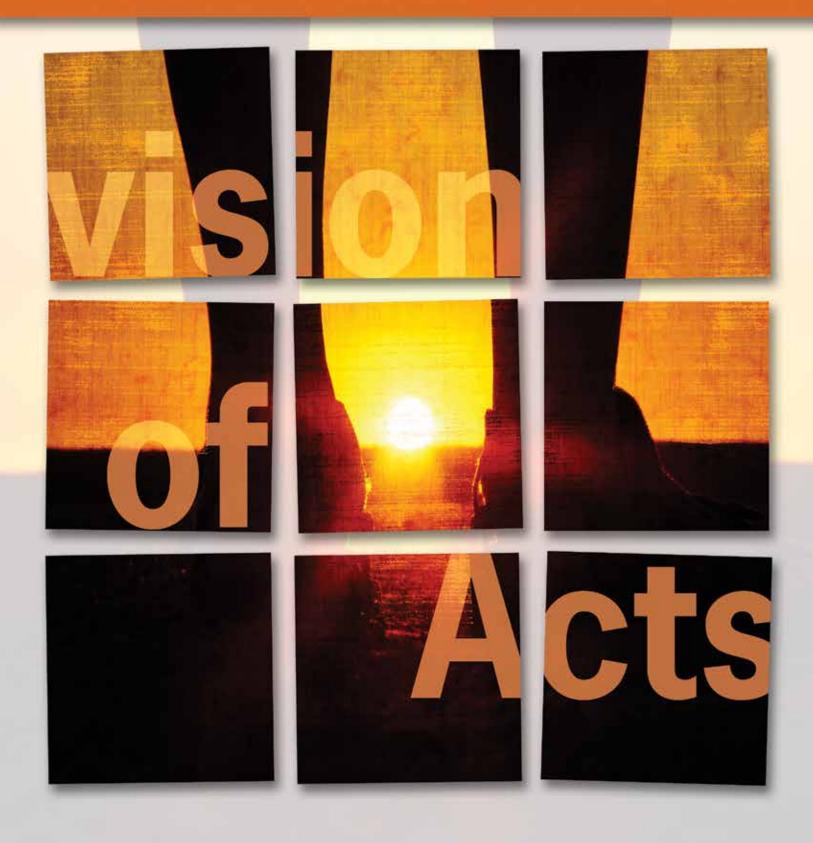
## THE LUTHERAN SADOR AND JANUARY 2006 AND JANUARY 2006 AND JANUARY 2006 AND JANUARY 2006



## **Encouraging Word**

## Vision for the

t times when I read the Bible and the biblical stories, I try to place myself in the shoes of those written about; I try to understand a bit about what they might have been thinking and feeling. It is not always easy to do. When I think about the followers of Jesus in the book of

Acts, I think of their feelings of vulnerability, perhaps, of fear in the face of much opposition to their beliefs. But I also see in them a courage and willingness to step out and share their faith, the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ, so that others would also come to believe and have peace and eternity, no matter the cost.

I have tremendous awe and respect for missionaries who leave the familiar and go to foreign lands to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with those who have not heard. Growing up in a foreign country as a child of missionaries, I was able to experience firsthand the sharing of the gospel with those who were perhaps hearing it for the first time. My parents involved us children in their ministry, part of which was church planting.

I remember seeing and participating as a child in the beginning of one church in an area of the Brazilian city we were living in called Jardim Alvorada. The gospel was first presented in outdoor afternoon meetings where hymns and Sunday school songs were sung, my sister played her accordion and a Bible school student told an illustrated Bible story. On some Sunday evenings we would gather at a street corner and have a short service with singing and sharing of the Bible. Soon it was decided that daily vacation Bible school should be held. My brothers, along with some friends, took their bicycles

and went from house to house with invitations. I'm not sure that they were kindly received at each home, but they persevered. The children came to our rented house, which was converted into a meeting room, and then brought moms and dads to church services and Sunday school.

From that beginning of outdoor meetings, vacation Bible school, in-home Bible studies, and meeting people on a one-to-one basis, the gospel penetrated the hearts of some. They, in turn, shared with others, and a church was begun that continues strong to this day. It first took prayer, then the courage to go to a part of town where we were not known, and finally sharing a message that many had not heard but all needed to hear for their eternal souls.

Today, with the world in so much turmoil, we probably have friends and neighbors who are in need of the gospel of salvation and peace with God, as did the people who lived in foreign lands at the time described in the book of Acts. May I be bold like the Christians in Acts and share the gospel of salvation and peace with those around me, no matter the cost. God would have all come to Him.

Acts 2:39 says, "For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself."

> - By Carol Knapp Maranatha Free Lutheran Willmar, Minn.

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## **UTHERANAMBASSADOR**

Editor

Pastor Craig Johnson craigi@teleport.com

**Managing Editor** 

**Editorial Board** 

Ruth Gunderson ruthg@aflc.org

Pastor John Mundfrom Oryen Benrud Pastor Jerry Moan Pastor James L. Johnson

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## **Sound Bites**

All who are in Christ are entitled saints of God. There is no exception. There is no middle class. Despite all degrees of sin among humans there are simply two classes in relation to God — namely, Christians and non-Christians, saints or sinners.

— C. O. Rosenius Romans: A Devotional Commentary

> We grow, and the <mark>churc</mark>h flourishes, when we let this crazy-quilt people be who God made them to be, when we accept and bless the group we have.

> > — Kevin A. Miller

The more we're able to cross the boundaries between groups of people, the more proof we have to offer the world of the truth of our gospel. And the more our Christianity can present a Body not divided like the rest of the world, the louder we will be able to say with conviction that Jesus is, indeed, the answer.

— John Perkins

The Church then maintained the doctrine by her faith in it: we maintain our doctrine by distrusting our converts' capacity to receive it. The Church then maintained her doctrine by thinking it so clear that any one could understand it: we maintain our doctrine by treating it as so complicated that only theologians can understand it.

> - Roland Allen The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church

The nations are at our doorsteps. Are you read
By Pastor

Tom Olson



t's harvest time! International evangelists are preaching to packed stadiums, even in Muslim strongholds like Pakistan. In Africa, crowds have topped one million at a single revival meeting. Recent estimates say that about 175,000 souls are coming to Jesus each day, over a million a week, mostly in the non-white world. Are we ready to be a part of that harvest locally?

God is bringing people from the nations to our neighborhoods. Third-world university students live near our city churches. Hispanic migrants walk the streets of small midwestern towns.

For people like me, reaching out to non-lutefisk eaters is not natural. Some Norwegians have a hard time with the customs of others, like the kraut-eating German I married. We are even nervous around Swedes and Finns. If you are a low-church Haugean, you may not even be comfortable praying with a saved Norwegian if he goes to a church where the pastor wears a robe. We fearfully retreat into our small, white, ingrown comfortable churches and wait for the return of Jesus. Attendance drops and joy disappears.

But we are in good company. In Acts 10 we see

"Kosher Peter" needing a revelation from God to motivate him to preach to the repulsive Gentiles. Italian Cornelius had been crying out to God for salvation. When Peter realized that it was a God thing, he said, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation ..." (Acts 10:34 and 35a). Peter preached to Cornelius' household, and all who heard the message were saved. The Jewish believers were amazed to see God touch uncircumcised Gentiles.

Are there cross-cultural ministry opportunities in your neighborhood? Is God prompting you to reach out? The first step is a change of attitude. Like Peter, you may have to eat some different food. Pioneer missionary Oscar Brown went to the Eskimos in 1930. They responded to his preaching because he lived among, rather than above them. He learned their language. They said, "We like you, Oscar, because you eat our food." Believe me, eating leather-tough walrus was a change from the tender beef he had at the Lutheran Bible Institute.

When I accepted a call to Alaska in the late 1990s it meant a diet change to wild meat. Cross-cultural ministry meant being far from loved ones. It meant flying an airplane and simple home-church services. The culture was different.



Most ministry is cross-cultural to a degree. In Cumberland, Wis., we visited farmers in their dairy barns. When we moved to Cloquet, Minn., it involved enjoying the Finnish sauna at Ahti, Aino and Eino's houses. It meant preaching to a church at least half full of Democrats. Now in Mineral Point, Wis., it means wearing a robe and clerical collar and occasionally chanting the full liturgy to lead worship for people with German Lutheran roots. In our rural churches I have bonded with the men and boys on the lake or at the hunting shack. (And I am not a fisherman or a hunter.) My wife, Sharon, had much greater adjustments to make to do real cross-cultural mission work in Liberia, West Africa, for 11 years.

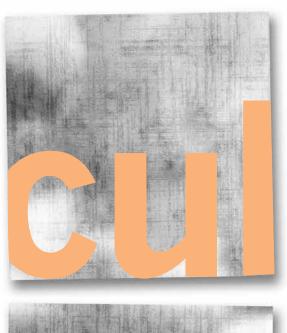
Our willingness to change has not always been easy, but it has been necessary. The gospel never changes, but the context in which it is preached is constantly changing. We are supposedly living in a postmodern and neo-barbaric culture. To reach out of our Scandinavian and German enclaves effectively requires a willingness to bend.

The love of Christ is our motivation. Love for lost souls motivates us to do culturally effective ministry, even if it is uncomfortable at first. People respond quickly to love that is willing to touch them on their turf or at their table. Calvary love is a universal language.

For some reason my confirmation class wants to study New Testament Greek this year. Our opening lesson was to learn the first phrase of John 3:16. My heart was touched by the Greek text. The first word, perhaps for emphasis, is "so" and the last word is "world." That emphasized word, "so," helped me to see the intense passion of God for the salvation of the lost. The word "world" reminded me that the object of God's passion is the people of all cultures. The application is obvious. Do we have the same passion and the same target audience that God does? Are we willing to get out of our comfort zone, like Peter, to meet strangers on their turf? If we don't, who will?

Cross-cultural ministry has come to our doorsteps. Love constrains us to share Jesus in meaningful ways. We may even learn to like some of the food that the new believers bring to our potluck dinners as much as we like lutefisk!

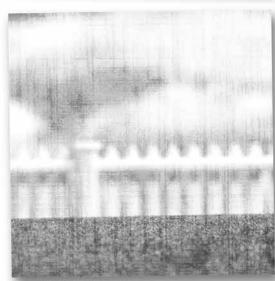
Olson is pastor of Faith Lutheran, Mineral Point, Wis.













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### By Pastor Chuck Lindquist

ow do you talk to your non-Christian friends — assuming you have any? Paul talked with non-Christians, it seems, wherever he went. His visit with unbelievers in Athens, as recorded in Acts 17, is illustrative of the great apostle's style.

#### Go to the marketplace

An important first step in talking with non-Christians is finding a few. When Paul arrived in Athens, he went straight to the marketplace on the lookout for peo-

ple who might want to hear the greatest news on earth. And he found them.

Most American Christians spend very little time rubbing shoulders with unbelievers. We much prefer to hang out with other Christians. We go to church; we may participate in an occasional small group; we gravitate to Christian colleagues at work or in our neighborhood. American Christians tend to live and work in highly Christianized "ghettos" with very little intentional contact with our non-Christian neighbors.

If you are interested in learning how to talk with





non-Christians, you will have to make a conscious decision to abandon your ghetto. Make a trip to the marketplace like Paul did. Maybe you will want to volunteer in some neighborhood or civic project. Many neighborhoods have action committees of one kind or another. Maybe you will want to join.

If you do, you will discover that some of your neighbors — a lot of your neighbors, probably — are non-Christians. It is estimated that 80 languages are spoken in the Minneapolis public school district, representing people and cultures and religions from around the world. More than 400 Afghans live in my city. More Somalis live here than in any other city in the United States, as I understand, Ninety-nine percent of them are non-Christians.

But you are not likely to meet them in the ghetto. Get to the marketplace.

#### Get distressed

Paul's visit to the marketplace caused him profound distress. The Phillips translation reports that Paul's "soul was exasperated." The KJV tells us that Paul's "spirit was stirred." In the NRSV, we read that Paul "was deeply distressed." The place "was full of idols" (v. 16); Paul's spirit was exasperated at the sight of it.

Most Christians simply do not care if Athens is full of idols. Maybe, we surmise, our Athenian friends like it that way. Maybe it makes no difference in the end.

But it *does* make a difference in the end — and Paul knew it. The apostle wrote to his friends in

Ephesus, "Remember that you were at that time [i.e., before you came to faith] without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). This is not a pretty picture. Ephesians without faith are "without hope" and "without God." It is true for unbelievers in your neighborhood, too.

Unless this situation distresses you at some level, you are not likely to talk with your non-Christian neighbors. Indeed, you are not likely to care.

Do you care that your city is full of modern-day idols? Do you care that idols of vice and pride and materialism keep many of your friends and neighbors in bondage? Get distressed a little. Maybe your distress will eventually lead to an opportunity to talk with your unbelieving friends.

#### Deal with stereotypes

Our distressed Paul soon spoke out, but it did not go so well for him at the outset. We are told that the great apostle came off as a blabber. "What does this blabber want to say? ... He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities" (v. 18). The Peterson translation captures the flavor of this early encounter in the marketplace: "Some of them dismissed him with sarcasm: "What an airhead!" (v. 18).

Nobody likes coming off as an airhead, but the reaction did not dissuade Paul. It is interesting to note that Paul did not get huffy or defensive or challenge this stereotype directly. He simply proved it wrong by demonstrating his intelligent concern for the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who came out to meet him.

The only way to remedy an inaccurate stereotype is to demonstrate its untruth in consistent and intelligible action. This is exactly what Paul did. He surprised the Athenians and won a hearing by demonstrating his appreciative understanding of their own culture and philosophy. Pretty soon they were asking him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?" (v. 19).

What are some common stereotypes made of American Christians? We are presumed to be self-centered but you can explode this stereotype by compassionate concern for others. We are thought to be materialistic; you can disprove this one by valuing people more than things. We are thought to be individualistic; you can demonstrate a real concern for your neighbor's life situation, children and family. We are presumed always to be in a hurry; you can pause to spend unhurried time with your non-Christian friends (as long as they are open to it).

#### Show Respect

So when you have an opportunity to share, what do you say? Paul may have been tempted to criticize the Athenians regarding their many idols. After all, the city was full of them, and Paul was feeling exasperated about it. But the apostle chose another tactic. He motioned his hearers toward the array of idols infesting the city of Athens and shared a word—of appreciation. "I see how extremely religious you are in every way," Paul said. "For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you" (vs.

See **CULTIVATE**, page 16



By Pastor Kevin Olson

sraeli and I met in a small room off to the side of the church before the service. He carefully unfolded the white robe from inside the protective cloth and put it on with an equal amount of care. As we prayed, his words were difficult to understand, but it seemed as if he were talking to a close friend in the same room. My mind wandered to his care of the robe and then back to the conversation he was hav-

ing. It seemed like such a contrast, but both of them demonstrated his love and respect for the Lord.

The sun was bright in the blue sky as we walked to the church. From the top of the hill you could see for miles. The drumbeat grew louder as we neared the entrance. I ducked to avoid the thatch roof that hung down, and once inside my eyes had to adjust to the darkness in the small 10' x 16' room. When they did, I could see the children sitting on the dirt floor in the front, the older people sitting on the log benches, and the younger people standing in the back. Light was as visible through the mud and stick walls as it was through the holes in the thatch roof. A light breeze came in through the small window, but the music was pouring out. The people were singing with all their hearts to the beat of the drum. There wasn't another instrument. Most didn't have a hymnbook and there wasn't a projection of the words on a screen.

The contrast struck me again; outside the sun shown bright, inside the Son shown bright. Outside you could see for miles, inside you could see heaven.

Congregational prayers were sprinkled throughout the service: after the Scripture reading, or the sermon, before the offering, or a testimony. Sometimes individuals led the congregation in prayer, but other times everyone prayed out loud simultaneously in their own words. These group prayer times were loud and unintelligible. One person was praying about a family member's health, another one about rain for the next year's crop, a third about a friend who was far from the Lord, and a fourth was crying out in repentance to the Lord.

In the midst of this confusing blend of voices there was a unity in their hearts. There was a unity that looked to the Lord to meet their needs, a unity that cried out to the Lord. What a contrast — in the midst of confusion is the unity that the Lord brings.

The offering, with its own unique flavor, was held at the end of the four-hour worship service. The congregation's tradition allowed for everyone to walk by the offering basket in the front and center of the church. As people filed by you could hear coins softly dropping into the basket, and occasionally someone would put in a one-dollar or a 50 cent bill. One woman carried in a bag of tomatoes, another one a bag of beans. Someone carried in a stalk of sugar

cane, followed by a woman with a loud crowing rooster, more coins, a boy with his bag containing two eggs, and a last one with a handwoven rope.

As I watched the parade of people and presents, I was reminded of the time Jesus watched the people put money into the treasury in Jerusalem. In that crowd was a widow who put in two small coins worth less than a penny. Jesus told his disciples, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on" (Mark 12:43-44). Again the contrast in front of me was striking. In

their poverty the congregation gave what little they had, but in the Lord's eyes they put in more than all of the others.

I wonder what contrasts people from other countries would see if they were to watch our worship services. What would they see in our respect for the Lord or hear in our prayers to God? What would the music of our hearts or the generosity of our

lives communicate? Perhaps

they, too, would be able to see beyond the one hour of church on Sunday. Perhaps the attitudes of our hearts and the priorities of our lives would also be visible.

Thankfully the Lord meets us in worship wherever we are — even as he met Isaiah. "I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.' Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

Olson, who serves as AFLC Youth Ministries Director, recently spent a nine-month sabbatical with his family in Tanzania.



Find a way to reach out,

every day

By Brent Raan



ave you shared your faith today? Have you ever shared your faith? Does the average Joe know you are a Christian? I struggle with these questions at times. Mainly with the question that asks me if I've shared my faith. How about you? Like me, you may also struggle with this question. How many days has it

been since you told someone about the love of Christ? Has it been a day or two, a week, a month, or never?

If you answered never, it is not right, because if you are a Christian today and have that great promise of eternal life with Christ, you should be sharing with anyone who comes across your path.

There is a ministry in Minneapolis that has opened my eyes to this necessity. The people who work with Street Level have helped me through this struggle. A group of students from AFLBS join the citywide ministry every week. We meet people where they are at, on the streets. For example, we witness to people downtown, uptown, at the University of Minnesota, the Somali malls, and the homeless shelters.

I like to stay near downtown and the homeless shelters. I have had many interesting conversations out there on the streets, as you can well imagine, especially talking to the homeless. You may be surprised to hear that as a whole, in my experience, the homeless are more open to a conversation than those who are heading home from work, out for a fun night, or with their families. Why? Because they see their need for help.

But when we are out sharing our faith and ministering to those out on the streets, we are often spoken to through their life stories and things the Lord has done in their lives.

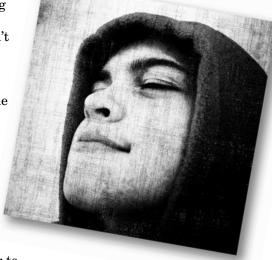
For example, Tyler Prentice, a friend of mine, and two others from AFLBS had a conversation with a young man named Matt. He was a Christian and shared with them a verse and this story: He was on a flight from New York to Minneapolis when he had a gut feeling to tell a lady that she was beautiful, smart, and that Jesus loved her. At first he backed down. But when the urge came again, he could not help it. After telling her this he found out that it was an answer to her prayer. She told him that she was anorexic and had prayed that someone would share with her God's love. What hit Tyler through this was how God uses us in everyday events. "God really does use us," said Tyler.

But things aren't always peachy clean out there on the streets. Several of us had a conversation one night with three homeless guys. I could tell that they had all been drinking and one had no balance at all. During the conversation, he tried several times to get into a fight. I kept stepping between the two and bringing the guy close to me to tell him that Jesus loves him and that He does not want war. The last time, though, the guy threw up his hands and caught me in the jaw. (I had broken my jaw about a month prior to this.) But again the hand of the Lord was there to protect us. While the blow did break open my bottom lip, there was no pain at all.

Another time, I had a conversation with a man on Hennipen Avenue, the commercial and entertainment center of downtown Minneapolis. This man was a drug dealer. He first asked me if I was interested in buying some drugs, only to find out that I was a Christian. Surprisingly, he stayed in the conversation. A girl from AFLBS and I walked with him to buy him a pizza so that we could continue talking with him. Initially, we didn't make it there. Instead, we sat down to talk. He told us that he believed he was not causing any harm by selling drugs. I then pointed out a man walking by and asked him if he were to sell drugs to a dad, what would happen to his kids? God just kept on sending families past us. It really hit him hard. But then his attitude turned cold and he walked away

from us. My friend and I turned to God asking that He would bring the man back to us and that he wouldn't go back to selling drugs. Within 15 minutes he walked by us and then came up to us, stating that he would take us up on that pizza. We found out that he had not even tried to sell any drugs when he had

walked away.



As you minister to others, remember that the Lord will fill you with words; He will protect you, and He will speak to you through that conversation. Don't, I beg you, reject His calling and ignore that waitress, clerk, mom, dad, friend, or whoever may be sitting next to you right now. They need to hear of God's love, too. Even if they are Christian, they may need encouragement.

Raan, a senior at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School in Minneapolis, Minn., is from Tioga, N.D.



sn't it odd how people tend to associate themselves with sport teams from towns where they grew up? I am an avid Pittsburgh Steeler fan, yet I have never played for the team, I've bought fewer tickets to a game than the number of fingers on one hand, and I no longer even live in the same state for which they play. However if anyone asks, I am a Steeler fan. Why? That is a

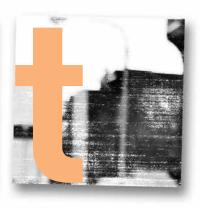
really good question. I suppose I could spend this whole article writing about why — but I won't. The easiest answer would be that I am comfortable with the team. I don't want to change my "affiliation" with the Steelers, and likely I never will. What in the world does this have to do with city ministry you ask?

I believe we have so few AFLC city churches

(with no inner city churches) because, like football team affiliations, we are comfortable in our rural- and suburban-style churches. I will admit that I was hesitant in taking my call to serve Hope because it was a city church out of my comfort zone. If most of us are honest, we also are comfortable in our churches, and happen to like this comfort.

Comfort is not necessarily bad; however, there is a question we need to ask ourselves. Why do we have our churches in their locations? For many of us, the answer is probably that was where enough people felt *comfortable* going to a church. I wonder how many churches were started in locations that were uncomfortable, or even dangerous?

We read of the Apostle Paul being beaten, stoned, whipped, left for dead — this uncomfort-











able and even dangerous work took place in areas that today might best be described as the inner city. And who could forget Jonah? He was perfectly content following the direction God had for him as long as it was comfortable. Jonah did not want to go and "do" ministry in that inner city called Nineveh. Those people were too far lost. They didn't deserve God's grace; they weren't "church" material.

Is God calling us to Nineveh today? Yes He is! It makes sense to

do inner city ministry; the city has a huge need, yet so few are willing to go. Why should we venture into the city? If we are honest, we are more than just uncomfortable with inner city ministry — we are plain scared. When I was out grocery shopping for Thanksgiving I decided to go to a different part of town for my food. I went deeper into the city of Minneapolis, instead of further away, where the shops are cleaner, the food is better, and the people are nicer. At least that was what my perception was. I was more than a little uncomfortable when I gassed up my mini-van at a shady looking station. And then after a shopping trip to a city grocery store where I was a minority, I literally was in culture shock. However, I found myself thinking what a great need there was for solid AFLC churches in the inner city.

Perhaps what we need is to have more of us will-

ing to buy homes in "bad" parts of the city. Perhaps next time we do a church plant or grow and expand our church, we ought to grow and expand into the city. I believe God wants to reach out to those dwelling in the city, but because of our affluence, many of us desiring safety, security, and a better life for our families have moved out of the city and into comfort.

Jesus reached out to prostitutes in His day. Dare I say that we need more prostitutes in our congregations? Drinking wine or beer is a hot topic within our pious congregations, yet don't we need churches setting up shop right next to liquor stores? How will we reach the inner city when we are afraid to worship in "their" part of town, let alone live in it! When we start to purposely make a real effort to show God's love to city dwellers by living, working, laughing, and crying with our neighbors, then people might start to sit up and take notice of Christ and what He has to offer.

The end of the book of Jonah leaves us with a somewhat tragic picture. A great prophet is angry with God because a simple plant that was shading him shriveled up and died. Jonah's earthly source of fleeting comfort vanished. Yet people in the city of Nineveh were crying out for mercy from God. The end. The true story is over. What did Jonah do? Perhaps a bigger question and even more important question than what Jonah did after being confronted by God is what are you going to do? Will you set this article down and forget what was said? Maybe you will give a few extra bucks to some "city" ministry so your conscience can be appeased. Or perhaps some will decide to make a difference and go all in. It is easy to scorn Jonah, yet how many of us are just like him?

Carr serves Hope Lutheran, Minneapolis, Minn.



am so thankful to God for the opportunity to be here in America. I have experienced His wonderful creation in this part of the world with snow, which I never saw before! In the Iraqw Bible translation for the Iragw people of Mbula, Tanzania, the whiteness of snow mentioned in Isaiah 1:18 is translated as hail. Because of a lack of knowing snow, you can't even find a word to describe it in Iraqw.

I want to give my sincere thanks to the AFLC and AFLTS leaders as they have agreed to my coming as one of their seminarians this year. I have found that Christian theology is taught in a pure Lutheran doctrine according to the Word of God, and I can also learn Christianity through the life of Christian people on this campus. Pray to the Lord for the professors He called here to teach His Word so as to help the seminarians and the Bible school students personally in their spiritual needs and to prepare many for His field here in America and abroad as Jesus Himself said, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers

school before coming to America for my studies.

Zak Malikwa is a secretary for mission and evangelism of the Diocese. He travels throughout the country for evangelism.

Especially for this time our church has started a new area for missions, where we are focusing on evangelism among the Hadzabe and Datoga people in the big valley of Yaeda Chiin.

The Datoga people are cattle keepers who do not live in one area, but they are always shifting from one area to another looking for a bigger place to feed their flocks.

The Hadzabe are the people living in the bushes, without special houses, and they still live by hunting animals and gathering fruits and roots.

The church is helping them spiritually, fiscally, and socially. Some of them have now been to primary school. Through evangelism, many of them have become Christians. As they do, there is a special opportunity for five to ten of them to join the Waama school every year. This helps strengthen them in their Christian faith and prepare some of them to be local church leaders

## In Africa, the harvest is ready

## —to reap

## By Pastor Zakaria Dallei

are few ..." (Matthew 9:37-38).

Because my English is limited, I just want to briefly tell a few words about the three Zaks. I am now the third seminarian named Zak to study at AFLTS from Tanzania! The first was Zak Axwesso, the second was Zak Malikwa and I am Zak Dallei. This is wonderful! And it is only by the grace of God — oh praise the Lord!

How great will it be if AFLTS would continue to leave its doors open for others to come from and others to go to Tanzania.

After their studies here, my fellow Zaks have become special blessings in the church in Mbula Diocese. Zak Axwesso, who was a dean of Waama Lutheran Bible School for many years, served as general secretary of the Mbula Diocese. He is now retired, but because Waama is the heart of the Diocese and is experiencing a shortage of teachers, he was asked to continue teaching there. I was also a dean at the Waama Bible

among their own people.

I can prove how plentiful the harvest of our Lord is in Tanzania and Mbula by telling of many different examples. But in short, I want to close by saying the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few at Waama. Please pray with us to the Lord of the harvest that He would send His workers.

May the Lord bless you.

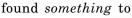


Pastor Zakaria Dallei, who is from Tanzania, is a first-year seminary student at the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary.

22-23).

Not only that. Paul went on to quote an Athenian holy book — and in a *positive* light. "For 'In him we live and move and have our being;' as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring'" (v. 28).

There is a lesson to be learned here: *show respect* early and often. Even in out-and-out pagan Athens, Paul





respect. We can respect
our non-Christian
friends, too. Acknowledge
their spiritual search,
such as it is. "I see that
you are interested in
spiritual things," you
might say. "Well, so am
I."

Paul became a student of Athenian culture and history. If you are interested in speaking with postmodern unbelievers, you might read a

book about their culture and values

or listen to their songs and read their poetry. If you are interested in speaking with your Hindu colleagues at work, learn something about their worldview.

#### Point to Jesus

When the opportunity arose, of course, Paul did not hesitate to point his hearers to Jesus. If you have gotten to the marketplace, overcome the stereotypes, shown consistent respect, etc., you will eventually gain a hearing. It is the time to point your hearers to Jesus.

Paul condensed his evangelistic message into a two-minute sermon: "While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (vs. 30-31). Paul pointed his hearers to the "man whom [God] appointed." He didn't recite the entire catechism. He didn't lecture his hearers in theology. He pointed them briefly and precisely to Jesus.

There is an important evangelistic strategy at work here. Paul did not want to "get in the way." He did not want them to trip over his own cultural insensitivity or his own culture, Jewish behaviors, or traditions. He wanted them to meet the Lord Jesus. If they were to trip up at all, they must trip up over Him.

Let's be realistic. If we are successful in presenting the gospel, *some* of our hearers will turn away. The message, certainly, is for everyone. But the "gate is narrow" and relatively few will accept it. We should make every effort that our hearers hear and understand *the gospel itself* and do not get sidetracked by our own behaviors, idiosyncrasies or insensitivities.

#### Move On

Finally, Paul knew when to move on. Pointing to Jesus and the resurrection caused quite a stir among the Athenians. Pointing to Jesus sometimes does. But Paul didn't remain until every question was answered and every doubt resolved. Rather, we read, "At that point Paul left them" (v. 33).

Do you remember the old story about a pastor who preached to one lonely parishioner who had braved a snowstorm and made it to church when no one else was able? The pastor felt obligated to offer his parishioner a full liturgy, a complete sermon, and full array of appointed hymns and readings.

After the service, the parishioner, a farmer, thanked the pastor for braving the snowstorm, making his way to church, and offering his services. "You would brave a snowstorm, too, to feed your cows — even if only one of them showed up," the pastor said.

"Yes," the farmer replied, "but if only one showed up, I wouldn't give him the whole load of hay!"

There is good wisdom in the farmer's reply. You don't need to "dump the whole load" at every meeting with your non-Christian friends. If you do, they might start running away whenever they see you coming — not exactly what you want to have happen.

Paul was able to move on because he trusted the harvest to the Lord. Verses 26 and 27 give us an insight into his worldview: "From one ancestor [God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him ..."

God is behind this groping and searching. It does not depend upon our clever preaching. It does not depend upon some technique for clinching a spiritual commitment. Spiritual searching and spiritual finding depend upon God himself. He is the object of our searching and the instigator of the journey.

So move on. God may give you an opportunity to share a word of identification, respect, hope, or challenge with your non-Christian friends. Watch for opportunities — and pray for the courage to share when they arrive. Your sharing may be brief, your words faltering, and your heart pounding. But it's OK. You can trust the harvest to the Harvestor.

Lindquist, a Lutheran pastor, is general director of World Mission Prayer League, a Lutheran community mission based in Minneapolis. This article is reprinted with permission from WMPL's *Fellow Workers* magazine.



#### AMBASSADOR PUBLICATIONS Minneapolis, Minnesota

#### To Order Resources

Available from AFLC
Parish Education at (763)
545-5631 or parished@
aflc.org. Note that some of
the materials may be
borrowed from the Parish
Ed lending library.

#### **Further Resources**

These resources are produced by Jesus Cares Ministries (JCM), a unique outreach ministry of The Lutheran Home Association in Belle Plaine. Minn. JCM publishes Christ-centered resources to assist parents, teachers, caregivers, pastors, and volunteers in teaching God's Word to individuals with special needs. For information on additional resources, contact JCM Ministries at 1-877-505-3675 or icministries.org

# AFLC Parish Education RESOURCES

## Planting the Seeds in Students with Special Needs



This resource gives teachers of Sunday schools and Bible classes guidelines for including students with special needs in their classrooms.

Characteristics of

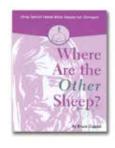
Characteristics of common areas of disability are explained,

and information is given on how the disabilities affect the students and learning situations. The 37-page booklet and 32-minute video include sections on:

- learning disabilities
- attention deficit disorder
- mental retardation
- autism
- communication disabilities
- visual impairments
- hearing impairments
- orthopedic disabilities
- reaching out to parents

Video and booklet set \$14.95 or booklet \$4.95

#### Where Are the Other Sheep?



Jesus wants all people to hear His Word, but people with developmental disabilities have often been overlooked in the sharing of that Word. Often Christians want to share the gospel with

them but don't know where to start. This 10-page booklet is a helpful guide for those who wish to do evangelism work in their communities and shows how to use a special needs Bible class to reach out to persons with developmental disabilities. \$3.95

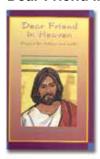
#### **Understanding Your Student**



Designed for pastors and teachers to use in planning the spiritual instruction of a student with special needs, this 26-page booklet includes specific steps for understanding your new student to

determine his or her level of spiritual knowledge. \$5.95

#### **Dear Friend in Heaven**



A specially designed prayer book for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Prayers are provided in 17 different topical areas. For each topic, prayers are presented in four different styles: prose,

rebus, personalized, and song. The 40-page booklet is also appropriate for children without cognitive disabilities. \$6.95

## Also available: Dear Christian Friend Bible Curriculum

- Old Testament: Student Lessons \$6,
   Teacher's Guide CD-ROM \$37.75
- New Testament: Student Lessons
  \$8.95, Teacher's Guide CD-ROM \$55.75

## Beginning a Special Needs Bible Class

A step-by-step checklist. \$3.95

## [World Missions] Melting pot a missions

was recently surprised to learn that here in the metro area of Fargo, N.D., and Moorhead, Minn., 195 people speak Cushite.

Cushite? Aren't the Cushites people from back in the book of Genesis?

Indeed. Cush was born to Ham, son of Noah, who built the ark (see Genesis 10:6). Modern day Cushites are not necessarily direct descendants, but they are called Cushite because of their language, which is, in fact, descended from those ancient peoples of northeastern Africa. Many Cushite cultures, mostly in Africa, are as vet unreached with the gospel. In addition to Cushite, languages spoken right here in our neighborhoods include Chinese, Vietnamese, Kurdish, Serbocroatian and others.

America has always been a melting pot of nationalities, and today it is no less true. The nations are in our neighborhoods. They may even be in our own back yards. And this provides us a unique opportunity and privilege. God may not be calling us to a land far

away, but is He calling us to an ethnic neighbor? Can we get to know them? Can we let them into our lives? Can we be to them a living testimony for Jesus?

> They are not isolated people. They may have parents, siblings or other relatives still living in a land where the gospel may not yet have penetrated. If the ethnic neighbors we know receive the gospel, who knows how far it will go? Perhaps our little witness to them will turn out to be a witness to an otherwise unreached nation.

"If you cannot cross the ocean, And the heathen lands explore, You can find the heathen nearer, You can help them at your door." Jesus commanded us in Matthew 28:19-20 to make disciples of all the nations. Going to some of them may be a pretty short distance.

> Pastor Jim Fugleberg World Missions Committee member

## Fergus Falls church makes support challenge

embers of the Calvary Free Lutheran Missions Committee, Fergus Falls, Minn., visited Nate and Rhoda Jore in Minot, N.D., this last summer to find out more about their missionary candidacy to Uganda. Nate explained the vision to provide pastoral training and organization in the partnership with Ugandan believers, as he would preach, teach, and administer God's Word.

The Calvary Missions Committee recommended to their congregation to provide annually 10 units of support, or \$6,000 per year, to the Jores. If the Calvary congregation passes this resolution at their Annual Meeting in January, the financial support will be extended. The Calvary Missions Committee is prayerful that other AFLC congregations will join them in

this opportunity to send the Jores to the field.

"As the Missions Committee has proposed adopting a new missionary family, the call is to make this more personal, more focused, and more connected," said Jim Johnson, senior pastor at Calvary in a message last fall on evangelism. "We as a congregation take that call to become very personally connected with the Jores, which enables us to be a part of taking the good news of Jesus to the ends of the earth."

> Pastor Jason Holt Calvary Free Lutheran Fergus Falls, Minn.

# Abounding Contraction of the Con

call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19, NKJ).

This is a true story of a small, midwestern congregation — a matter of life or death. The church was having *mild* financial problems. They acted decisively, and at the annual meeting, members of the congregation voted to take care of "our own." They stopped ministering to the community so they could minister just to their members only.

The following year they had *serious* financial problems. At the annual meeting, they voted to take care of "our own." That year they stopped serving inactive members of the congregation so they could focus on active members only.

The next year they had *overwhelming* financial problems. They passed a resolution at the annual meeting to take care of "our own." They stopped helping those who did not attend the annual meeting so they could more fully help only those who did attend.

The following year they had *catastrophic* financial problems. They passed two resolutions at the annual meeting. The first was to take care of "our own." The second was to close the church.

Slow learners!

Jesus, in Luke 6:38, said: "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

From Mark 14:3 we read of Jesus' going to Simon's home in His last visit to Bethany, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus had blessed Jesus so often. From a most tender, perhaps heavy heart, wanting to shower bountiful love upon Jesus, Mary brought "an alabaster flask of very costly oil ... and poured it on His head" (v. 3). "But there were some who were indignant among themselves and said, 'Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.' And they criticized her sharply" (vs. 4-5).

But Jesus said, in her defense: "Let her alone. Why



That testimony is still being heralded today as a work that pleased Jesus — complete surrender of time, talent, and treasure.

Paul, in II Corinthians 9:6-7, was inspired of God to write a perfect pattern for our sharing with God our gifts: "But this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."

Then the blessing comes in verse 8: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work."

Wonderful, wonderful — "abounding grace," "all sufficiency," and "an abundance for every good work."

May our testimony be like Mary's as we share our time, talent, and treasure for every good work — a work that pleases Jesus.

"I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed" (Psalm 37:25-26).

— Dale Manternach
 Abiding Savior Free Lutheran
 Sioux Falls, S.D.

# Have you **UISIOM** caught the

have been rereading the book of Acts lately. Those poor disciples! They knew Jesus was the Son of God, yet they were crushed by His unfair trial and crucifixion. Their world spun out of control at the news that He was not in the tomb.

Reeling from the news that He had risen from the dead, they were just getting accustomed to His being alive when He left again. They watched Him ascend into a cloud! There they stood. Two other men were there and they asked, "Why do you stand looking up into heaven?"



**Faylin Myhre** 

I think they could ask the same of us sometimes. Our spirits are crushed and we feel defeated. Our world spins out of control. We stand looking as if we are in a daze, not really seeing the great need

around us. Or, we see the need and don't know where to

begin. We may be looking to human leader-

ship around us for answers and direc-

tion. The Lord asks: "Why do you

did. In spite of warnings not to preach the name of Jesus, they did anyway. After beatings and jail, they continued to preach and heal in the name of Jesus. They were filled with a power and passion that would not let them sit idle. In fact, they were willing to die for the cause of Christ!

The Lord Jesus gave them a vision. They fulfilled it. Acts 1:8 was not just for the disciples and the New Testament church. It is for us today, for you and for me, as women who serve Him. He has promised us the power of the Holy Spirit. He calls us to share the gospel at home, in our land and to the ends of the earth.

Throughout Scripture, women have played an important role in God's plan. Sarah, Leah, Hannah, Rahab, Mary the mother of Jesus, the woman at the well, Martha and Mary, and many others were used by God because of their faith and obedience. It was to women that the Lord first spoke after His resurrection.

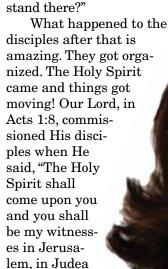
In the New Testament church, women were active as well. They prayed for Peter to be released

from jail and supported Paul as he preached Christ on his journeys.

Some are mentioned for their good works, charity, support and service for the Lord's

work. How about you?
Have you caught the
vision? Are you filled
with passion for Jesus?
Are you tapping into
the Power He has
available to us in the
Holy Spirit? He is
asking you: "Why do
you stand looking
into heaven?"

Myhre, Abercrombie, N.D., is the Women's Outreach Coordinator



and Samaria

and the ends of

the earth." That is just what they





New members were received Nov. 27 at Faith Free Lutheran, Minneapolis. Pictured (from left) are interim Pastor Eugene Enderlein, Peter, Isaiah, Janoah and Aleithia Haugen, Joe Faldet, Sam and Sarah Wellumson, Nick, Sarah and Isaiah Tennessen, and Jeanne Ott.

## **ABCDEFG**

#### 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 head-quarters 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.



New members were received Nov. 13 at Living Word Lutheran, Menasha, Wis. Pictured (from left) are Greg Johnston, K.C. Beyer, Brent Johnston, Dave Johnston, Deb Johnston, Pastor Duane Matz, Brad Johnston, Judy Tracy, Brandon Maciejewski, and Boyd Tracy.

Pastor Al Pinno, the new president of the AFLC Canada, accepted a call to serve Living Word Lutheran Church, Vernon, British Columbia. He is also the Canadian representative of East European Mission Network (EEMN), and will continue his ministry with that organization.

Pastor David White, Lipan, Texas, has accepted a call to serve Abiding Word Lutheran Church, Deshler, Neb. White was approved by members of the Coordinating Committee for call to an AFLC congregation, and will be placed on the fellowship roster.

Pastor Lee Hoops, Metz, Michigan, has resigned from St. Peter Lutheran Church to accept a call from West Prairie Lutheran Church, Kindred, N.D., where he began serving in December.

Pastor Richard Gun-

derson will begin interim work at the Wisconsin churches of Hosanna Free Lutheran, Cumberland, and Timberland-Ringebu Free Lutheran, Barronett.

Pastor Mel Meyer has accepted a call to serve as interim pastor at St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran, Indianapolis, Ind.

The theme for the **2006 Annual Conference**, scheduled for June 19-23 at the Warm Beach Christian Conference Center, Stanwood, Wash., is taken from II Kings 7:9: "This is the day of good news." Next month's issue will contain registration and housing information.

The theme for the **2007 FLY Convention**, schedule for July 2-7, is "Unshackled," taken from Galatians 5:1: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourself be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

### ARC hosts junior high, high school retreats

#### Announces theme for 2006

The theme for 2006 at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis., is based on John 8:36: "So if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed!"

Feb. 3-5 is SIDEbySIDE (for grades 7-12) and Junior Sno Daze (for grades 4-7). Dave VanAcker and Matt Oxendale will be two featured speakers for the SIDEbySIDE retreat. Eric Westlake is the featured speaker for Junior Sno Daze. There will be lots of recreation including snow tubing, cross-country skiing, broomball, basketball, swimming, and dodge ball. Skiing at Trollhaugen is an additional option for those attending SIDEbySIDE.

Register by Jan. 3 to receive a free ARC t-shirt. The cost of each retreat is \$85 per person. There is a late fee of \$10 for any registrations received after Jan. 24. Please register through your church, which should have registration forms available. Call the ARC for more information, 1-800-294-2877 or email arcregistration@centurytel.net. Additional information about each retreat will soon be posted on the ARC website: arcaflc.org.

### **Update on WMF email**

The email addresses printed in the November issue for the executive board of the WMF were incorrect. Please note the corrected emails below.

President: wmf.pres@aflc.org First vice president: wmf.1vp@aflc.org Second vice president: wmf.2vp@aflc.org Third vice president: wmf.3vp@aflc.org Communications secretary: wmf.comsec@ aflc.org

Recording secretary: wmf.recsec@aflc.org Treasurer: wmf.treas@aflc.org Executive Secretary: wmf.es@aflc.org Women's Outreach Coordinator: wmf.woc@ aflc.org

#### **AFLC** memorials — November

#### **AFLBS**

Derek Horn, Don Rodvold, Nellie Helgeson, Bea Skoog, Arnold Yri, Fred Haufschild, Kenny Johnson, Erling Hoseth, Michael Towbridge, Kenny Nylander, Gertie Olson, Violet Mortenson, Verne Trulson, Olga Moberg, Sharon Gudvanger, Arvey Hartsoch, Earl Hartsoch, Mike Davidson, Lester Mickelson (2), Maynard Davidson, Rolf Springon, Donna Bohn, Josie Miller, Cliff Grubb, Ralph Boland, Esther Ericson

#### **AFLTS**

Earl Stover, Neil Rudebusch, Loretta Johnson, Beldon Kapelle, Victor Stueland, Arnold Yri, Fred Haufschild

#### **Evangelism**

Gertrude Landsem

#### **FLAPS**

Pastor Mike Crowell

#### **Home Missions**

Mrs. Tom Johnston, Jan Fatland, Chuck Hendrickson, Belden Kapelle

#### **Parish Education**

Erling Hoseth Les Mickelsen

#### **WMF**

Carolyn Dyrud (2), Wilma Mortimer, Harriet Johnson, Joe Rumpca, Selma Tvinnereim, Bea Skoog

#### **World Missions**

Gladys Vedquam LaVanche Petersen

#### Vision

**Dusty Frisinger Bob Transtrom** 

... in honor of **AFLTS** 

Aloysius and Dorothy Cerny

#### **Association of Free Lutheran Congregations**

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (11 months) - January 1 - November 30, 2005

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN NOVEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund*	\$387,377	\$34,400	\$384,312	99
Youth Ministries	56,062	3,779	64,344	
Parish Education	81,988	7,902	89,860	
Seminary	156,804	16,119	180,979	115
Bible School	269,308	14,232	288,287	107
Home Missions	277,870	26,617	233,354	84
World Missions	262,377	26,293	207,662	79
Personal Support	368,688	31,402	334,762	91
TOTALS	\$1,860,474	\$134,126	\$1,550,205	83
TOTALS 2004	\$1,739,460	\$129,196	\$1,612,695	93
Goal 92%	. , ,	. ,	. , ,	

The Evangelism Department received \$3,223 in November.

These are the Annual Conference-approved budgets but do not reflect all the financial needs of the departments. Contact the individual departments for further information.

<sup>\*</sup> Includes Evangelism totals

# You can Serve there

hile attending a conference in Chicago I had the chance to be part of a group that visited some inner-city ministries.

One of our visits was to a ministry



**Craig Johnson** 

to male prostitutes. Those who serve in this challenging ministry spend much of their time walking the streets, late at night, in a dangerous part of town. They try to make contacts, establish relationships, earn people's

trust, and show the love of Christ in any way they can.

You would expect the person who started a ministry like this to be somebody who grew up living in the inner city and accustomed to life on the streets. That wasn't the founder of the ministry's story. He grew up in a small town in Iowa. He went to Wheaton College safely out in a Chicago suburb and a long way, in various ways, from the urban jungle. While at college God placed a burden on his heart to reach out to those society considered the lowest and the least. God led him to start the ministry. God equipped him to do the work, and God was using him to reach many who felt hopeless and unloved.

Too often we have bought into the myth that you can only serve "your own kind." We have limited our possible mission fields to the familiar and the comfortable. We have failed to see that by the power of God a guy who grows up in a small town in Iowa can effectively serve the Lord on the streets of Chicago.

The apostle Paul was "a Hebrew of Hebrews" (Philippians 3:5, NIV). Before his conversion to Christ he was a proud Jew who looked down upon non-Jews. Nobody was more of a least likely candidate to be "the apostle to the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13). And yet the Lord said about him, "This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

Our recently departed missionary friend, Carolyn Dyrud, had a rather comfortable childhood in Minnesota's Twin Cities. It was a long way from there to the red dirt of Brazil's state of Parana. But God used her for many years in very effective service to poor and hurting Brazilians.

Believing God can only use you to minister to people who are like you isn't really humility. It's a failure to believe in what God can do. It's a lack of trust that He can equip and use you in ways beyond what human reason could expect.

Over the years, many of our people in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations have grown up in rural areas or small towns. The big city has often been looked at as a scary place. There is a temptation to consider it impossible to serve in an urban area. It's so different. "How could I serve in a place like that after growing up in a place like this?" you may ask. But God replies, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things

Too often we have bought into the myth that you can only serve 'your own kind.'

are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

A central theme of the book of Acts is the early Church's struggle with sharing the good news of Christ with people different from themselves. The first Jewish believers didn't know how to relate to non-Jews. Sometimes the Lord had to use persecution to get them out of their comfortable — and closed — community. They eventually went into the world with the good news. God taught them how to share His message with all kinds of different people. They learned that "God does not show favoritism" (Acts 10:34). And that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Jesus is the ultimate demonstration of someone going to a place different from the familiar. He left the glory of heaven for the barn of Bethlehem. The holy One came and hung out with sinners like us.

Because of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross, we can leave our familiar condition of hopeless bondage to sin and become part of God's family. Then we can go to the faraway and the formerly frightening places and people and share the life-transforming message of Jesus.

## ARC

## Vision at our Tates

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

uring my first few months here at the Association Retreat Center, I have come to realize and experience the power of the Holy Spirit working in the lives of so many people from all the ends of the earth.

Who would have ever thought that someone born and raised on the plains of South Dakota could ever come to a place such as this and be part of creating an environment in which the Holy Spirit can do His great work in the hearts of people from so many different cultures?

There is a vision among the employees here at the ARC to allow God to bring Christian groups to the beautiful Wisconsin woods. We also desire to see the power of the Holy Spirit work in our visitors. As I am writing this, we have a group of Romanian Baptists here, some of whom do not speak English but do certainly feel the power of the Holy Spirit. In the other groups of Hispanic, Hmong, Chinese, Russian, African American, and many others, we hear of the same sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8 tells us that we must be contagious Christians. That we must be involved — not just watching from the sidelines — in God's activity of telling the

world's people about Jesus. By our actions, words, and thoughts, we are to show the people around us that we believe in the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we desire the same for everyone.

We need to realize that we are continuing the ministry begun by Jesus when He came to Earth. This is why we are called the Body of Christ. Each one of us needs to catch the vision that Jesus had when He was here. When we read about Him preaching, we should also preach. When we remember Him praying, we too should pray. As He shows us compassion, we, too, should be compassionate. Jesus not only came into the world to save us through His death and resurrection, He came that we would have an example to follow in our daily lives.

It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit would continue His great work in me and through the staff at the ARC. I also pray that we would humbly receive the power of the Holy Spirit and be the witnesses that Jesus would have us to be to all the people entering our gates.

By Jim Keller
 Director of guest services
 Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis.