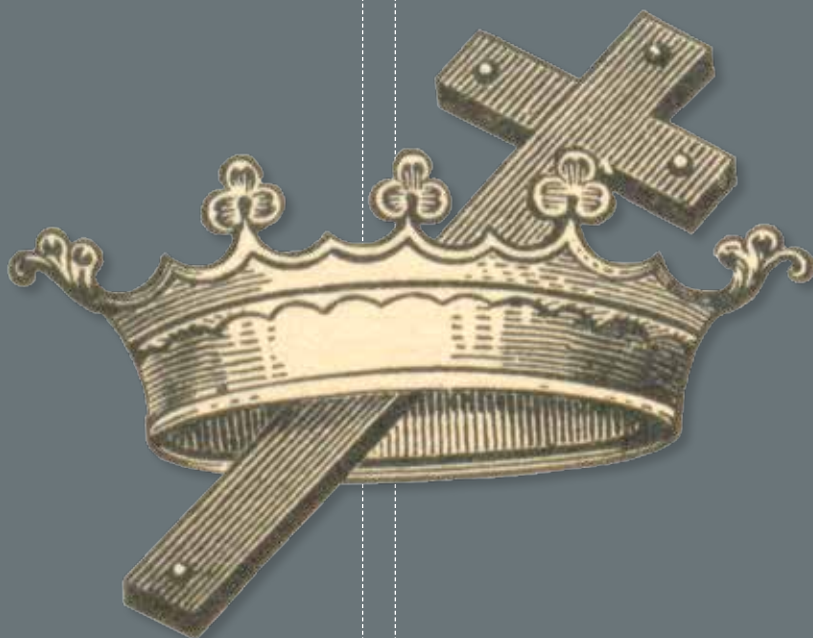


THE LUTHERAN 

JUNE 2009

# AMBASSADOR

THE  
WHO,  
WHAT,  
WHEN,  
WHERE,  
WHY, &  
HOW OF



# EVANGELISM

EVANGELISM

# Set



# free

BY PASTOR HERB HOFF

I fully release you from all restrictions." That was the good news I heard this morning.

Wow! And hallelujah! It is just one day short of three months since I had surgery to hold my neck together, and now my surgeon says that I am fully released. I am free! The bone grafts in my neck are already beginning to fuse, now stronger than they have ever been. I can do anything I feel comfortable with, at least that is what the doctor said.

The past three months have been quite a journey for me, my family and the wonderful church I am honored to pastor. My regular schedule of preaching and teaching, visiting and counseling was interrupted early this year when a mid-January skiing accident injured my spinal cord and compromised the stability of my lower neck. Now, with a titanium plate firmly screwed onto three vertebrae, I am safe and secure.

"I fully release you" were the truly wonderful words I heard this morning. But as good as those words were to hear from my doctor, they are even better words to hear from One who has been healing me, my Great Physician.

Just last weekend I heard similar words after I and the congregation made confession of our struggle with sin:

*Almighty God, in His great and wonderful mercy for us has given His only Son to die in our place, and for His sake He offers us the forgiveness of all our sins.*

*Through His Holy Spirit He cleanses us and gives us the power to proclaim the mighty deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into the splendor of His glorious light.*

*For this reason, and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, I declare unto you His promise. To you, who do truly repent and believe, hear these words:*

*You are forgiven! You are freed! You are loved!*

*Through the suffering, death and resurrection of our blessed Lord Jesus, you are cleansed and freed from the power of sin and its judgment upon you.*

That is a release that I can really live with, not only now, but forever. I am forgiven! I am freed! I am loved! Hallelujah!

Even though Dr. Kaczmar has officially released me from all medical restrictions, I know that there is still some healing yet to be completed. I am missing strength and some feeling, and there are still several non-responsive muscles, all reminding me that I am still waiting for nerves to experience repair. It seems that the completion of healing will take some time.

The same is also true in the rest of my life. I know that the results of that full release that Jesus offers will take time to be experienced in my life. I know that God's "mercy triumphs over judgment" in my life, that is His promise in James 2:13. I also know that the battle, the struggle, continues as long as I live in this flesh.

I have been released, "cleansed and freed from the power of sin and its judgment," but I still wait for the fullness of all that it means. When I see Jesus face to face, my Great Physician will reveal in me complete healing.

*Hoff serves St. Ansgar's Free Lutheran, Salinas, Calif.*

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Evangelization is a process of bringing the gospel to people where they are, not where you would like them to be.

—Vincent Donovan

Perhaps if there were more of that intense distress for souls that leads to tears, we should more frequently see the results we desire. Sometimes it may be that while we are complaining of the hardness of the hearts of those we are seeking to benefit, the hardness of our own hearts and our feeble apprehension of the solemn reality of eternal things may be the true cause of our want of success.

—Hudson Taylor

Evangelism is not a professional job for a few trained men, but is instead the unrelenting responsibility of every person who belongs to the company of Jesus.

—Elton Trueblood

It is not our business to make the message acceptable, but to make it available. We are not to see that they like it, but that they get it.

—Dr. Vance Havner

THE



# You are the hands and feet of the gospel



By Mark Fagerstrom

**H**ow can I tell people about Christ when others can do a better job than I can? I don't even know if they will listen. When the time finally comes I decide I don't know enough. Someone else can do a better job of telling them about Jesus Christ. Yet it is hard to ignore what Jesus said in Acts 1:8, that we are to be His witnesses. We are to be His witnesses first where we live and then go out and expand our witness even to the ends of the earth.

Too often we leave the responsibility of reaching the lost for Christ to pastors and missionaries. God has placed around us family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers with whom to share Jesus. As followers of Christ we are called to share the good news. The problem is we make it too difficult. It is as simple as living your life for Christ and not compromising the truth of God's Word. God's Word is true—hold the world to the standard of God's Word and don't try to change the Word to fit into the world's standard. Don't be afraid to fail. On our own we will fail, but God is our strength.

How great it is to know that whenever God asks us to do something, He doesn't leave us to do it alone. He is there every step of the way and provides us with the

strength we need to accomplish the task He has set before us. Matthew 28:20 says He is with us always, even to the end of the age.

In our church we launch balloons after our Easter morning service. The idea is to let others know about the good news that Jesus is alive. We tie notes to the balloons so that if they are found by someone, they can call or write back to the church. Each year a few balloons are never sent out. Maybe the idea is keeping one balloon won't make a difference since there are so many that do get sent out. But that one balloon not sent out could be the one that brings the finder to know Jesus.

Do we do the same? Do we hold back because we think people won't come to know Christ anyway, or someone else will tell them? We might be the only voice they will ever hear telling them the good news of Jesus. We don't know when or how people will come to know Jesus as their personal Savior. We should use every opportunity to tell those around us the good news. We should let all the balloons go.

Here are three simple things we can do:

First, hold on to the truth of God's Word. Don't allow God's Word to be compromised. In today's world we want to fit the Bible into what is happening around us.

Instead we should mold the world according to what is written in the Bible. Stand up for the Bible, even when it seems to go against what the world is saying. This could be an easy way to let others know about your faith and about the God you serve. Remember that God is always with you.

Second, have faith that God can work through you. In Hebrews 11 we have example after example of ordinary people who did great things. It was their faith that made them righteous, and it is because of their faith we know who they are today. When we put our faith in Jesus Christ, He gives us the strength to be bold for Him.

Third, allow God to change people. As we share Jesus with those around us, we need to remember that it is the Holy Spirit working in them who will bring them to know the Savior. Be faithful to share what Jesus can do for them and what He has done for you, and then let the Holy Spirit work. "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Who me? Yes you!

*Fagerstrom is a member of Grace Lutheran, DeKalb, Ill.*

**I**t is interesting to note that the word “evangelism” isn’t even in our English Bible. So we have to ask ourselves, where does the word come from? It comes from the Greek word *evangel*, from which we get our word “gospel.”

Many times in the Scriptures where the word “preach” is used, it is literally the word “evangelize.” For instance, Luke 4:18 says, “He has anointed me to *evangelize* the poor ...” Paul said to the Romans (1:15-16), “Thus, for my part, I am eager to *evangelize* you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the *evangel* (gospel) ...” Evangelism is simply the preaching, teaching or proclamation of the gospel.

That was easy. But wait, what’s the gospel? In order to evangelize, we have to know what the gospel is. Paul gives us a clear definition in I Corinthians 15:1-4 when he says, “Now I make known the *gospel* which I *preached* to you ... that Christ died for our

sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures ...”

We see that the gospel is all about Jesus and what He has done for us on the cross. That’s the gospel! That’s good news! Isn’t it?

But why don’t more people see it as good news? I think we often forget to explain the two little words Paul has in his definition, “our sins.” The evangel isn’t good news if we don’t know what sin is or what its consequences are. That’s why Paul, in his letter to Timothy, explains the need for the *evangel*, “But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully ... according to the glorious *gospel* of the blessed God ...” (I Timothy 1:8-11).

The law (or Ten Commandments) must be used to reveal our sins and their consequences before a holy God, or it doesn’t make much sense that Christ died for us. A. W. Knock, in *Personal Evangelism*,

gives his definition of evangelism, “It is to bring a soul face to face with a holy God in His Word so that he will see his sin and come to the Savior who forgives, blots out, and forgets sin.” We need to use the Ten Commandments to bring us to the knowledge of sin, and then we can tell people what Christ has done to save us from the consequences of sin.

We work in a country where almost everyone knows that Jesus died for our sins and rose again from the dead. But for many that story doesn’t make a difference until we present the law. I don’t know how many people have said to me, “Oh, I see, that makes sense, I get it now,” after I have told them about their need for a Savior. And it’s not me, or my Spanish (which isn’t much better than my English). It was the law that revealed their sin, so that the cross can be seen in all its glory.

Is that now all there is to evangelism? I

THEY NEED  
TO SEE THEIR  
NEED FOR  
A SAVIOR



By Darwin Jackson

Here's where I really appreciate the simplicity of Dr. George Patterson, a church-planting missionary to Honduras

My wife, MaryAnn, and I have had the pleasure of seeing God work in peoples lives in three different states here in Mexico. Whether in the city, small rural villages, or in the agricultural camps, when we even-

*Jackson and his wife, MaryAnn, are AFLC missionaries on loan to World Mission Prayer League serving in Nogales, Mexico.*

## A horizontal strip of various typographic styles, including bold, italic, and decorative fonts, arranged in a collage-like fashion. The styles range from classic serif and sans-serif to more ornate, calligraphic, and condensed fonts. Some letters are in all caps, while others are in lowercase, and some are in italics. The arrangement is dense and overlapping, showcasing a wide variety of type design possibilities.

# EVANGELISM CAN BE A PART OF YOUR LIFE

By Dave Berg

THE

WORLD OF THE  
LUTHERAN  
EVANGELIST

**E**vangelism can be a dreaded word for most Christians. It is something we know we should do, but many would rather not talk about it. We would just as soon let someone else take care of it for us. At one time or another, we have heard others say, or perhaps we have been known to say ourselves: "I just can't share my faith" or "I'm afraid to talk about Jesus," or "Isn't that the pastor's job?"

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He was quite clear about what He wants each of us to go out and do when He gave the Great Commission: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

In case anyone would try to claim that Jesus was not specific in those words as to who should go and make disciples of all nations, He is quite clear in the parable of the vine and the branches: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful" (John 15:1-2).

As branches in the Vine of Jesus Christ, we have the privilege of abiding in Him and the awesome responsibility of bearing fruit. Thus all of us are called to bear fruit by sharing our faith. Jesus clearly states that branches bearing no fruit will be cut off. But branches bearing fruit will be pruned to bear even more fruit. God will prune us and help us mature in faith, nurturing us to go out and witness, and plant seeds.

But when do we do this? Is evangelism something we do a few times a year at special events? Or is evangelism something we do every day whenever God presents the opportunity? Actually, God wants us to be evangelizing at major events, at minor events, and every opportunity in between!

If only it were that easy. Unfortunately, as sinful human beings, we have a terrible

fear of failure. If we knew ahead of time that all of the lost souls in our lives would be open to hearing the good news, we would confidently share with them. But because of doubt, we shy away from sharing our faith and lost souls remain in darkness.

What we really need is for God to change our lives so evangelism becomes part of our lifestyle. That change will only come through prayer. AFLC Director of Evangelism Jim Rasmussen came to St. Louis several years ago and taught our Gloria Dei congregation that without prayer, any evangelism effort will fail.



Each week at our Gloria Dei prayer meeting, we ask God to equip us to communicate our faith in Jesus with confidence and without fear. We ask God to teach us that we cannot fail in sharing our faith if we depend on His power for the results. We ask Him to help us have witnessing conversations without fear of failure or rejection. We then offer a list of first names and ask God to open their hearts to receive Christ. And ask Him to help us to share our faith with them.

We ask God to transform our lives so that we may share Christ without fear. We ask Him to take the words "I can't" out of our vocabularies. With God anything is possible. As we go forward with confidence in Him, God will give us opportunities in our daily lives to share our faith whether at school, at work, at a lutefisk supper, on the exercise trail, at the baseball game, at the shopping mall, or wherever God might lead us. We pray we will naturally talk about our faith and invite others to come to know Jesus. God will place us where He needs us and the Holy Spirit will give us the words.

If evangelism is something we are to do each day, do we still need special evangelism events a few times a year? Absolutely!

At Gloria Dei we recently held an Easter egg hunt for the children of our community. The lure of hunting for plastic eggs filled with candy brought more than 100 children and their families to our congregation on a Saturday morning. Before hunting for eggs, we shared the Easter message of Jesus and the resurrection with a captive audience and, hopefully, seeds were planted.

We had never done an event like this before and some of us had doubts. We wondered if anyone would come. We wondered if we could handle an event of this magnitude.

The doubt has been taken away. The event brought many people together and we know that God planted seeds. He used this event to show us what He can do through us when we pray together and go where He leads us. This was one opportunity to share our faith with the community and we are already asking God to show us the way to the next event. God has now given us even more confidence to plant seeds by sharing our faith every day. What seeds will you plant today?

*Berg is a member of Gloria Dei Lutheran, St. Louis, Mo.*

THE



By Sterling Overman

# WITHOUT OPPORTUNITY THERE IS NO PLACE FOR EVANGELISM

**I**n the years that I've been at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School I've enjoyed witnessing and sharing my faith, although I was reluctant at first. All of us in starting out at something new may think, "This is not my comfort zone, and if God wanted me to do this, it wouldn't be this hard."

As for evangelism, there are many different places and opportunities that God gives us to share our faith. I can recall the very first time that I went out to share my faith. I was with an evangelistic group called Street Level. We were sharing our testimonies on the University of Minnesota campus. Feeling uneasy, I asked if I could pray for those who were witnessing so that I would begin to feel more comfortable with the thought of witnessing myself.

Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

I continued to participate with this urban ministry evangelism team, and as time went by, I began personally sharing my faith with others. No longer did intimidation keep me on the sidelines. The more I participated, the better I felt. By showing humility and admitting that I am not totally comfortable in sharing my faith with strangers, I have found a way to approach others that disarms my fears. In fact, I have found a peace that allows me to present the law and the gospel without concern for personal rejection. Instead of anxiety, I experienced true enjoyment in evangelism.

I John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."


So where do we evangelize?

"Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests" (Matthew 22:9-10 KJV).

I see in this parable of Jesus the heart of God who desires that we, as His faithful servants, go out into every highway, every byway, and every pathway, and call upon those whom we find to invite them to the marriage supper of the Lamb. I've found that those highways and byways could be anyplace.

One highway lead to a rock concert. When I arrived, there was nobody there besides our evangelism team. When others came to buy their concert tickets, we were able to pass out CDs that have testimonies of God's salvation on them. In the midst of this, a homeless man asked me for some money. Having no money to give him, I asked him if he had salvation through Christ. He replied that he was saved and encouraged me with the testimony of how Christ had been working in his life. Because the Holy Spirit had prompted me to ask this man of his spiritual condition, we were both encouraged by one another and were able to pray for each other.

Another pathway brought me to the Mall of America. I was invited to join a



class, taught by Pastor Jim Rasmussen, which was going there to practice evangelism techniques. When we arrived, we were given a specific time and place to meet back with each other after evangelizing. As I walked through the mall, I found it very hard to find people who had time or were willing to listen to what I had to share. While milling around, I noticed an idle salesman in a candy shop. I approached him and asked if he had time to answer a few questions. He replied that he did, seeing that he had nothing else that was occupying his time. While we talked, it became apparent to me that this man had many questions and desired to have tangible proof of the message I was presenting. Since I could not prove my claims to his satisfaction, I tried to show him Scripture in the hope that he would be able to recognize the truth of God's Word. This was of no avail because his eyes were blinded. All that he could see was only what lay before him in this world, only those things which will soon pass away.

I Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit

of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

When I left, I asked him to think about the consequences of where his choices would lead him; if what he believed right now was wrong, how would this change his eternal future after death?

It is not the "where" of evangelism that is the concern, but the opportunity that we must be watchful of, because without the *opportunity* there would never be a *place* for evangelism. When seeking opportunities for evangelism, we must be willing and ready to follow the Holy Spirit's leading when and wherever He shows us an opportunity. The where of evangelism is always based on the response of obedience to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

*Overman, a 2009 graduate of AFLBS, is from Arlington, Wash.*

## Opportunities for evangelism

- People sitting next to you on a bus or airplane
- People with handicaps or physical injuries
- People with mental illnesses
- People waiting at a bus stop
- Providing assistance to someone in need
- People who seem as if they have nothing to do, or are just milling around
- Your neighbor across the street
- Your family doctor
- Your waiter at a restaurant

By Pastor Tom Gilman

**E**arly on in my ministry career I remember having a conversation with a pastor of another church in the community where I lived. In response to my expression of concern for the spiritual condition of so many in the community, he said, “Oh, your congregation is that ‘evangelical’ one, isn’t it?” I went home wondering how any Christian, especially a pastor, could make such a comment. Isn’t that what every church is to be about?

Learning about people, even learning about the Church, can be quite disheartening. Many of you have the same mindset as I had in the encounter mentioned above; but undoubtedly there are others of you who would question the importance of evangelism. Please continue reading.

God’s Word says that the Church is the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:27). That picture alone ought to remind us that *we* are not the head; that position belongs to Jesus. He sets the course, He gives the direction, He is in perfect union with the Father, and He passes along to His people the very thing which is on the Father’s heart (see John 6:38; 14:10). Yet sadly, the church all too often operates as if it were given the task of setting the course, and then asking the Father to bless what we’ve decided to do. How much greater the blessing and the anointing when we seek the Father’s heart with our whole heart, and then “get on board.” The Father’s heart is toward the lost people of this world. I Timothy 2:4 tells us that He “desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.” If this is on His heart, it *must*

be on our hearts, too.

The whole basis for the necessity of doing evangelism is the truth that “there is salvation in no one else, and there is no other name (than Jesus) under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts. 4:12). If this were not true, our investments of time and money into evangelism would be foolish. This gives us some insight into why there are so many (sadly, even within the organized church) who believe evangelism to be pointless and arrogant, even bigoted. Why should we “infringe” on someone else’s life with our message of hope in Jesus Christ if there is any number of other ways to find eternal life? If that were true, I’d have to agree with them.

The majority of people in the world, and even in our own society in the United States, simply don’t understand why Jesus is the only possible way to the Father (heaven). The whole concept of “sin” is lost on so much of humanity. It’s not that people don’t believe that they’re sinners; it’s that they don’t understand (or believe) that “the wages of sin is death” (hell), according to Romans 6:23. Though they would probably prefer to speak in terms other than “saved” and “unsaved,” *the bottom line is that so many don’t believe that they aren’t saved.* There is instead a commonly held belief that when a person dies, his or her life will be measured against the lives of other human beings. Naturally, most people believe that they’re “pretty good people,” certainly not in the same category as some of the vilest and most evil people of the world. On that

basis, they believe they’ve got a pretty good chance of being spared from God’s judgment, so why worry about it? Right?

What a huge—and fatal—misunderstanding! The standard by which people will be judged is not “other people’s lives,” rather, perfection according to God’s definition. James 2:10 says, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.” None of us is able to measure up to that standard. But praise God, there is One who is able. Jesus said, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17).

Is there anyone other than Jesus who has fulfilled God’s requirements without sinning? Though there have been many who have given up their lives on behalf of others, which life amongst all of them, apart from Jesus, was a sinless offering? There are none. And God has assigned the Church the privilege of sharing this news. As Paul asks in Romans 10:14, “How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard?” Would we really withhold this good news from people because it offends them or makes them uncomfortable?

If we bear the title as one of those “evangelical” churches, we ought to hold that banner high, rejoicing in the privilege of such a high calling. If for some reason we aren’t bearing that title, may I suggest a deeper searching into the Father’s heart?

*Gilman serves Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn.*

THERE IS NO NEED FOR  
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# THE HOLY

By Dean Hobelmann

DO YOU  
HAVE A  
PASSION  
TO BRING  
PEOPLE TO  
CHRIST? ¶



Our country has a passion for winning at everything. It's true in sports, politics, prestige, and daily life. Who's going to be number one by winning it all? Many are willing to spend exorbitant amounts of money, time and effort to become number one. Their passion is so strong they will do almost anything to get results.

How about winning for God's kingdom? Would you do almost anything for Him? Do you have a passion for lost souls? Are you praying about it? Many Christians would like to see churches filled and a return to a vibrant Christian nation. They wish someone would do something.

A passion and desire to save souls must be developed. Some wonder what it takes. What can I do? "Practice makes perfect" isn't just an old adage. There are some dos and don'ts about evangelizing. First, a few don'ts:

Don't just hope "someone" will do something. Don't say, "I don't have time. Maybe I will one of these days." Don't say, "I don't have the ability to speak or witness to people." Don't think, "If I could present the gospel right, I could save souls." Don't think, "If we had the right tools or program we could win souls." Don't watch the wrong TV programs, frequent the wrong places or be around people who downplay your passion for saving souls.

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) tells us to make disciples. To make a disciple we need to be a disciple. Here are some dos to help accomplish that:

Develop a passion by studying and listening to God's Word. Be involved in Bible studies and learn some tools and methods of evangelism. Believe that God does not need our ability but desires our availability. Believe that God can use our fumbling and mumbling, even our mistakes, but cannot use our nothings. Follow up immediately when someone shows an interest in the Lord or in your church. Believe that if we work to fill God's kingdom He will fill our churches. Do much praying. Have a partner in prayer while you're witnessing. Believe that the Holy Spirit does the work if He has someone to work through. Understand most previous non-Christians now attend church because lay people invited them. Keep in mind that 11 percent of non-Christians are just waiting to be asked and many others are open to talking about the Lord.

Let your passion begin. The AFLC Evangelism Commission has gathered materials to help you prepare. The materials may not turn us into evangelists but it can help us share the good news more easily and effectively.

In my personal experience, I have found the EvangeCube an excellent, non-threatening way to present the gospel. (Check source at [www.aflc.org/evangelism](http://www.aflc.org/evangelism) or [www.evangelicube.org](http://www.evangelicube.org).) I've used it with individuals, at church groups, and in fair booths. People are intrigued by how it works physically to make pictures unfold the gospel story. It challenges them with the gospel. An older man said, "Now I understand!" A pre-teen was led to ask, "What's a Bible?" It can readily be used again and again.

The "Wordless Bible" and its color-coded variations tell the gospel story. "Wordless bracelets" have been used by many groups. They are excellent at events like fairs or vacation Bible schools.

Two things of great importance are encouragement and discipling. We are called in the Bible to "encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrew 10:25). By ourselves we cannot reach many. Together we do much better. We make disciples by being together and by friendship. We are to be mentoring, teaching and nurturing new Christians so that they might make disciples of others.

We know two families who were invited to church at the exact same time. Only one family had follow-up discipleship training. They are now ready to be disciples themselves while the other family was only invited, then left to themselves. The second family is regressing to where they were.

No Christian has an excuse. We all can pray, be in God's Word daily and frequent His house of worship. We need to ask and listen to what His Word tells us. Could there be a soul that only we can reach with our witness? If someone tells you they know Jesus because God led you to disciple or mentor, there is no greater joy. Develop that passion for the lost. We don't have much time. All people seem to be in a hurry. Will the Lord also be coming in a hurry?

*Hobelmann, Republic, Kan., is a member of the AFLC's Commission on Evangelism.*



# That sweet ingredient

*Remember to look for Jesus,  
who makes each moment precious*

**I**n just a few weeks, hundreds of students, counselors, and adults will gather together in Estes Park, Colo., and experience something sweet. This event is known as the Free Lutheran Youth—or FLY—Convention. Many of you already know everything there is to know about FLY. In case you aren't one of those people, allow me to explain.

FLY is a biennial youth event that takes place at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park. Several hundred students, counselors, staff, and adults gather for one week. Throughout the week speakers share messages in the mornings and evenings. In between there is a lot of activity around camp. People are able to participate in sporting tournaments, watch a movie, or hike up a mountain. Some sit on the administration building veranda watching the tournaments and enjoying the views of Rocky Mountain National Park.

In my opinion that is not what makes the FLY Convention sweet. In fact, it has nothing to do with the location, the speakers, or the kind of music that is played. It's not necessarily about the new friends you make, or connecting with old friends—though that is quite nice.

None of those things are bad. In fact, they are all great. But do you know about those moments that aren't so easily seen? Have you ever watched two people spend an extra minute in prayer for each other? Have you heard others encourage and build up one another up with both words and actions? Have you counted the hours that counselors spend throughout the week building relationships with their students? These are the moments that no FLY Committee could ever plan for—the moments that touch people.

These are the moments that make the FLY Convention sweet.

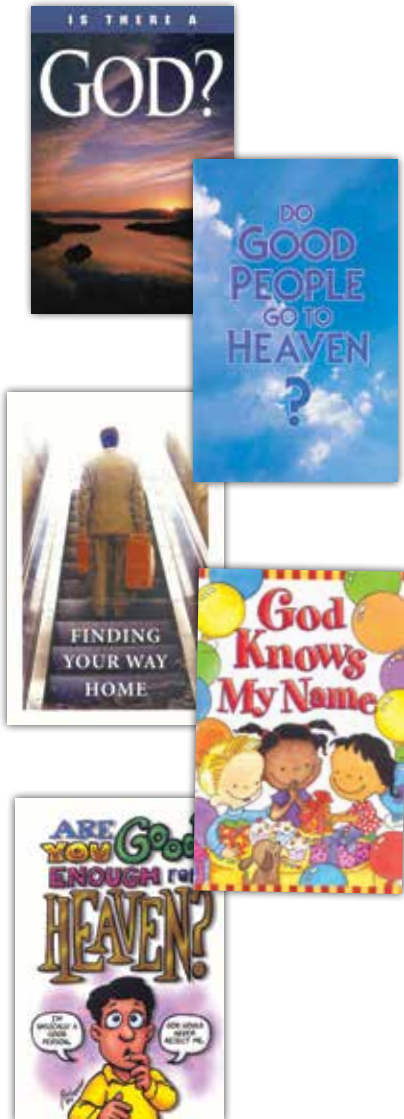
Our theme for 2009 is “Firmly Planted” from Psalm 1:1-3. God's desire for us is simple. We are to be like trees firmly planted by living streams of water. Those same fun activities that surround the convention can often be the obstacles that keep us from remembering the reason why we gather in Colorado—Jesus. If Jesus wasn't expected at the FLY Convention, if He had not been sought for direction and guidance, this convention would be a mess. We would have tried to find our footing on loose soil and in earthly things. Jesus makes each moment precious. His thoughts and His plans are higher than ours. He is the One to whom we are trusting this convention.

I cannot tell you what God will do at FLY this summer. I can tell you that the staff's desire is for God to move through students, counselors, and adults. We will not get in the way of what He wants to do and accomplish through us. Pray for our students, counselors, adults, and staff. Pray that we will all see our need to be firmly planted in Jesus. It will be in those moments when God reveals Himself to us that makes this convention sweet.

*Keinanen, LaCrosse, Wis., is the president of the Free Lutheran Youth Committee.*

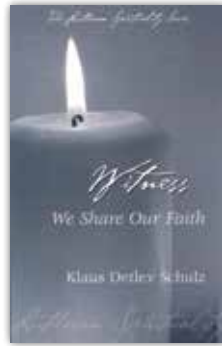
# resources

AFLC Parish Education has a lending library of videos and visualized mission stories. Contact Parish Education at (763) 545-5631 or [parished@aflc.org](mailto:parished@aflc.org) for more information.



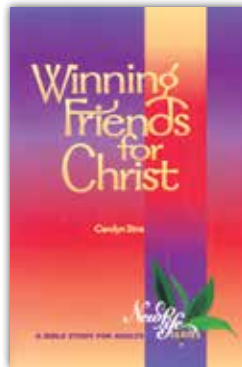
## Tracts

Is There a God?  
Do Good People Go to Heaven?  
Finding Your Way Home  
Are You Good Enough for Heaven?  
God Knows My Name  
Many other tracts also available.  
\$.15 each



## Witness: We Share Our Faith

Intended to help Christians become more aware of the people around them who do not know Christ, this adult study encourages believers to live out their faith boldly in whatever calling the Lord has placed them. \$8.95



## Winning Friends for Christ

Emphasizing that evangelism is not a program or an event but a lifestyle, this book with study questions challenges believers to build caring relationships with the goal of leading others to Christ. Provides helpful ideas for assimilating new members into a congregation. \$7.95



## The Mirror Gospel Tract

Explains how the Bible is like a mirror that shows us our sin and need of a Savior, and seeks to assure the reader that we are saved by God's grace alone and not by our own efforts. \$.75 each or pack of 20 for \$14



## Gospel Story by Colors

Present the gospel using six colors and Scripture verses to explain sin, the cross, faith, forgiveness, growth, and heaven. Helpful evangelism tools for children, recommended for VBS students.

### Pencil with Card

\$1.95

### Activity Booklet

(four crayons included)  
\$2

### Ribbon Bookmark

\$1.95

# God's person, place & time

*The AFLC Nominating Committee may be one of the most important links to our polity. This annual conference, come prayerfully prepared with the names of those willing to serve.*

BY PASTOR WADE MOBLEY

I have an assignment for you this annual conference: Come with names of people who have prayerfully agreed in advance to serve on the Nominating Committee for the 2010 conference.

One of the most fulfilling ministry opportunities I have ever experienced happened following the 2006 AFLC annual conference when I was elected to serve on the Nominating Committee. While this opportunity involved significant work, I was incredibly fulfilled. Why? We were responsible for seeking the Lord for the correct nominees to place God's person in God's place in God's time.

The process begins with a lot of blanks on a sheet of paper. The temptation, of course, is to find people who can't say "no" so you can fill your blanks. But the task of the Nominating Committee members far exceeds the mere filling of blanks. Their call from God is to place God's person in God's place at God's time.

The polity of our Association makes the Nominating Committee even more important than in other organizations. We are dependent upon the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God for guidance. If our Nominating Committee depends upon God's Word and God's Spirit our conferences will elect people who are depending upon God's Word and God's Spirit. Then our ministries will operate in dependence upon God's Word and God's Spirit.

The converse is also true. If our Nominating Committee does not depend upon God's Word and God's Spirit ... perish the thought of how our cooperative endeavors will follow! Thus, one could argue that the commitment of our Nominating Committee members is the most significant

thermostat for ministry in the AFLC.

So before you come to the conference this June, get on your knees before the Lord and ask Him to show you people who would be great members of the Nominating Committee. Then ask them to consider allowing you to place their names in nomination. You may request a specific ministry description from AFLC headquarters by calling (763) 545-5631, but here is what you need to know to start the process:

Nominees for the Nominating Committee must:

- Be available for physical or conference call presence at two to three meetings during the next year.
- Be dependent upon God's Word and God's Spirit to help them find God's person for God's place in God's time.
- Be willing to invest one to two hours per week for 10-12 weeks spread out through the year.
- Know people in their district well enough to suggest where they might best serve.
- Be willing to make personal phone and mail contact to make sure that every nominee has the opportunity to prayerfully consider a nomination.

Perhaps the greatest duty of our annual conference is to place God's people in God's place at God's time. Your advance preparation in selecting a Nominating Committee will go a long way to making sure that the cooperative endeavors of the AFLC continue to depend upon God's Word and God's Spirit for fruitful ministry.

*Mobley serves Living Word Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D.*



**JEREMIAH 23:29**



# The parable model

BY PASTOR KEVIN OLSON

Sunlight streamed through a crack in the thatched roof and a breeze came through the open window. Children could be seen playing through the open door of the simple church in rural Uganda. Inside, the 24 students were focused on learning their next lesson. This time it was the story of Joseph revealing himself to his brothers.

The students sat stunned as Scripture was read and acted out. Most of them had heard of Joseph before, but never like this. Never had they heard the story in their own language and never with a dramatic presentation that helped them understand that this actually took place. Last week, they learned that Joseph had just been sold into slavery and now his brothers were coming to him begging for food. Joseph could finally get his revenge, but he didn't. He said, "God meant it for good," and he forgave them. They found it hard to imagine how Joseph could just forgive his brothers.

As the morning went on and the students memorized the 50 verses about Joseph, they then began understanding better the nature of man and of God. They understood how their own lives needed to be changed, and they were eager to share it with as many people as they could.

Accounts like this happen weekly for us in the Ambassador Institute. Distance education takes on a whole new appearance when you are working with developing countries in new languages, without computers, books or a classroom. Instead, we are

going back to the parable model of teaching that Jesus used with His disciples.

The students are still learning the Word of God, the doctrine, the character development and the life application that is required from seminary studies. They are just learning about it through the examples in Scripture and questions that draw the truths right out of the text that they have learned.

The first class began in Uganda on Feb. 7 and already students have completed their first 14 weeks of training. Throughout the course of this year students will complete three 14-week courses covering an overview of the Bible. In their second year the students will study with a more focused emphasis on doctrine, character development and life application.

The goal this year is to get the training started in India. Forty Indian pastors who came to the introduction to this training method earlier this year were thrilled and wanted to start right away in June. We are still working out details, but we expect that training should begin at least by the time I travel to both India and Uganda in September.

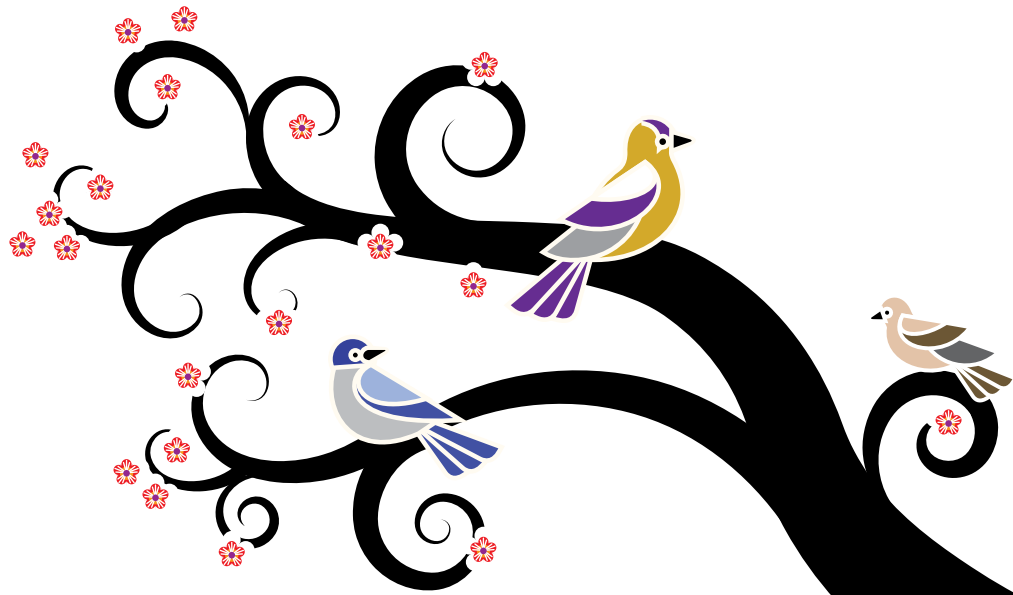
I am currently traveling to churches in order to raise support and share the vision of this new approach to training. I would love to come to your church, as well.

*Olson works with the Ambassador Institute, a department within AFLC World Missions. Contact him at (763) 545-5631.*

# Women's ministry

*Practical, personal  
and prayerful  
ways to meet each  
other's needs*

BY JUDITH WESTGATE



If you ask a group of women what is meant by “Women Ministering to Women” you will receive about as many different answers as the number of women you ask. However, most of the answers will fall into one of three categories.

The first is the ministry of the practical. In Matthew 25:34-40 the Lord speaks of the importance of meeting the physical needs of others. As women we think of the times we have been on either the giving or receiving end of practical care. One woman I know was deeply grateful to two friends who really understood her need. Her husband had just died after a lengthy illness and long hospital stay. Her friends knew she had been spending all of her time in the hospital and would have family coming in from out of town. They went to her home and cleaned her kitchen and bathrooms. She returned to shining floors and sparkling counters. What a blessing!

The second is the ministry of the personal. John 13:34 tells us: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” Each of us has a deep need for friendship, acceptance, love and fellowship. Any enjoyable experience is made even more enjoyable when shared with a friend. Any sorrow is lightened when someone is there to share it with us. We need to have someone to hear us, understand us, support and encourage us. Our friend will not always agree with us, but we know we are safe in her love. Within churches we find relationships that have grown over the years. Often the personal is almost interchangeable with the practical and prayerful as we “bear one another’s burdens.” We drive a friend to a doctor’s appointment, hold her hand in her fear and cry with her if news is bad.

One of the most overlooked or least valued benefits of church membership is the opportunity to participate in work

days or projects. The shared experience gives great opportunity to triumph together, to laugh together, to think, plan and discuss together. Through the process relationships are strengthened and enhanced.

The third is the ministry of the prayerful, or the spiritual. What a blessing it is for women to be able to gather together for Bible Study. What comfort and strength we receive when a friend tells us, “I’m praying for you.” What a privilege it is to have a friend share a burden and ask for prayer. Those who are younger in the faith can come to those with greater experience and ask, “Where does the Bible say ...?” or “What does God say about ...?” We prayerfully hope that each one will have someone they can turn to for help and advice.

One of the greatest gifts God has given me is my prayer partner, a woman I have known since we were both 21. We only spent a few years living near each other, yet through the years have kept in contact with our prayer requests, sharing joys and concerns. We now call each other regularly and spend about an hour praying for and encouraging each other.

Women ministering to women can be summed up in the ministry of presence. In the love of God, women reach out to women. We each offer and seek assistance from our own areas of strength and weakness. Under God’s direction and assistance, He blesses our humble endeavors and leads us to serve as He wishes. What He asks of us is that we be available, willing to serve and seek the opportunity.

When I asked one woman for her definition of women ministering to women, she responded, “I can only think of one word, love.” To that I can only add, “Amen.”

*Westgate is a member of St. Matthew Lutheran, Millerstown, Pa., where her husband, James Westgate, serves as pastor.*



Pastor Nathan Minnich, above, was ordained March 22 at Salem Lutheran Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., by Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president. The ordination service (at left) was also an installation service, including local clergy and former pastors at Salem Lutheran.

## Minnich ordained, installed at Elizabethtown, Pa.

**P**astor Nathan Minnich was ordained and installed at Salem Lutheran Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., on March 22. The ordination service was presided over by Pastor Elden Nelson, president of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. More than 260 were in attendance, including local clergy and former pastors of Salem's congregation. Minnich's work at Salem began in 2004 as their minister of music. On Nov.

23, 2008, the congregation issued him a call to serve as their pastor upon his ordination. In addition to serving Salem with Pastor John Schaertel, Minnich served during his studies as an intern at St. Paul Lutheran, Millersburg Pa.; Lutheran Church of the Newtons, Newton Centre, Ma.; and Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Paxtang, Pa. Minnich was also mentored by Pastor Richard Carr of Christ Community Church (AFLC)

Hagerstown, Md.

Minnich is a graduate of the School of Theology at Boston University and has done subsequent study at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa. He also serves the Elizabethtown and Millersburg communities as a licensed funeral director as well leading private and group grief counseling.

### People and Places

**Joe Faldet** has accepted a call to serve Hosanna Free Lutheran, St. James, Minn. Faldet graduated from AFLTS on May 16 and will be ordained June 28 at Trinity Lutheran, McIntosh, Minn., with Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president, presiding. Faldet will begin his ministry at St. James on July 1.

**Seth Forness** has accepted a call to serve Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glyndon, Minn., as pastor of youth and young adult ministries. Forness graduated from AFLTS on May 16 and will be ordained June 19 at the closing service of the AFLC annual conference in Fergus Falls, Minn., with Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president, officiating. Forness will begin his ministry at Glyndon on June 8.

**Patrick Lohse** has accepted a call to serve Bethlehem Lutheran, Morris, Ill. Lohse graduated from AFLTS on May 16 and will be ordained June 19 at the closing service of the AFLC annual conference in Fergus Falls, Minn., with AFLC President Pastor Elden Nelson officiating.

**Pastor Dana Coyle** has accepted a call to Helmar Lutheran, Newark, Ill. He was installed on April 26 by Pastor Richard Gunderson, AFLC assistant to the president. Coyle had previously served Freedom Lutheran, Ottawa, Ill., and St. Petrie Lutheran, Leland, Ill.

**Licensed Pastor Gerald Steele** has accepted a call to serve St. Petrie Lutheran, Leland, Ill. He was installed on May 31 by Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president.

Members of the **2009 AFLBS summer teams** have been chosen and will serve from May 31 to Aug. 14. Please be in prayer for the more than 30 members of these teams, including the Ambassadors, Majesty, Cornerstone, Timothy, Foundation, the ARC and Joshua, and the Home Missions teams: North Barnabas and South Barnabas.

**Pastor Ron Brubakken**, a 2008 graduate of AFLTS, was ordained and installed on May 17 at Cornerstone Lutheran, Argyle, Wis. Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president, officiated at the service.

Members of **Skrefsrud Lutheran**, Beresford, S.D., will celebrate the congregation's centennial anniversary on Sept. 13.

## AFLC memorials: April

### AFLBS

Bob Gresing  
Ivar Skurdal  
Andrew Larson (7)  
Pastor Amos Dyrud

### AFLTS

Ivar Skurdal  
Pastor Amos Dyrud (6)  
Alfred Haugen

### Evangelism

Doris Larson  
Carl Keller  
Mel Kremser

### Home Missions

Ivar Skurdal  
Inga Elton  
Theresa Erker

### World Missions

Gladys Schmiginske  
Ivar Skurdal  
Pastor Milo Gudim  
Art Johnson  
Harriet Erickson

... in honor of

### AFLBS

Rick and Kim Noreen

### World Missions

Edith Gudim

## Emmaus hosts worship seminar

Author and teacher Tom Kraeuter will highlight the event

Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn., will host a worship seminar July 25. Nationally acclaimed worship author and teacher Tom Kraeuter will lead the seminar. Kraeuter (pronounced kroyter) offers practical, scriptural teaching on worship, helping his audience move past the distractions that hinder worship and develop a vibrant worship life in their church.

"I'm thrilled to visit Emmaus Lutheran Church," said Kraeuter, "and grateful to Pastor Gilman for inviting me and hosting this seminar. I look forward to discussing worship in practical, biblical ways ..."

Kraeuter is the author of more than 15 books, including *Worship is What?!*, *The Worship Leader's Handbook* and *Reflecting Mercy in an Unmerciful World*.

The all-day seminar is open to everyone interested in learning more about worship or desiring a stronger relationship with God. The lowest registration cost is available in advance at [WorshipSeminar.com](http://WorshipSeminar.com). Registration is also available at the door.

The seminar will be held at Emmaus Lutheran Church, 8443 Second Ave. S., Bloomington. For more information or to register, call Mike Borg at (952) 884-4751, or visit [WorshipSeminar.com](http://WorshipSeminar.com).

## Summer retreats at ARC

### Fire Up youth camp

Grades 4-7  
June 21-26  
Cost: \$190

Speaker is Jared Langness, a parish builder at Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Camarillo, Calif.

### Kids Camp

Grades 1-3  
June 26-28  
Cost: \$75

Camp leaders are the four members of the ARC summer team from AFLBS.

### Family Camp

July 26-August 1  
Costs vary depending on family size and lodging choice. Maximum family rates range from \$465-\$675 for the week, including lodging and meals.

Come help us celebrate the ARC's 30th anniversary. Pastor Kevin Garner, Marseilles, Ill., will be the special speaker.

### Classics Retreat

Sept. 18-20  
Led by Pastor Elden and Faith Nelson and Pastor John and Barb Skeie.

Ask your church for our brochures/bulletin inserts or for more information on these events, visit the ARC's Web site at [www.arc-aflc.org](http://www.arc-aflc.org), or call (800) 294-2877. Scholarships are available.

## Beaver Creek Lutheran to celebrate 120th anniversary

Members of Beaver Creek Free Lutheran Church, located south of Ray, N.D., will be celebrating the congregation's 120th anniversary this summer. The celebration will take place Sunday, Aug. 9, with a worship service at 10 a.m., followed by dinner at noon and a special program at 2 p.m. with guest Pastor Tony Stockman.

## Sioux Falls congregation seeks youth minister

Applications are now being taken for a full-time youth ministry position at Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, S.D. Contact Jerry Nelson at 605-371-3800 for more information.

### AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1- April 30, 2009

FUND	TOTAL (subsidy)	REC'D IN APRIL	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$434,087	\$31,955	\$102,170	24
Evangelism	112,642	10,074	31,305	28
Youth Ministries	78,909	6,211	21,163	27
Parish Education	135,207	9,439	42,459	31
Seminary	244,110	19,839	66,299	27
Bible School	398,910	41,957	108,759	27
Home Missions	375,908	36,058	101,972	27
World Missions	327,017	27,449	81,573	25
Personal Support	435,500	39,891	136,524	31
TOTALS	\$2,542,290	\$222,872	\$692,524	27
TOTALS 2008	\$2,307,821	\$222,086	\$741,419	32

#### Goal 33%

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.

# Making the most of the moment

**O**pportunities to share the good news of Jesus come in some unique situations and at some unexpected times.

I was getting my teeth cleaned. The dental hygienist who was doing it asked me what I did for a living.



Pastor Craig Johnson

When she found out I am a pastor she started to talk about some of her beliefs. She told about some things that had happened in her life and shared some questions that she was wrestling with. I

was sitting there in the dental chair listening and thinking about what I could share and Scripture that would apply to her questions. It's tough to be much more than a good listener, however, when somebody has their hands and a cleaning instrument in your mouth.

She'd pause and have me rinse and then there would be a few seconds while she got ready for the next step in the cleaning process. I tried to share a little something during the pause.

Her hands would go back in my mouth and she would start talking a little more. I was listening and thinking about how I should reply during the brief moments when I could do more than grunt. I needed to choose my words well.

Another time when I had to choose my words well happened in a sauna at the gym I go to. I was in it once when an-

other guy came in. He started talking and sharing about his life. He appeared to be interested in talking about spiritual matters, but he was also interested in cranking up the heat in the sauna. I didn't want to miss an opportunity to listen to what was going on in his life and share Jesus with him. My spirit was willing to stay, but my flesh was weak and starting to get a little overcooked. I stayed as long as I could. I tried to share a little bit, but then I had to make my way to the door.

In our busy, fast-paced world the witnessing opportunities we are presented with often seem to come with a time limit. It is rare when we get the chance to share our whole life story, plus 20 Bible verses. Often we need to make it quick. Our paths may cross with another individual for just a moment. We want to make the most of the moment.

Some evangelism training material that I read encouraged people to learn to share the story of what God has done in their lives in three minutes. You can't say it all in three minutes, but you can say a lot if you work at trying to make each word count.

A new and popular form of communication is something called Twitter. You can use your cell phone or computer to "tweet" people and update them on your activities. Your tweet needs to be 140 characters or less. If you are going to communicate

much with so few characters you need to be careful what characters you use.

We can complain about how these forms of communication are causing people to forget how to write in complete sentences and use real words, but it is the culture we live in. The folks using these forms of communication are the people with whom we are called to share the good news. We need to ask God to help us learn to share a lot with few words.

**It is rare when we get the chance to share our whole life story, plus 20 Bible verses. Often we need to make it quick. Our paths may cross with another individual for just a moment. We want to make the most of the moment.**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV) has 129 characters with the spaces included. Obviously, it says a lot—and it could all fit in a tweet message.

There will always be more we could share. But with God's help, even if the opportunities are for a brief moment, we can still share a lot and we can still proclaim the good news of Jesus.

*something to share*

BY KANDY BAUDER

# COPY CAT

**D**o you remember how much fun it was to annoy your brothers and sisters (maybe even your friends) with the game of copy cat? I remember annoying my sisters with the game, often to the point of causing one or all three of us to get into trouble. Whoever is doing the copying gets an air of superiority as the game progresses, especially if the victim gets frustrated and flustered. I now understand why my mother was just as annoyed by the game as the person I was copying. My children, Analiese and Jerrod, have started playing the copy cat game. I don't know where they learned it, but they have perfected the art of annoying others with their game. In the car or at the table, giggles abound as they use every opportunity that comes their way to participate in annoying each other and me, as well. Even Jesalyn, not yet 2 years old, occasionally makes her own attempt to play the game. She usually copies the dog which is more funny than it is annoying.

The playing of copy cat in our home got me thinking. It is not always annoying or bad to copy someone. I am always encouraging the older children, especially Aaron since he is the oldest, to set a good example for the younger kids in our family and neighborhood. Whether it be playing a game or etiquette on the play set in the yard, I always remind the older kids that the little eyes are watching. I add that what is fun and easy for them to do can be dangerous to someone smaller and less coordinated. Often this dampens the fun they are having. But I know that it is easy to forget that eyes are watching and learning through copying our actions.

Why does it seem that my children copy my bad habits? Analiese does "humphing" when she is frustrated or angry with authority. My husband, Terry, caught me "humphing" when I was frustrated with the kids one day. "I wonder where Analiese gets it?" he asked me in a joking manner. True, she got that bad habit from her mother. I didn't even realize that I "humphed." I easily recognized Analiese doing it, but didn't hear myself.

This is a good reminder for me as a mother and as a Christian. Are my actions worthy of being copied? Some people laugh when they hear children use a swear word probably picked up from an adult in their lives. However, there is nothing funny or cute about encouraging children to speak and act inappropriately. It should be a reminder to us of the example we are setting. The Christian group Phillips, Craig and Dean has a song with the words, "I want to be just like You, 'cause he wants to be just like me. I want to be a holy example for his innocent eyes to see. Help me be a living Bible, Lord that my little boy can read. I want to be just like You 'cause he wants to be like me." If we are copying God and the examples He gives us in the Bible, then our children will also copy God. When we are copying God we can be proud when we are the victim of the copy cat game.

*Bauder is a member of Living Word Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D. Reprinted with permission by Living Stone News (livingstone-news.com).*