

THE LUTHERAN 

SEPTEMBER 2006

# AMBASSADOR

BOOT CAMP IS  
ABOUT LEADING.  
IT'S ABOUT  
FINDING OUT  
WHAT YOU HAVE



# BOOT CAMP

YOUTHS BECOME LEADERS

IN YOU AND  
TAKING ON  
THE SKILLS  
GOD GAVE YOU.

# everypromise

BY FAYLIN MYHRE

**W**hen I was a student at AFLBS (a quarter of a century ago!), I learned the Long Hash Chorus. It's a series of choruses, hymns and verses strung together, and often the last word of one song is the first of the next, so it moves right along. I loved singing it then, and I still do. It begins with, "Every promise in the book is mine, every chapter every verse every line, all the blessings of His love divine, every promise in the book is mine!"

I love that! To think that the great and awesome God of the universe gave me His holy and precious Word, that it was written to me and for me. I run often to that precious Word, looking for direction or encouragement, and I always find a promise. Often the promises I hid in my heart over the years will come to me without ever turning a page in my Bible. Promises like, "I will never leave or forsake you" (Joshua 1:5), "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2), "I can do all things thru Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13), "He is not willing that any

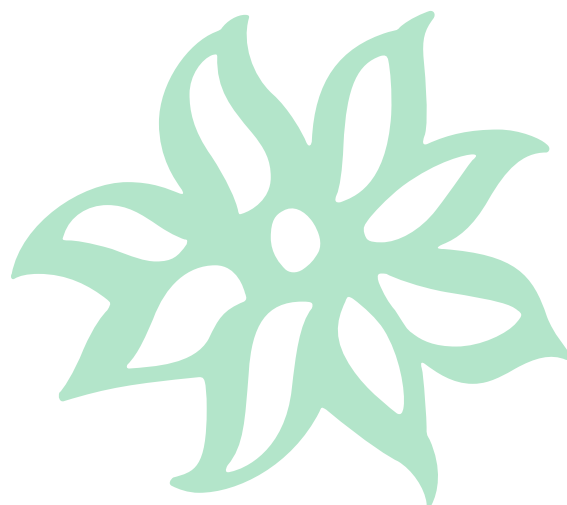
should perish" (II Peter 3:9). These are but a few promises found in the deep, deep mine of Scripture.

There is a line from another little chorus that says: "You can't stand on the promises if you don't know what they are." How true! It's like being on a boat, knowing there are life preservers but never finding out where they are stored or learning how to use them. One day your boat hits a large rock, there is a huge hole torn in the bottom and the water is coming on fast. You and the boat are sinking! Finding and using those life preservers won't save the boat, but they could save you. Knowing God's promises and hiding that Word in your heart may not change a situation or soften another's hard heart or critical spirit. Rather, the promises are there for you to claim as your own, trusting that no matter what the difficult situation may be, God is in control and He will carry you through.

What is it that concerns you today? What causes your boat to take on water and begin to sink? It could be a broken relationship or a way-

ward child. Maybe you are dealing with an illness or the loss of loved one. Sometimes it's hard to let go of the past and sometimes it's hard to face the future. God has a special word just for you, just for your situation. It's found between Genesis 1:1 and Revelation 22:21. It may seem like an overwhelming undertaking to find the promise He has just for you. That's where one of my favorite promises comes in. Isaiah 55:11 says, "So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth, it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." The Holy Spirit will guide you to the powerful, healing Scripture God has in mind just for you, just for today.

*Myhre is a member of Bethany Free Lutheran, Wahpeton, N.D.*



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# soundbites <<

If we are going to train up children who have the resources to enter the cultural warfare, we parents must learn to apply the Christian worldview to every aspect of our life. We can't give our children what we don't have ourselves.

— Chuck Colson  
“Answers to Your Kids’ Questions”

Too many of our students move through their youth-group experience hearing earnest people describe the importance of faith, and how God can help us in our time of need, but they never have to test their own faith. They are seldom forced or encouraged to flesh out what they think they believe.

— Duffy Robbins  
“The Ministry of Nurture”

We cannot perpetuate these and other teachings unless we train the people who come after us and succeed us in our office and work, so that they in turn may bring up their children successfully. Thus the Word of God and the Christian church will be preserved.

— Martin Luther  
Large Catechism

As Proverbs 17:22 declares, it's healthy to laugh. I'd even go so far as to say that there may be something unhealthy about you and your family if laughter isn't present. Your children need to laugh.

— Doug Fields  
“Too Old Too Soon”



**I**t is summertime, and it is a Thursday morning. What are you doing? In North Minneapolis, neighborhood kids are at the park playing games, making crafts, developing friendships, and learning about Jesus.

For the last six years, Hope Lutheran Church in Minneapolis has hosted a vacation Bible school in a nearby park. This has been an amazing ministry experience week after week, year after year. During our first week in the park, we served nine children; in our second week, there

were 50 children. This summer we are seeing the numbers top 100 children, plus adults and volunteers. This is a huge outreach for our congregation — only about 10 children are from our church body!

I share this adventure with you to transition into a new journey; this one starts with FLY Boot Camp. Several months ago, as a director of youth ministries at Hope Lutheran, I was approached by the Boot Camp organizers about expanding our ministry in the park to a weeklong VBS. They wanted leadership campers to have a hands-on opportunity to try out

# becoming leaders

BY MICHELLE SATREN





their newly acquired skills and suggested that Boot Camp teens lead all aspects of the VBS. We gladly said yes!

This outreach project had its commencement at the Association Retreat Center in Osceola, Wis., when, each morning at Boot Camp, a group of 30 students gathered to be trained in leading VBS. Students were taught music, crafts, games, skits, attention-getters, Bible stories, mission stories, memory verses, and more. A half-hour later, the students (somewhat glossy-eyed) boarded a bus to Minneapolis. It was not uncommon to hear, "So what adults are going to be with us ... helping us ... leading us?" To which I would chuckle to myself and reply, "It is just you; you better start

praying and preparing."

The students reached the church at noon, the adventure just beginning. After a short walk to the park, they set up the tables, chairs, speakers, sound system, crafts, chalk, tarps, bubbles, snacks, balls, balloons, banners, and signs, transforming the park into Camp Turned Around (our VBS theme for the week). Then it was their job to wander through the park, looking for kids to invite. At 1 p.m., Camp Turned Around officially began.

It was a privilege to watch the Lord work through these teens every afternoon. I heard of kids and adults praying with these students from throughout the AFLC, some of whom prayed to receive Christ as their Savior and Lord. I saw teenagers getting out of their comfort zones, pursuing kids and starting conversations. I witnessed a VBS implemented entirely by teens and done exceptionally well. As a youth leader, I was excited. I am so glad we serve a God who wants to use people of *all* ages for His glory.

By 3:30 p.m., when everyone involved was dripping wet with sweat from running around in 90 degree temperatures, Camp Turned Around shutdown for the day. The teens then went door-to-door canvassing the neighborhood with flyers for an upcoming Tent Revival at our church (they delivered 2,000 flyers). At 4:15 p.m., the students loaded the bus to return to the ARC, tired, but having accomplished what some never thought they could.

I am amazed at what can happen in one week. The kids from the neighborhood are still talking about Camp Turned Around. I am sure the teens remember their experiences, as well. God created the world in less than a week. He can change our lives forever in even less time. I am honored that I could be a part of FLY Boot Camp so I could see God yet again transform lives. And I also wonder what God would do throughout America if each AFLC church opened their doors to more outreach ministries.

*Satren is director of youth ministries at Hope Lutheran, Minneapolis, Minn.*

## testimony ...

**Malina Gore, 9th grader**  
*Hope Lutheran, Minneapolis*

When I went to help out at Camp Turned Around, I was thinking of myself as a saint and the kids as sinners. You see, I had participated in events similar to Camp Turned Around and had always pictured it that way. But this event was different. God showed me that when He works, everyone is turned around. I learned how to truly work for Him and not for my own glory.

When my group got to the park, I was expecting to basically do nothing, as always. For some reason, I expected the people around me to do the same. Strangely, when we arrived the whole team was ready to start a revolution in each kid's heart. We knew we could by the power of God. So that day God not only started a revival in the "lost," but also in the "already found." And there was a revival each day of camp. Praise God!









# yourteammates

BY DANIEL KEINANEN

## Young adults want to be involved in the ministry, too

A few weeks ago, 50 teenagers and adults gathered for prayer at the altar of our church, but there was a lot more going on than just prayer. We fasted all day in preparation for going to the altar that night. At the altar, we sought the Lord, asking Him for wisdom for our summer retreat.

God was certainly at work that day. People of all ages had come to support our teens. Small groups of people both young and old were seeking God together as one. To hear a congregation praying for one purpose — that God would be honored — was music to my ears.

On my way home that night, my heart could do nothing but rejoice! The adults and teenagers were working together.

This is a great example of the impact that Leadership Camp, now called FLY Boot Camp, has had on our students and congregation. The students learned many skills and practical things they can apply to their lives. However, the thing that comes through the most from Boot Camp is the idea that we as Christians, no matter our age, have a responsibility to care for and serve one another. My students have come back to youth group with an attitude of what they can give rather than what they can get out of youth group.

So many times people come to church, youth group, or any church event looking to get something out of it. Shouldn't we come to the throne of God seeking how we can give? Too often we look at God like we look at a vending machine. We put in our prayer, tell God what we want, and then wait for Him to give it to us. Being challenged to come out of our comfort zones can help us see the needs of others and serve them.

Our students came back from Boot Camp wanting to serve their peers. They came back with an attitude of what they can give back to the Lord and to their youth group. Did Boot Camp change them? Absolutely not! It was the power of the Word of God and of the Holy Spirit working in their lives. However, it was at Boot Camp where God taught them these things.

This same attitude has carried over into the rest of our congregation. I have often heard people say that teenagers are the future of the church. I beg to differ. Our teenagers

are the church of today. They are just as much a part of a congregation as the senior citizens. In fact, the teenagers in our congregation have set a high bar for the rest of us. I have had adults and parents tell me that they are learning from the youths. Adults share how they are being challenged to follow their example.

Young people contribute to our congregation in many ways. They sing and play on the praise team, share their testimonies on Sunday mornings, teach children on Wednesday nights, and come to prayer meetings on Monday nights. They are involved in our church and have a vital part in the body of Christ.

For some of our teens, it has been hard to get involved. Some are scared, others are nervous. Even after they have gotten involved, it takes time for them to adjust and become confident. The adults have been instrumental in helping them fit in. They have been there to encourage and build them up. They are there at fund-raisers, and they are praying for our youths as we go on trips. The adults are in full support of our youth ministry, which has been very helpful in their development.

Isn't that a full circle of ministry? The adults are supporting the youths, and the youths are looking to serve in the congregation. They have taken what they have learned at Boot Camp and have applied it in their congregation by being involved in the church. Isn't that how the body of Christ should work?

As we gathered for prayer that night, much more than prayer was happening. Both young and old worked together for one purpose. We all came together in prayer for each other.

No, our congregation isn't perfect. We still have a lot to learn and many areas where we can grow. But we are learning to work together. How is your church doing? Are your teens actively involved? Are they looking to serve others? How about the adults? Are they supporting the youths, looking how to be involved with the youth group? It's a worthwhile effort.

*Keinanen is the youth director at Christ is Lord Lutheran, LaCrosse, Wis.*









# familyministry

BY LUKE LONG

## God's plan means keeping parents involved in youth ministry

“We want to go to hell!” It wasn’t the response we expected from a rowdy bunch of children in Mazatlan, Mexico.

I was serving with missionaries Darwin and MaryAnn Jackson at a migrant worker camp called Tayoltita — the most unruly of all we had visited. Having invited the small village and migrant camp to an evening presentation, we were excited by the crowd of about 300 that gathered, but we quickly found our team nearly pressed against the truck by the children who were eager to get to the front.

With difficulty, we presented some of the skits and stories. As the gospel presentation began, Darwin, an AFLC missionary on loan to World Mission Prayer League, asked the question, “Do you want to go to heaven?” The calloused response of the children shocked us. But what happened next changed the whole course of the night.

Instead of addressing the kids’ response with reasons they did not want to go to hell, Darwin immediately looked up at the parents and adults in the back of the crowd. “If my daughter, Gracie, was playing in the street and I knew she was going to be hurt, it would break my heart! But from what your children just said, they are on the road to hell! Do you care?” Darwin asked.

The crowd grew unbelievably silent. A sober look came over the faces of parents and grandparents. After a gospel presentation and invitation were given, nearly all of the

300 people raised their hands! We watched with amazement as dozens of fathers stood in line to sign up for training in how to disciple their children.

Darwin’s response demonstrated an understanding of the wisdom of God’s plan for families and youth ministry. How does youth ministry relate to families or how should it? Is there a connection between youth ministry and family ministry?

There most certainly is! As shocking as it may sound, the *family* is the most important aspect in God’s plan of raising kids! Yes, there are dysfunctional families, but God’s design remains, and we always have the most success when we pattern our lives after the intent of the Designer. Think about the ideal that God created in the family: mentorship, an atmosphere of love, accountability, correction, provision, direction, nurture — all in a family.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not at all diminishing the value of youth ministry. I’ve spent more than seven years in youth ministry and am excited about what God can do through this work. But I wonder if it is possible to get so caught up in what we see as a great idea of youth ministry, that we miss the wisdom of the structure that our wise God has already put in place. Is it possible, even, to sometimes see our ministry as a replacement for the structure that He designed? Or, even further, that the structure that He has set up becomes a *hindrance* to what we want to accomplish?

(Continued on page 10)



## Youth directors aren't meant to be surrogate parents

Ben Freudenburg, in his book, “Family Friendly Church,” writes, “*Parents* are the primary Christian educators in the church, and the *family* is the God-ordained institution for building faith in young people and for passing faith on from one generation to the next.”

Do you think youth ministry in the 21st century is family friendly? I believe a mindset has crept in through the years that says that a youth pastor should, in essence, try to become surrogate parents for the youths — lots of hang-out time where they give answers to life’s questions, they are confided in even against parents, and they are the hero. How can parents complain? After all, the youth pastor is set up by the church as the representative “God-influence” in their lives, right? Parents may think, “I thought those things were my role? Maybe I just need to get with the program and withdraw from their lives even more.”

I have had parents tell me that at the church they attended, the door to the youth ministry room was actually locked and no parents were admitted! They were viewed as inferior to what God wanted to do in the lives of young people. What? Who do you think put them in the lives of the young people? What message is that sending to the youth?

“Kids, your silly parents don’t understand you like we do. After all, we’re the youth pastors and they’re just the parents.”

Think about it — after all the growth of youth ministries in churches over the

past decades, shouldn’t there be a renewed spiritual depth among the young people who are maturing into adults? What is the actual situation?

- Knowledge of Scripture is at an all-time low.
- Our culture no longer embraces God’s law.
- The life values of Christian teenagers and adults are often indistinguishable from the world’s life values.
- American families don’t realize their power and influence.
- The Christian church has less and less impact in the lives of its members and in the culture itself.

As a youth director, I’ve seen a huge percentage of college students falling away from the faith. Many times these are ones who have thrived in the youth group setting. But when they go on to college, they no longer have the youth group for spiritual direction and counsel. The natural support system of the family that God had put in place was undermined, and the crazy games, fun and friends that were so much a part of the mid-teen years now seem irrelevant to the challenges and questions of the college years.

If we abandon God’s structure and design of families, I think we will continue to see the church have less and less impact on society, even if teens are having a great time, we are drawing in new kids and they are hearing the gospel. We can be excited about our progress and unaware of our failure at the same time.

A race car trying to win a race as it’s being pushed by







## Find ways to partner with parents in your ministry

the pit-crew could make it a few laps around the track, but it will be so far away from its potential. If we ignore the intent of the Designer when it comes to families and youth ministry, I believe we will never experience the full potential God intended.

Whatever we do in ministry should never undermine or weaken the family, but only strengthen it and also help in cases where family is lacking. Youth ministries should be re-evaluated for ways that it can come alongside families and reinforce God's wise design.

Freudenburg states, "[If we] ... strengthen the partnership between church and home ... the world will be a changed place — a place more impacted by the Gospel of Jesus than it is today."

### Here are some ideas:

- Spend a devotion focusing on how to live for God at home. Talk about siblings, parents, obedience, respect, chores, mentorship, leadership, etc.
- Host a parents meeting for parents of those mighty for God. Encourage the parents' positive involvement in their lives. Tell them your desire to support them and never undermine.
- Ask parents how you can serve them. Topics to cover include struggles at home, what would be biggest blessing, etc.
- View the family as your greatest ally. Let parents

know they are always welcome!

- Consider combining junior and senior high together so that the family isn't further segmented. The older ones can give an atmosphere of passion for God and testimonies. The younger ones can give the older ones an enthusiasm and ministry opportunity.
- Show youths how cool it is in God's eyes to honor their parents. Teach them how to respect those God put in their lives.
- Host a banquet or special event in honor of all the parents. Give opportunity for each student to publicly express gratefulness to those who have invested so much in their lives. Make it fun and do it with excellence.
- When giving counsel, encourage parental involvement. Include them as part of the solution.
- Foster a ministry mindset in the older ones for the younger ones.
- Encourage the four family practices especially helpful in building faith in young people:
  - Talk about faith with mom
  - Talk about faith with dad
  - Family devotions
  - Family projects to help other people.

*Long works with youth and college-age ministries at Atonement Free Lutheran, Arlington, Wash.*



# impactlives

BY SARAH ROLF

**P**aul sat in a prison, cut off from the world with just a visitor or two and his writing materials. He knew that soon he would be executed. So he wrote his final thoughts to Timothy, his “son,” passing to him the torch of leadership, reminding him of what was truly important, and encouraging him in the faith. Imagine how Timothy must have read and reread every word; this was the last message from his beloved mentor.

As we read II Timothy, we get an understanding of what a Christ-like, discipleship/mentoring relationship looks like. Paul’s introduction is warm and every phrase lets Timothy know how much Paul cares for him. Paul then points Timothy to Jesus by reminding him of the qualities necessary for a faithful minister of Jesus Christ.

An active, genuine, Christ-focused relationship between adults and young people is vital to keeping youths connected to the congregation. I believe that most of the youths who attend our churches are longing to be noticed, deeply needing someone to point them to the perfect love of our Savior. They need to be loved, accepted and feel like they have something to offer. They need to have a “Paul” in their lives to tell them that they’ve got what it takes to make a difference for Christ!

So what does the healthy, unified “youth group within a congregation relationship” look like? Paul outlined it nicely for us in his letters to Timothy.

First, each young adult needs to be encouraged to set an example of respect and maturity in his or her faith for the rest of the congregation. Paul tells Timothy to “... preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction ... be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist and fulfill your ministry” (4:2, 5). Timothy had the opportunity to walk alongside Paul and learn about preaching, reproofing, enduring

hardships and evangelizing. We need to walk alongside our youths and do the same in order for them to grow in maturity and be able to exercise their spiritual gifts.

Second, the congregation needs to see a true heart of service among young adults. Paul modeled this for Timothy so that Timothy would learn what it really takes to win people for Christ. Paul tells Timothy, “For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory” (2:10). Just as Timothy was encouraged to overcome obstacles in his service, our youths need to be encouraged to persevere in their faith and service to the Lord.

Third, it’s important that youths are invited to join in adult fellowship opportunities and Bible studies, which will help them to make the transition into adult ministry in our congregations. The young ladies could be invited to come to a mother-daughter event at WMF or a scrapbooking night. The young men would love to be invited on a men-and-boys fishing trip or join that great men’s fellowship breakfast meeting at your church. Still other youths have musical gifts and could be encouraged to share them during the worship service or with the church choir. Young adults are a great resource during vacation Bible school and some may be able to help with leading Sunday school classes. Do you have a Salvation Army or other mission in your area? Invite a young adult to go and serve alongside you







next time you go! Paul tells Timothy in his earlier letter to “let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe” (I Timothy 4:12). Timothy had to earn the respect of his elders by setting an example in his speech, life, love, faith, and purity. Our youths need to be taught to model the same characteristics as Timothy. We have many opportunities to be intentional mentors of our young adults.

In Matthew 28:19-20, we are commanded to “go and make disciples of all nations ...” This command to make disciples extends to everyone, including this present generation of youths. Is there a young man or a young woman

in your congregation who you could encourage as a younger brother or sister? I am so thankful for the many older people who took the time to point me to Jesus and teach me how to serve Him. Praise God for my Sunday school teachers, my parents, many pastors and youth workers, many wonderful Bible camp speakers and Bible school teachers. I believe God raised each of them up to be a “Jesus” or a “Paul” example to me. Would you be willing to let God use you to impact the next Timothy in your congregation? God bless you as you answer His call.

*Rolf is the youth director at Maranatha Free Lutheran Church in Glyndon, Minn.*







# ministryelements

BY DAVE VANACKER

**I**t stands to reason that if we are to engage in ministry for the glory of God it is essential that we know what ministry is. Ministry is a common term in the Church, but do we really know what it means?

I vividly remember visiting my grandpa at his apartment in August of 1994. He was home on hospice, dying from pancreatic cancer. I remember looking down on him and trying to come up with the right words to say. I knew that this was probably the last time I would be able to speak to my grandpa on this earth. While I couldn't get the words to come out of my mouth, my thoughts were undiluted. There was no pretext and no pride. Had the words formed, I am confident that they would have been pure.

Such is the case when death is involved. There is no longer any need to mince words. The last words of — or to — any person carry with them a remarkable weight. How much more weight, then, do the last words of the Son of God carry! Jesus' last words on earth are found in Matthew 28:18-20: "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

Jesus' last words are known as the Great Commission. They are a charge to His followers to make disciples of everyone, everywhere.

This is ministry.

Ministry isn't getting people to pray a certain prayer, or teaching a particular class, or giving a sermon, or leading a group, or sharing a truth about God. While a healthy ministry will certainly include each of these encounters, they alone are not ministry. Instead, God-glorifying ministry is the *intentional process of making disciples because of our love for God and people*.

Ministry is *intentional*. It is done on purpose. It is not an accidental encounter or a haphazard engagement or an unplanned event. Biblical ministry is purposeful ministry.

Ministry is a *process*. It takes place over time. It is not a one-shot deal. It is not a short-term activity. It is not an event. Ministry begins when a follower of Jesus intentionally initiates a relationship for the sake of the Great Commission, and it ends in heaven. It is the process of helping people become disciples of Jesus Christ.

The only acceptable motivation for ministry is *love*

— love for God and love for people. It is not a callous act of the will. It is not the result of cold-hearted obedience. It is not a dispassionate duty. Biblical ministry is done out of a joyful fulfillment of the Great Commandment, found in Matthew 22:35-38: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

We intentionally engage in the process of making disciples because our love for God is so great that it spills out onto everyone around us.

It stands to reason that if ministry is the intentional process of making disciples because of our love for God and people, then we must be clear on what a disciple is. Like ministry, the terms disciple, discipleship, and disciple making are common ones in the Church today. But, do we really know what they mean?

I remember when I first started here at Sunnyside. I wanted so badly for the kids to love Jesus — I still do. I earnestly wanted to make disciples of them. But, while I had a vague notion of a disciple as fighting against sin, not having sex until marriage, praying regularly, reading the Bible, etc., I had no clear biblical picture of a fully devoted follower of Jesus. I had, at best, a list of things that a disciple should do — like a shopping list.

Many Christians, and even Christian leaders, talk about "making disciples" or practicing "discipleship" without any clear understanding of what a disciple really is or looks like. If our purpose in ministry is to make disciples, it is clearly crucial that we have a solid, biblical understanding of the true nature of a disciple.

A disciple is not perfect. A disciple is not one who never stumbles. A disciple is not one who has already arrived.

A disciple is a follower of Jesus.

And as a follower of Jesus, a disciple is an individual who is in the *process* of becoming more like *Jesus*. But, what is Jesus like? And what did Jesus command us to be like as His followers?

Several years ago our youth ministry team spent a good portion of a year praying, thinking, studying, and wrestling through these questions in order to come up with a biblical description of a disciple. While our conclusion is certainly not perfect, we believe that seven characteristics capture

(Continued on page 16)

Sometimes we need to see something demonstrated before it clicks. In the lives of Jesus and His apostles we have examples of ministry.

## What does it take to be a follower?

all of the biblical essentials of a disciple — a follower of Jesus.

- A disciple is a *worshiper/lover* of God: Matthew 22:35-38
- A disciple is a *debtor/lover* of people: Matthew 22:35-38 ; Romans 1:14
- A disciple recognizes his or her *dependence on God*: John 8:28; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 13:15; Matthew 10:29-30; Colossians 1:16-17; II Thessalonians 2:13
- A disciple pursues *holiness*: Romans 6:12; Matthew 5:29-30; Hebrews 12:14
- A disciple strives to see and act on the Word of God as it *truly is*: Psalm 1:1-3; Joshua 1:8; John 4:23-24
- A disciple sees himself or herself as a part of the *body of Christ*: Hebrews 10:19-23; Romans 12; Ephesians 4:15-16
- A disciple is a *suffering servant*: I Peter 3:17; I Peter 4:19; John 15:20-21; Matthew 20:25-28

Steve Saint, the son of Nate Saint, one of the missionaries who was killed by the Auca Indians while trying to bring them the gospel, told of how difficult it was to explain the gospel to people with no written language. He talked of how, as hard as they tried, they could not get the Aucas to understand certain concepts without demonstrating those concepts for them. For instance, they could not just describe crucifixion, they were forced to build a cross and lay on it to show the Aucas what Jesus did for them.

Sometimes we are like that as well. Sometimes we need to see something demonstrated before it clicks. In the lives of Jesus and His apostles we have examples of ministry. What example did Jesus and His apostles leave us?

### Jesus' example in John 17:1-4

Just before His arrest, trial, and crucifixion Jesus reflected back on His ministry over the previous three years in a prayer to His Father. "After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: 'Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For

you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.'"

Did you catch that last sentence? The interesting thing here is that Jesus is not dead yet. What work has He completed that the Father gave Him to do? Jesus gives us the answer in verse 6. "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word."

Jesus brought glory to the Father, completing His ministry. He understood that all of His teaching, leading, healing, and modeling — His ministry — were to be for the glory of God. What a spectacular example of the Son of God Himself seeing His ministry as an opportunity to reflect the glory of God!

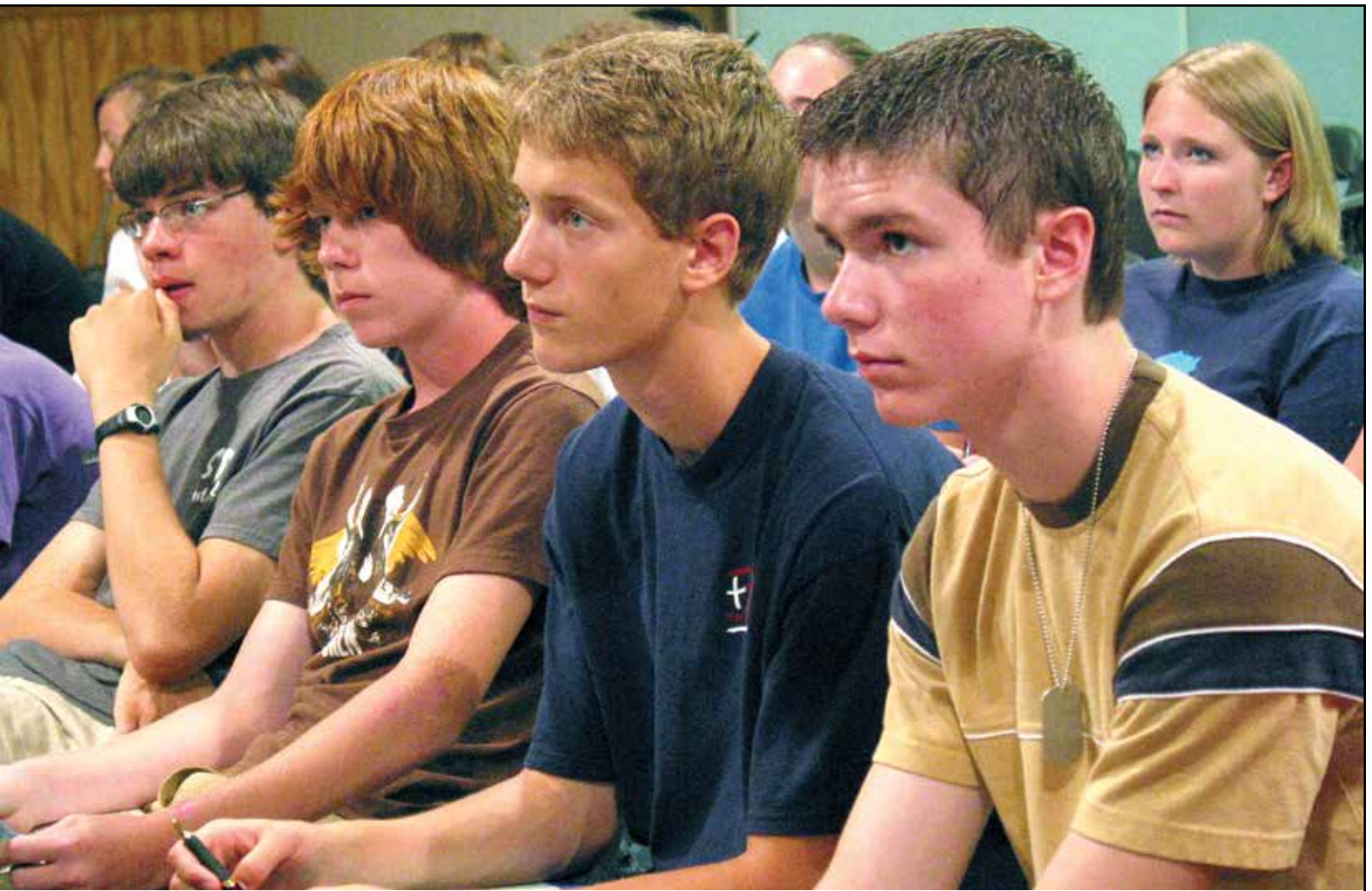
### Peter's example in Acts 10:42-43

Just after Jesus' resurrection and ascension God speaks to Peter, through a dream, and tells him to share the gospel with all people — not just the Jews. In Acts 10 we are able to witness Peter in action. "[Jesus] commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Peter is clearly being obedient to Jesus' Great Commission by preaching and testifying to Cornelius. But why was Peter so compelled to preach and testify to the truthfulness of Jesus' claims? We find the answer in an earlier encounter that Peter had with Jesus in John 21:15-17: "When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.' Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.' The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do







you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep.'"

In this passage Jesus is saying, "Peter, if you love me take care of my children — look after them, teach them about me, help them to become my disciples."

### The disciples' example in John 15:8-15

Again, shortly before His arrest, trial, and crucifixion Jesus spoke to His disciples. He was in the process of releasing His ministry to them when He spoke these words:

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

Picture the disciples sitting at His feet. We have, in the Gospels, seen their transformation from lowly fishermen and tax collectors to disciples of Christ. Jesus tells them that they are truly His disciples because they have learned from Him and obeyed Him — that they have become like Him in His obedience and in bearing much fruit.

The process of biblical ministry begins when an individual, who is committed to *living* out an authentic Christian life, compelled by his love for God and neighbor, *reaches* out with the gospel to people. The process continues as the follower of Christ helps new believers *grow* in their love for God, *trains* and *releases* mature Christians to minister to others, and continually *challenges* ministry leaders to pursue the souls around them. This process is most effective, biblical and beautiful when it takes place with the support of and within the context of the body of Christ — the Church.

*VanAcker is the youth ministries director at Sunnyside Lutheran, Stacy, Minn. This article has been adapted from a presentation VanAcker made on the elements that provide a framework for biblical ministry. If you would like more information on this presentation, contact VanAcker at [youthpastordave@frontiernet.net](mailto:youthpastordave@frontiernet.net).*

# camplessons

BY BETSY O'NEIL

As summer draws to a close, I've been thinking of the AFLC young people and their adult leaders who have been busy attending and staffing a number of youth camps the past several months. This year, I had the privilege of counseling at the camp my husband grew up attending — Bethany Bible Camp near Bemidji, Minn. There I heard solid biblical teaching, met many enthusiastic Christian young people, and learned there really *is* poison ivy out in left field. Attending the camp caused me to reflect on the purpose of Bible camps in the AFLC. Here's some I came up with: reaching those who don't know Jesus personally, encouraging the saved in their walk with Jesus, supporting Christian friendships, and promoting leadership among Christian youths.

These purposes are illustrated in the encouraging words of students and youth leaders from a sampling of camps that took place this summer. At Pickerel Lake Bible Camp in South Dakota, Christian kids reached out to their non-Christian peers. Dan Warner, a recent graduate of Flandreau, S.D., said this year's camp sessions were mainly directed toward those already saved.

"It was largely the Christian kids' responsibility to model a godly lifestyle. There were a lot of personal testimonies shared throughout the week, encouraging kids who didn't know the Lord," said Dan.

Because Pickerel Lake holds separate camps for junior and senior high, students from the senior high camp can be leaders at the junior camp.

"It made me really think about how I was acting," said 18-year-old

Carmen Parsley. "Kids were watching what I did all the time, and I wanted to make sure I was reflecting Christ."

Joel Mattson, a member of the AFLBS Majesty summer team, has witnessed kids grow in their faith this summer, including those from difficult family situations.

"Some Christian kids I've gotten to know have come from broken homes, some where alcohol is abused, yet they still live Christian lives even though their families aren't supportive," said Joel.

You can't diminish the importance of fellowship among Christian youths. An example of this is seen in the life of Jon Langness, a senior from Ishpeming, Mich. Jon has attended family camp at the ARC for 16 years and is part of a community of young people who have become good friends through camp. When asked how the camp encouraged Christian friendships, Jon looked at his buddies around him and said, "I met many of my Christian friends here, and it's just grown into a big pine tree from there, branching out right and left into the Midwestern U.S."

Boot Camp was a leadership training conference held at the ARC this past summer. Michael Osthus, a junior from Eagan, Minn., was trained



A group of campers from Bethany Bible Camp near Bemidji, Minn.

to lead worship, where he learned to not "worry as much about what other people think. Be more concerned about what God thinks." Another boot-camper was 18-year-old Christopher Buchfink from Glyndon, Minn. As the opening speaker for the camp, Chris said he had "never spoken in front of so many of my peers before. People come up to you afterwards and want to talk to you about your message, so speaking gives you more opportunities to encourage others."

Although these testimonies share only a little of what took place at our Bible camps over the summer, let us praise the Lord for what He is doing in the lives of our youths. May this challenge young people to not only continue attending summer camp, but strive to be leaders among their peers, as well.

*O'Neil attends Faith Free Lutheran, Minneapolis, Minn.*





### AFLTS hires new office staff

Marilee Johnson (right), from Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn., has accepted the position of administrative support in the AFLTS office. Her duties began in July. She replaces Monica Rakow (left), wife of seminarian Mark Rakow.

## AFLC memorials for July

#### World Missions

Keith Mitchell

#### WMF

Bill Gill

Aletha Olsen

Effie Hunt (2)

Myrtle Smith

Owen Myhre

Vernon Hove

Norma Sandberg



### Organ donated; chapel remodeled

Luther Melby, Dalton, Minn., has accepted the job of removing the seven-rank Kilgen pipe organ in the AFLC chapel this summer. The 1920 organ will be replaced by a newer 1960 Wicks 4511-3 manual pipe organ with 34 ranks. The front of the chapel building will need to be remodeled to accommodate the larger organ and its more than 2,000 pipes, which was donated to the schools. If you would like to help with the chapel remodeling project or are interested in the Kilgen pipe organ, call the AFLC schools office at (763) 544-9501.

## People and places

**Maranatha Lutheran Church**, Glyndon, Minn., has established a satellite congregation nearly 30 miles north-east in the community of Ulen, with worship services beginning there on June 25. A commercial building has been donated and remodeled, providing the worshippers with a chapel as well as ample space for Sunday school and youth activities. A dedication service has been scheduled for Aug. 6. The pastoral staff of Maranatha will serve the new congregation, reports Pastor Dale Finstrom, senior pastor.

**Pastor John Chandler**, Amarillo, Texas, sailed on the USS Constitution from Boston on June 10 as national chaplain for Marine Corps retirees, and took part in the dedication of a plaque in honor of the departed members of this branch of the military.

## Schools to host luncheons

Have you ever wanted to tour the AFLC Schools campus? Would you like to find out where your financial gifts are going? Ever wondered what it's like to be a Bible school student? Find out this fall and winter when the Vision department will host Dean's Luncheons on Thursdays. Current dates include Sept. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 9, Dec. 7, and Jan. 11, 2007. The events include an informational tour of the facilities, a chance to sit in on an AFLBS class and lunch with AFLBS Dean Pastor Joel Rolf. For more information and to make reservations, contact the Vision office at (763) 545-9501.



### Dean's home being remodeled

Remodel and repair work took place recently on the AFLBS dean's home, including replacing flooring and windows, as well as painting and landscaping. Pastor Leroy Flickinger (pictured above) installs duct work for central air. A fund has been set up to help with the remodeling costs. Gifts may be sent to AFLBS earmarked, "Deans home remodel."

# building churches

BY PAUL & BECKY ABEL

“I will build my church and the gates  
of hell will not prevail against it.”  
~ Matthew 16:18

**P**raise God for His faithfulness in building His church around the world! The new church in Campo Largo, Brazil, is growing and becoming more independent while we, as the congregation's founding missionaries, are in the U.S. on furlough for seven months.

The Campo Largo congregation began as a home Bible study in 2004. In October of that year, attendees moved their meeting location to rented quarters. After an evangelistic tent campaign in March 2005, a

third Primavera Project, a partnership between AFLC congregations in the United States and the Brazilian national church to purchase land and erect a church building in a new area of ministry. American congregations and interested individuals encouraged the new work with gifts and prayers.

The new congregation prayed and contributed regularly and sacrificially to see a dream come true. Paul served as foreman and contractor during the building process, coordinating short-term missionary

work teams and Brazilian volunteers in an effort to finish the new church before leaving on furlough.

What a great day of praise and celebration when the new building was dedicated to the glory of God on May 6. Representatives from the three other Free Lutheran congregations we started in the Curitiba area were present for the festive service.

The Campo Largo congregation will soon receive their second group of new members. Lay leaders and area Free Lutheran pastors are taking responsibility for the ministry while we are in the U.S.

Gifts to defray the construction costs may be sent to AFLC World Missions

designated to the Campo Largo Church Project. The project goal is \$10,000.

*The Abels are AFLC missionaries in Curitiba, Brazil.*



The Campo Largo church building, a Primavera Project in Brazil, was completed and dedicated in May.

regular church program got under way with teaching and preaching. Many were baptized and received as new members.

In August 2005, property was purchased across the street from the rental facility. This became the





( WMF Bible Study  
focuses on the  
Image of Christ  
in Women )

# restorejoyfulness

BY JANE EMERSON



**H**ave you lost your joy in the Lord? Psalm 51:12 says, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free (willing) spirit." When you are disappointed, when you are in the midst of a struggle, when you have been hurt by someone or something, when grief or illness strikes you or a loved one,

how do you react? If your finances are depleted or temptation takes over you, where do you go and what do you do?

The 2007 series of women's Bible studies, "The Image of Christ in Women," is designed to help you get a godly perspective when you have lost your way on the journey. Whether you struggle with self-doubt, a poor self-image or if you are having a dif-

ficult time being the wife, mother, grandmother, and co-worker that God designed you to be, this study will help you look at what it takes to be a woman of God and reflect His image in your life.

*Emerson, a member of Peace Lutheran, Canal Winchester, Ohio, is the author of the 2007 WMF Bible Study.*

## 2007 WMF BIBLE STUDY

"The Image of Christ in Women"

By Jane Emerson

ORDER BY OCTOBER 15

Cost: All books \$7 each

(Postage is included in this price)

Send to Executive Secretary:

Dawn Johnson

2991 30<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Wilson, WI 54027

(make checks to National WMF)

Total numbers of books ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check for: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail order to:

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CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

City & State: \_\_\_\_\_

## Gifford, Ill., congregation celebrates 100 years

Members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Gifford, Ill., celebrated the congregation's 100th anniversary May 19-21. The activities included a gospel jamboree, a pageant depicting the history of the congregation and a special worship service and luncheon.

The congregation began in 1906 with 16 families and a constitution formulated by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Iowa and Other States. Pastor Friedrich Mutschmann was called in 1907 to serve as the first pastor and offered a salary of \$500 per year, free housing and free fuel for the heating stoves, \$50 a year for feed for his horse and \$1 per month for each child for teaching summer school.

The congregation completed their building in 1929. An addition that included an elevator, fellowship area, music room, handicapped-accessible restrooms and additional storage areas was completed in 1995.

St. Paul's left the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America in 2004 and became affiliated with the AFLC the same year. Pastor David Skordahl began serving as interim pastor of St. Paul's in February 2005. Gary Maxwell began serving as youth and family ministries leader in March 2005. Later that fall saw the creation of the St. Paul's Community Preschool.

Members give thanks for those who have gone before so that the Word of God may continue to be preached and taught today.



Pastor Jim Johnson was installed as pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Camarillo, Calif., on July 16, with Pastor Robert Lee, AFLC president, officiating. Pastor Johnson and his wife, Linda, began full-time ministry there on July 1. Pictured are, from left, Pastor Robert and Gloria Lee and Linda and Pastor Jim Johnson.



## AFLBS class of 1981 reunites

The AFLBS class of 1981 celebrated their 25th reunion the weekend of July 21-22 in the Twin Cities. The classmates enjoyed time together as they reminisced about Bible school days and shared how God has directed them in the last 25 years. Pictured are: (front row, from left) Joyce Folsom, Mary Munch, Deb Anderson, Karla Berger, Pam Kinneberg, (middle row) Rebecca Moan, Nancy Eder, Amy Engwall, Jean Erickson, Kris McIntyre, Jean Sheldon, (back row) Jerry Moan, Marvin Schauland, Jon Benson, Priscilla Horn, and Harold Voth.

## AFLC seeks business manager

Members of the AFLC Coordinating Committee are seeking a general fund business manager. The position may be full- or part-time. If you or someone you know are interested in the position, contact Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC vice president, at (763) 545-5631.

Please feel free to pass on the contact information to possible applicants.

## AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1- July 31, 2006

FUND	TOTAL (Subsidy)	REC'D IN JULY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$325,700	\$23,670	\$192,625	59
Youth Ministries	57,949	4,836	40,097	69
Evangelism	98,330	7,049	55,803	57
Parish Education	96,477	4,762	42,548	44
Seminary	189,224	21,547	116,138	61
Bible School	296,257	37,265	184,162	62
Home Missions	293,287	19,164	144,435	49
World Missions	260,933	18,454	141,576	54
Personal Support	376,641	46,010	256,609	68
TOTALS	\$1,944,798	\$182,756	\$1,173,994	59
TOTALS 2005	\$1,860,474	\$154,849	\$1,125,054	60

Goal 58%

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.



# somewander

THE JOYS AND SORROWS OF WORKING WITH PEOPLE

I wonder if Jesus glanced over at Judas when He told the parable of the prodigal son. He “had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him” (John 6:64, NIV). As He told of a son who left His father’s home, I wonder if He thought ahead to the night when Judas would



Pastor Craig Johnson

leave the Lord’s table to meet up with those who were plotting to arrest Jesus.

The Lord would have loved to have Judas’ story end like the prodigal son’s. But, tragically, Judas did not return to the care of the One who loved him.

For three years Judas saw Jesus in action. He heard the teachings. And yet he betrayed the Lord.

It baffles us how Jesus could have lost one. After all that Judas had witnessed and experienced, how could he have wandered away?

People wander from the truth. Youths can be taught the Word of God, and be given a good example to follow, but as they grow up some choose a different path. Working with young people has brought great joy to my life and also, at times, sorrow and heart-break.

You do the best you can sharing the Word of God with them. You point them to Christ. You pray. You share your life with them. But they go a different direction. You wonder what you did wrong.

We’ve done a whole lot of things

wrong. None of our congregations have a perfect pastor, a perfect youth worker, perfect congregation members or perfect parents. But Jesus is perfect. And still a member of His group went astray.

It saddens us greatly when someone we’ve cared for goes against God’s Word. But it shouldn’t shock us. We continually check what we’re doing and confess where we’ve sinned and contributed to the problem. We ask the Lord to “See if there is any offensive way in me” (Psalm 139:24). Our responsibility has its limits, though. Just as we cannot take a whole lot of credit when someone is walking with the Lord, so we should not shoulder all the blame each time a person we work with goes astray. We each must give an account to God for our own actions. The Bible says, “The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son” (Ezekiel 18:20).

Youths aren’t like vending machines where if you push the right buttons the right results always pop out. Some are like Judas. They have all kinds of great opportunities, but still they wander. Others are like the Ethiopian eunuch we read about in Acts 8. He was reading in Isaiah 53 but not understanding it. Then he got one opportunity to receive instruction from Philip. The teaching took hold. His life was transformed and church history indicates he was used by God to impact a nation.

Some youths have limited opportunities. They grow up surrounded by poor examples. They get little instruction in the Word. They seem destined to go the wrong direction. But God brings them through it and uses them in powerful ways.

If we looked at Jesus’ work with His disciples the way we sometimes judge a congregation’s youth work, we’d be tempted to call Him a failure. He only had 12 disciples and lost one of them. Whenever a big crowd started to follow Him, Jesus would say

Youths aren’t like vending machines where if you push the right buttons the right results always pop out.

something to drive a bunch of them away (John 6:66). He left behind on this earth an unimpressive group of 120 (Acts 1:15). That’s certainly not a mega-church. But Jesus perfectly completed the work the Father gave Him to do (John 17:4).

Maybe you’ve lost some. Maybe the numbers aren’t very big. Take an honest assessment of how you’re doing. Seek to grow and improve. Shed some tears. Confess your sins and your shortcomings. But don’t give up. There’s probably more good going on than you realize. And rest assured, Jesus understands.

*something to share*

# spirituallypersonal

BY PASTOR JOE OCKER

**L**et's see ... personal relationship with Jesus? Check. Personal relationship with God the Father? Check. Well if God the Father and God the Son want to have personal relationships with me, what about the Holy Spirit? What kind of relationship does the Holy Spirit want with me? Let's see what Scripture says!

First of all, you won't find me calling the Holy Spirit, "it." I wince every time I hear someone say that. How would you like to be called "it"? The Holy Spirit is not a ghost. The Holy Spirit is not a nameless spiritual force that floats around at the whim of the wind. The Holy Spirit is a *person* of the Godhead.

The New Testament often uses the pronoun, "He," when referring to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is called our Comforter, Teacher, the One who chooses which spiritual gifts to give to each believer, the One who convicts us of sin, and the One who draws people to Jesus and helps them believe. The Holy Spirit has feelings; Scripture says He can be "grieved," (Ephesians 4:30). Yes, the Holy Spirit is powerful and mysterious and wonderful, but keep in mind that He is a person, like Father and Son.

What kind of relationship does

the Holy Spirit want with the believer? The vocabulary of the Bible for the Holy Spirit in relationship with us has a lot to do with "presence." At Christmas we celebrate Jesus as Immanuel, God with us. As Jesus ascends into heaven at the end of His ministry on earth, He promises the disciples, "I will be with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). How is it possible for Jesus to be with us when He physically ascended into heaven to be seated at the Father's right hand? Listen to Jesus answer our question at the Last Supper as He speaks to His disciples, "If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:15-17).

How will Jesus be with the believer always? Through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. What kind of relationship does the Holy Spirit want to have with me? If He wants to "live with you and in us forever," I would say He wants a very personal relationship, wouldn't you?

And just to give a little extra encouragement to you as you ponder

developing a deeper personal relationship with the Spirit of God (and I hope you are pondering just that!), ponder this: the New Testament, on two occasions, calls the Holy Spirit the "Spirit of Jesus" in Acts 16:7 and Philippians 1:19. You see, God is three persons, and yet *one God*. What evidence of this Trinity do we see in the three articles I've written on our relationship with God? The Son wants to have a personal relationship with the believer, so does the Father, and so does the Holy Spirit. The three persons of the Godhead are in agreement regarding their relationship with God's children. God wants to be personally known, and to know us personally.

I'll leave you with one more fantastic verse that makes it a no-brainer to pursue a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Romans 5:5 says, "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us." If the Holy Spirit is the One who pours the love of God into our hearts, then I want all of the Holy Spirit I can get! Amen! Amen!

*Ocker is pastor of Dell Lutheran in Frost, Minn.*