
✠ THE HOPE LUTHERAN ✠

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Our Joyous Mission

A Scary Story

A brother pastor recently told me a story that's both scary and instructive. This story involved his daughter, a very bright and discerning young lady in her early teens, and the recent LCMS Youth Gathering held this summer in New Orleans. This was the first national youth gathering this young lady had ever attended. As are most youth, she was excited to see so many other Lutheran youth gathered in one place and she did enjoy getting to know some new brother and sister Christians.

However, one thing disappointed this young lady: the very guilt-laden "missions" message pushed by presenters. Gathering presenters may have meant well in teaching the youth to bear witness to Jesus, but their message actually ended up burdening the young people. The presenters were so focused on prompting these Lutheran youth to carry out the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ (a.k.a. "witnessing to Jesus") that the youth felt guilty for not witnessing enough. That's how this pastor's young daughter received the message, but it's hardly the way to teach people on the Church's mission.

The scary side of the story did not end there though. As the true story goes, many of the youth went on a tour of a New Orleans cathedral. As the group was touring inside the large space dedicated to worship and prayer, my friend's daughter got separated from the group as she was looking at something else. All of a sudden an older man, evidently homeless and dressed in tattered and dirty clothes, approached the young lady. The man told her that he was an atheist and began mocking religion in general.

Guilty for *Not* Witnessing?

What makes this part of the story so scary is the moral dilemma that flooded the young lady's mind. Should she stay and try to "witness" to this obviously bitter and unbelieving man, or should she return to her tour group and its certain safety?

She knew she should have paid more attention and stayed with her group, but now she was also feeling guilty for wanting to flee to safety and *not* witness to this unbelieving homeless man. She chose to leave the confrontational man and return to her tour group. However, as she did, she also felt incredibly guilty. She had not, in fact, witnessed to that older man. And wasn't that, after all, the message she had been hearing at the gathering?

For me—and I'm sure for my brother pastor and his wife—the mere prospect of this young lady, off by herself, being abducted by this stranger is truly scary. However, what's even more frightful is that she was compelled to feel guilty at choosing her safety over "witnessing to Jesus" at a time like that. That's what happens when mission work (a.k.a. "missions," "evangelism," "outreach," or "witnessing") is presented and taught in a burdensome, guilt-giving manner. And, sad to say, these days we hear the Church's mission taught and proclaimed more and more in this negative manner.

An Instructive Story

However, here's where this story transitions from being scary to becoming instructive. It actually instructs in what *not* to do and how *not* to teach Christian witnessing.

This pastor's daughter was exactly correct in seeing through the "missions" presentations for what they really were: burdensome guilt trips dressed in the sheep's clothing of "witnessing to Jesus." She was also exactly correct in fleeing from the stranger and returning to her tour group. She need not feel guilty about "not witnessing" to him. Rather, she actually *did* witness to him. How? By returning to her God-given vocation of being a) a student learning about the cathedral, b) a participant in the youth gathering, and c) a daughter who needed to return home to her family safe and sound.

At first we might think: "But how do those things bear witness to Jesus?" That's easy. The

young lady bore witness that she is a Christian by learning more about that cathedral (That was her purpose at that place and time.), by returning to and staying with the group of Christians that brought her there (She was under the care of gathering chaperones.), and by loving and honoring her parents (Remember what mom and dad said about not talking to strangers?). Believe it or not, this young lady did show that she is a Christian in these very normal and ordinary ways.

No, she did not spark up a conversation about Jesus with that confrontational stranger. But let's be honest, such conversations born out of such confrontations rarely "make disciples." If anything, a quick and off the cuff talk about Jesus and religion most likely would only further solidify that man's hard-hearted hostility toward Christ and His Church.

The Joy of Mission Work

Should this young lady—and we—be concerned about lost, unbelieving people such as the stranger in the cathedral? Of course! It's basic Christian love. Now *there's* the proper motivation for "mission work" (a.k.a. "missions," "evangelism," "outreach").

When "mission work" is taught in a burdensome, guilt-giving manner, it's usually done with some kind of self-serving purpose—a purpose such as increasing the size of an institution or ensuring institutional survival (either of a congregation or of a whole church body). That's hardly Christian love for the lost neighbor!

The joy of carrying out our God-given mission work comes when we love our neighbor enough to show them their "lostness" in their sin and then show them the Savior who comes to seek and save the lost—them. It's a lot like putting up road signs and barricades on a highway that leads to a deep canyon where the bridge is out. Road crews put up the signs and barricades out of love for their neighbor. After all, authorities do not want cars racing down the highway, especially at night, and plunging into the canyon to their doom. When we Christians bear witness to Jesus in our daily lives, and when the Church proclaims Christ crucified and risen to rescue us sinners, we are trying to love people enough to turn them from plunging to their eternal doom.

The joy of witnessing to Jesus comes not in keeping tabs on how many times we've sparked a conversation about Him with unsuspecting people

around us. Rather, it comes from living as God's redeemed children and enjoying the forgiveness and life that He freely gives in His Gospel and Sacraments. It comes from faithfully receiving His goodness and mercy in the Divine Service.

The joy of witnessing to Jesus shows as we love our neighbors enough to want them to enjoy the forgiveness and life that Jesus brings for them too. We certainly invite them to join us in the Divine Service at church, where they get to hear the message of Jesus' death and resurrection for them. Most of the time, though, witnessing to Jesus simply means living in our God-given vocations—such as father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, worker, citizen, etc.—and showing that we Christians live differently than other people around us. We spend time with our families and learn the Word of God together; we work diligently at our jobs; we do works of mercy for those in need; we love and pray for one another, both inside and outside the Church.

As one of my professors once said, witnessing to Jesus is as simple as: "Pray, and when you get a chance, say." Pray for your neighbor who does not yet know Jesus Christ, and then when the time comes, speak of Him and what He has done for you and your neighbor. St. Peter said it well: "*In your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you*" (1 Peter 3:15).

I've often used the illustration of a young lady wearing an engagement ring for the joy of mission work. No one needs to coax or cajole her to show off her new ring. She is just plain happy to do so every chance she can! In fact, you cannot stop her. ☺ Christians bearing witness to Christ are like that. In their Baptism they have been engaged to Jesus the Bridegroom, and now they joyfully spread the word and want others to join them in that joy. After all, the wedding feast on the Last Day will be a superb joy! Perhaps instead of focusing on coaxing and cajoling youths and adults to "Get out and do the mission work (or else!)," we need to focus on the joy of life from Christ, life with Christ, and life in Christ.

If our mission work is lackluster, it's probably because we do not find our joy of life in Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen. However, when we cling to our Savior and treasure the boundless depths of His forgiveness, grace, and life, then our joyous mission properly – and naturally – falls into place. Pastor Randy Asbury

FROM THE KANTOR

Be Strong in the Lord

The theme for 2010 – 2011 school year at our day school is *Be Strong in the Lord*. This theme takes its inspiration from the hymn #665 in *Lutheran Service Book* which tells the story of Ephesians 6: *Finally, be strong in the Lord... put on the whole armor of God... take up the whole armor of God... fastened the belt of truth... put on the breastplate of righteousness... take up the shield of faith... take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit*. This theme, this passage of Scripture, and this hymn express the foundation on which Lutheran education is built upon. Lutheran education exists to educate children within the context of the Christian – Lutheran worldview to equip the students to grow into adults who serve in their calling as members of the body of Christ both in the church, in their family, and in the world.

This is increasingly important as our society becomes more and more secular and pluralistic. The world here in the United States is a different place than it was a generation or two ago. Every generation probably makes this claim and it is probably true that each generation ushers in some kind of change. The difference is the kind of change we have seen in our society and culture from twenty to fifty years ago. Today's world is very different in terms of religious and moral culture. This is the cultural fabric of today's culture:

- truth is up to the individual to decide for himself,
- every religion is a similar expression of one god,
- the individual is entitled to the most he or she wants to have in life,
- the more diverse we are, the better we are
- tolerance is demanded for every viewpoint except that which holds to the absolute truth.

But the Christian viewpoint is different. The Christian faith is about

- turning to Scripture for truth,
- acknowledging that salvation is through faith in the Trinitarian God, so aptly expressed in our creeds,
- remaining strong and faithful to the Christian way of life, even in a society that is more and more pluralistic and diverse,
- and finally carry out one's Christian vocation in their daily life and work.

As Christians we must live in the world, but we must not let every aspect of the world form us as individuals or a community. Our identity must remain defined and clear. Our identity must incorporate what Paul describes as the *Armor of God*:

- Belt of truth – truth is found in Scripture, truth is not an opinion, truth is concrete
- Breastplate of righteousness – we are made righteous through Christ, we are called to live a righteous life
- Shoes as the Gospel of peace – we must be swift to turn to and share the Gospel
- Shield of faith – when we are called to be on the defense, faith is what we use
- Helmet of salvation – the knowledge of our salvation keeps us focused on our purpose
- Sword of the Spirit (Word of God) – God's Word does no good in its sheath, it must be used

The joy of a Lutheran day school for a congregation is found in knowing that this endeavor prepares children to grow into adults who are there to serve the Lord in whatever their vocations may be. Faith is formed and minds are educated, this is exactly what every child needs. This is indeed a very worthy endeavor.

Hope Lutheran School

September, 2010

The students and teachers began the 2010-2011 academic year on August 18 under the theme "Be Strong in the Lord". Knowing that our strength comes from the Lord, our first lesson was our Chapel service at Hope Church. Kantor spoke about the Bible verse from Ephesians 6. We are also learning Hymn 665 which reminds us to be dependent on prayer to help us to be strong in the Lord.

The enrollment is at 71 students. We are welcoming 10 new Kindergarten and Jr. Kindergarten children and 7 other new students in grades 2-8. God's family at Hope is blessed to share the Gospel message with each other.

One of the roof top air conditioning units was not working when we returned August 2. Before we received the repair bill, we were given a \$2000.00 donation to cover the cost of the repair with the remainder going toward scholarships for students.

Many people have been very generous with their time and talents. We would like to thank Tom Schulze for repainting the yellow stripes and games on the playground. Tom Schulze, Terry and Kim Haegele painted the health room, the door frames and the steps in the school. Thank you!

Pam Franks put up bulletin boards in the basement and hallway and organized the uniform swap. Lee Schmeiderer continues to help us with printing and copying, most recently, the Parent/Student Handbook. The Kights cleaned the fan blades and window blinds in the classrooms in addition to the other summer cleaning. Thanks also to Mark Rogers, Chris Atwood, Jacob Maples and Aaron Tampow for taking care of the grass at school. We appreciate all that they have done.

We welcome back Lynn Dancha and Edna Murphy for another year of help from OASIS. This is a volunteer organization of older adults who go through training and then come to schools to read with and do activities with children. Each lady spends about an hour week with their students. Mrs. Dancha and Mrs. Murphy were recognized last spring for completing 10 years with OASIS. All of those years have been at Hope.

We thank all of the volunteers who help us throughout the year!

What's Up In Worship?

"Therefore everything in this Christian community is so ordered that everyone may daily obtain full

forgiveness of sins through the Word and [Sacraments] appointed to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live on earth" (Large Catechism, II:55).). In September we continue to hear about the Holy Life of Christian faith and love. The Blessed Trinity constantly teaches us to trust in His mercy and to love our neighbors by serving them. Here's what's coming up in the Divine Service for September as we continue to learn and live the Christian faith and life.

Date	Day in Church Year	Gospel Reading	Gospel Focus (Theme of the Day)
September 5	Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity	Luke 17:11-19	The Thankful Samaritan - We like it when someone does a good deed for us, but too often we ignore the good deeds that God does for us. The thankful Samaritan shows us how to receive God's gifts in faith and give Him thanks and praise.
September 12	Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity	Matthew 6:24-34	Earthly Goods - Why get bogged down in the sin of worrying? After all, worry only betrays your lack of trust in God! God provides all of your earthly needs even before you know that you need them. Therefore, you can seek His kingdom first, and all other needed things will be given you.
September 19	Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity	Luke 7:11-17	Great Comfort - Christ raises the young man of Nain. Death's procession is brought to a halt by the procession of life led by Jesus who brings life and immortality to light. Only Jesus can say to the mother and to us: "Do not weep!" Only Jesus can say to the son and to us: "I say to you, arise."
September 26	Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity	Luke 14:1-11	Christian Freedom - Christ frees the man sick with dropsy for a life of love and humility. Christ frees us from pious narrowness (the Pharisees) and lets the living command of God shine forth again among men: that is the whole sense of the day of rest (Sabbath) for man and beast.
September 29	St. Michael and All Angels	Matthew 18:1-10	God's Holy Angels - Conflict is part of the Christian faith and life—that is, the conflict between God's kingdom and the kingdom of darkness. But God sends His holy angels fight the forces of Satan on our behalf. On this day we hear the accurate Scriptural teaching of angels (a teaching that is not always present in popular ideas about angels).

GOODFELLOWSHIP CLUB

The Mr. & Mrs. Club and The Goodfellowship Club wish to thank everyone who helped make Hope's Annual Basement Sale a success on August 11th and 14th. There was a lot of work involved behind the scenes-- such as setting up tables, pricing and unpacking and sorting the contents contained in bags and boxes. We enjoyed conversing

with our customers and if needed we helped them carry their purchases to their cars.

Our next monthly meeting will be on **Tuesday, September 21, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.** in the church basement. We invite any member of our congregation to join us.

Joyce Yancey

Corresponding Secretary

MR. & MRS. CLUB

THANK YOU, THANK YOU!! To all those who contributed their treasures to be sold at our Basement Sale; to all those who came and helped set up, work and clean up. We could not do this without everyone's help. We made a little over \$1,300!!! That's WONDERFUL!! But more important is the good times and fellowship we

have just working together on a project.

After the clean up from the sale some of us went out for lunch to Lafayette Firehouse #1 Restaurant in Lafayette Square. It was very good and a nice way to relax.

We are looking forward to our Progressive Dinner on Saturday, September 18. If you have questions or wish more information about this event, call the Woods, 631-1438, or Truebes, 631-1218.

LIFE CHAIN - OCTOBER 3

Life Chain is scheduled for **Sunday, October 3**. Life Chain is a peaceful, prayerful, pro-life witness for the sanctity of human life. Participants stand on the sidewalks lining major streets and hold the signs: Abortion Kills Children, Abortion Hurts Women, Jesus Forgives and Heals. This is a national event with thousands and thousands of participants.

Please prayerfully consider joining the group from Hope. We will meet on the church parking lot to carpool at **1:30 p.m.** Our group will be standing outside the Planned Parenthood abortion clinic on Forest Park. You are welcome to bring lawn chairs.

Please pray for good weather and that the Holy Spirit will use our simple witness to change hearts and save lives.

For more information, contact Judy Maichel at 352-1319.

SCRIP CARD NEWS

I hope everyone had a great summer. We will be starting up the Scrip orders again in September. Like before, we will place orders each week, and will go through the middle of December. Due to other obligations that came up for me, during the month of September, Carol Spyers will be collecting orders (with payment) on Sunday mornings after the early service in the coffee hour room. She will collect the orders and then have them ready for pick up the following Sunday. Orders from the school will need to be at the church by Friday. Please watch the church bulletins for new order forms. Mrs. Collet at the school will also receive an order form for distribution to the school parents. For a complete list of retailers, go to www.glscrip.com. Although it is ideal if orders can be placed online with Presto-Pay, order forms will

still be available for those who are not able to do online ordering.

Presto-Pay changes: If you have placed orders with Presto-Pay in the past, or wish to start up with Presto-Pay, please call me to discuss some changes. We have a "new" bank, and new procedures at Scrip.

Scrip cards are an easy way to raise money for the church and school. They're the exact same cards you can buy at a place like Walgreens or Walmart, etc., only instead of them getting the proceeds, we do! Visit www.glscrip.com or www.shopwithscrip.com.

Thanks for your support. Please call with any questions.

Scrip Coordinator, Kathi Berndt
Cell 314/223.0575; Home 314/994.1175
berndtrk@sbcglobal.net

VOTERS' ASSEMBLY

There will be a Voters' Assembly on **Monday, September 13, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.** All voters should try to attend. It's important that we have a quorum so we can accomplish the business of the congregation.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES FOR AUGUST 2010

BAPTISMS - None

TRANSFER IN - STEWART, Eric from Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Moline, IL, 8/8/2010

TRANSFER OUT -- None

CALLED TO THEIR ETERNAL HOME -
None

WEDDINGS - None

CHANGES TO 2010 TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

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