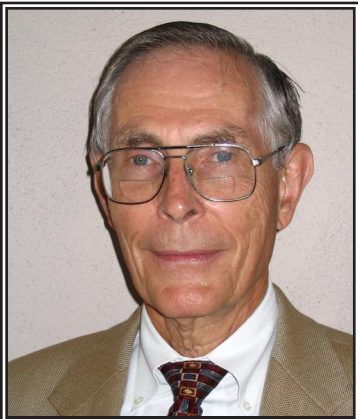


OUTREACH

Challenge Deficit



BURNING BUSH TALK

Bruce Lieske
Founder Lutherans in
Jewish Evangelism

"Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves." -Luke 10:3

In his book *50 Rules Kids Won't Hear in School*, Charles Sykes illustrates how parents and schools today are over-protecting their children from unpleasant experiences in order to make them feel good so they have a positive self-image — thus crippling them when they must respond to the eventual hard knocks of adult life. Games are played so that everybody is a winner. The old playground game of "dodge ball" has been forbidden in some schools because "somebody might get hurt." Or maybe we forbid our children from climbing trees because "they might get hurt." Do we do that in the church?

One of the reasons why evangelism is shunned by many Christians is because it is hard, frequently frustrating and disappointing in its results. In a recent column in the *Jews for Jesus* newsletter, Founder Moishe Rosen compares evangelism to mining. Mining is difficult and dangerous. We were all transfixed by the mining disaster in Utah this past August. The mine collapsed, killing a dozen miners. Mining can be disappointing as well. You can go to a lot of trouble and expense, digging a shaft, and end up with nothing.

Evangelism — sharing the good news of Jesus — can be like that. You can set up a program, pay for materials, deploy people into a neighborhood for a door-to-door canvass and end up with nobody visiting your church. Or perhaps you can screw up your courage and share Jesus with a friend and have that person dismiss your sharing with a casual remark, or even a polite rebuff. A bruised ego is painful. In our society we want to do things that are risk free!

Evangelism, like mining, is a difficult activity. We must learn to handle our disappointments.

My church has a program where we make "cold calls" on people in the neighborhood every Monday evening. Each team of two people takes turns at the door — either praying or speaking to whomever answers

the door. Recently it was my turn to knock and speak at a particular house. An unkempt looking young man answered, cracking the door open about 18 inches, and holding back an unhappy-looking pit bull.

My mind was so occupied with thinking about the pit bull that I could not speak. So my partner began talking, which then "primed my speech pump" so I could speak. The young man

injustices of adult life. Nor can we grow to our full potential as disciples of Jesus if we are never challenged to do and say the "hard stuff." Jesus did say: "Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves." Lambs? Not even adult sheep.

Sharing the Gospel with Jewish people is particularly difficult. I am not suggesting it is as difficult as when Stephen was stoned to death by an angry

Stephen die under a hail of rocks, became a believer in Jesus. There are growing numbers of Jewish people who have come to faith in Jesus in our time — and who are making huge contributions to the Kingdom of God. I will mention just two: Jay Sekulow, Founder of the American Center for Law and Justice (arguing successfully before the U.S. Supreme Court for the right of Christians to evangelize in public); and Moishe Rosen, Founder of *Jews for Jesus*, who has inspired and emboldened hundreds of Jewish and Gentile Christians to share Messiah Jesus.

Jesus spoke to his Jewish disciples and encouraged them to speak of him to other Jews: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves." (Luke 10:2-3)

Call us at 877-457-5556 x220 or e-mail us at blieske7@bellsouth.net for suggestions and materials that can help you be a lamb in the midst of wolves. □

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was not interested. Back in the car I asked my partner, "Did you not realize that was a pit bull, or are you not afraid of pit bulls?" He laughed and said he had seen them before.

Evangelism is a challenge, and I wonder if many of us are suffering from "challenge-deficit" syndrome. Children who are over-protected from all harm by their parents — or by their schools — never learn to cope with the difficulties and

Jewish mob. But there is a lot of rejection. There is silent rejection from many Christians who believe that it should not even be done. And there is active rejection from Jewish people who are offended that we imply that Judaism is inferior to Christianity — although 60% of Jews in America do not practice the religion of Judaism.

God uses our witness to the Gospel in those challenging situations! Saul, who watched

Peaches and Sunshine

Georgia and Florida Lutherans Cooperate to Boost Guardianship Programs

Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) and Lutheran Services of Georgia (LSG) are working together to set a tone for meaningful ministries for some of the most vulnerable adults in our District's two states.

"We are deeply grateful for the successful model of serving almost forgotten adults that Lutheran Services Florida provided us at Lutheran Services of Georgia as we establish a similar program in the Metro Atlanta Area," commented LSG President/CEO Rev. Gary Danielsen.

"Adult Guardianship blends well with the other services we have offered during LSG's 25-year history to bring hope healing and strength to the most vulnerable in our society."

When LSG in Atlanta began seeking state funding to establish a new Adult Public Guardianship Program, it turned to LSF, based in Tampa. LSF offered its 25 years of experience in guardianship programs and its track record of success to help its Georgia counterparts make a proposal.

"Working together to help people in need is social ministry at its best," LSF President and CEO Sam Sipes said. "We are pleased that our joint efforts were successful, and we know that the new Lutheran Services of Georgia Adult Guardianship Program will help many people in desperate need."

To secure funding, LSG submitted a proposal based on the very effective guardianship program in Florida. It worked. Lutheran Services of Georgia has now secured a contract from the Peach State government for a program based on Sunshine State expertise. The contract was awarded by the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Aging Services.

"We are honored to be the first agency in Georgia to provide the Adult Public Guardianship services, and we are working diligently to enhance the quality of life for all those we serve," noted Rose Williams, LSG's Guardianship Program Manager. "Thank you to LSF for your support." □

Adult guardianship programs help people 18 years of age and older who are incapacitated and can no longer make the most basic decisions and are often the victims of abuse, exploitation and/or neglect. During the past 25 years LSF Guardianship programs have helped thousands of people.

Volunteers play a significant role in meeting the growing need for these services. To learn more about becoming a volunteer in one of these guardianship programs, contact Bob Gibeling in Georgia at 678-686-9626 and bjgibeling@lsga.org; or Danielle Kearney in Florida at 813-676-9513 and dkearney@lsfnet.org. □



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Sharon Van Wert (left), Program Manager of Lutheran Services Florida's Tampa Bay Guardian Services, and Bob Gibeling, Volunteer Coordinator of the new Adult Public Guardianship Program of Lutheran Services of Georgia, met recently to share information.