



President
Paul
Sieveking

What made Jesus angry?

Jesus was angry, and His righteous anger is a terrifying thing! He was in the temple with a whip in His hand and fire in His eyes. He drove out animals, overturned money tables, and cleansed the temple.

You can tell a lot about a person by what makes him angry. It doesn't take much for some to lose their temper. Driving in traffic, raising kids, sorting hogs, even voters meetings can trigger explosions. Was that the way Jesus was? No! So, what was He so angry about?

It was Passover. According to Jewish law, every male was to celebrate at the temple. Pilgrims from all over the world were there. Every Jew had to pay his annual temple tax. This tax had to be paid with a Jewish shekel instead of the Roman coins used in the market place. So, those people from all over the world needed to exchange their money for the temple money. As a service to the people, there were moneychangers in the temple courts. But, these moneychangers charged exorbitant prices, and it was all being done in the name of pure religion!

The Law also required them to offer sacrifices. As another service to the pilgrims, animals (cattle, sheep, and doves) were available in the temple. Imagine the noise, the odors, and the confusion. People haggling over prices, moneybags jingling, feet shuffling, animals

bleating and cooing. How could anyone worship with all those distractions?

Jesus went to celebrate Passover at the temple and acted like He owned the place. He watched what was going on, and the more He watched, the more upset He became! He took ropes, made a whip and drove the frightened sheep and cattle out of the temple. He overturned the moneychangers' tables. Coins flew! People scattered. He did it with such authority that no one dared resist Him. He yelled, "How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" Yes, He acted like He owned the place because He is the Lord of the temple! He is the Son of God!

He was angry because His temple was desecrated. There was no reverence, no sense of God's presence in their worship. When you gather for worship in God's House, God Himself is present! God speaks to you in His Word. Do you sometimes go unprepared to be in His presence and partake of Jesus' body and blood? Do you ever permit the liturgy to become mere words that you recite without thinking? Do you let thoughts, memories, your anger distract you?

Our Lord also was upset because all of this commotion took place in the court of the Gentiles, the outermost court. A Gentile was not permitted to go any closer to the altar or the holy of holies, under penalty of death. There was no way anyone could worship there, and the Gentiles had nowhere else to go. Some people were shut out, denied access to God. It became impossible for them to worship. That really upset Jesus.

Is there anything in your church's life that makes it impossible for some people to worship? Is there anything you do that would make a

visitor feel unwelcome or distract your fellow members? Are there barriers that hinder handicapped people, the hearing impaired, or those with poor eyesight? Is it comfortable for parents with little children, teenagers, and people of other cultures? We need to be sensitive to anything that would deny people access to worship.

The primary reason Jesus reacted the way He did was to show that the whole system of sacrifices was coming to an end. For years the prophets had warned them that God was not pleased with their animal sacrifices. The psalmist wrote, "You do not delight in sacrifices, or I would bring it. You take no pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart O God, you will not despise." The people trusted in their sacrifices, temple tax, and their own goodness to meet the Law's demands. But the Law cannot save. No sacrifice ever made a person right with God. That was a false hope.

God had commanded His person to offer sacrifices to point them to the One and only sacrifice who was to come—the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The whole system—the Law, the temple, the sacrifices—pointed to Jesus. That day, our Lord put His Word into a dramatic act, drove out all the animals, tossed out all the money, and cleansed His temple.

We would never slaughter a lamb on the altars of our churches, but there are those of us who trust in their sacrifices—who attend worship, give offerings, and do good works in the hope of winning God's favor. Scripture tells us nothing we do, nothing we give, can put us right with God. That's why Jesus came; to drive out false hope and to

(Continued on Page H.)

EDUCATION



Rev. Bob Riggert
Executive
Assistant

'Bless this mess'

Perhaps you too have seen the "Bless This Mess" motto displayed in a kitchen, office, or other setting. The phrase also may be an appropriate prayer as we carry out Christ's mission for His church in various contexts of church and community.

I had the privilege of leading an Advent service at my church home in Manning. I was excited about being part of a service that also involved the three dozen preschool children. Director Deb Fink had prepared the classes to share the Good News of Jesus, the Light.

Joining the members of Zion, who had come for the midweek service, were parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors of the children. It was an exciting setting.

You can easily imagine the dynamics of the preschool presentation: some shy children chose to



stay huddled in the pew with parents, some shed tears of fear, some waved to their admirers in the pews, some relished their time on the "stage," some discovered that if you talk loudly into the microphone the sound would reverberate through the sanctuary, and some sang angelically and spoke prophetically.

The dynamics in the congregation were just as interesting. Some listened reverently; some waved back to their children; some maneuvered to get the best view and best picture angle.

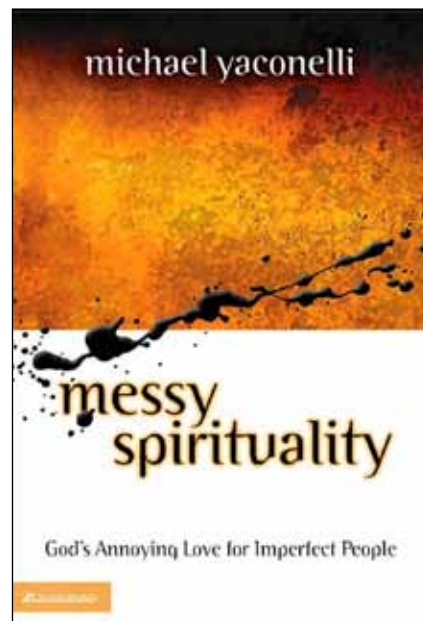
The traditional, organized, detail-oriented, reverent aspects of my personality and preferences reacted, "This is a mess!"

Then the Spirit opened my eyes and heart and I prayed, "Bless this mess." A number of those in attendance did not have a church home. Some of the children and their families had never experienced a "formal" worship setting.

This was perhaps the only Christmas service that the children and families would experience. The Light of Jesus was being shared and was shining on Zion Lutheran Church. God was in the mess!

A number of years ago, I read the book *Messy Spirituality* (by Michael Yaconelli, Zondervan, 2002). The message of the book is that sharing and living the Gospel is not always neat.

The message of the Lenten season is that Jesus came to be part of our messy world. The crucifixion scene was messy. Jesus came to take away all the messes that I make because of my sinful nature. Jesus alone is the answer to the messes in our family, our commu-



nity, our world, and sometimes even in the church.

Praise God for preschools and other Christian education agencies that get involved in the messy world of children. They offer the opportunities to share with children and families the Good News of Jesus.

When we get involved with them and when we take the risk to involve them in the worship and activity of the congregation, it will not always be well-organized and neat. Our comfort and our preferences become secondary to making Jesus known to every child and every adult in our community. We simply and humbly pray, "Bless this mess!"

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Rev. Mark Gerken
Executive Assistant

What's your passion?

What is it that really gets you excited, that item on which you could spend days or visit about for hours? That item, your passion, could just be the ticket the Lord wants to use to lead you into serving Him. Lanette Falk, member of Calvary, Sioux City, discovered that truth last summer. Here's her story; may it encourage you in sharing your Lord with others!

* * *

Two of my greatest passions, food and children, are what inspired me to start the Bag-A-Lunch program at Calvary Lutheran Church. Calvary is located in Leeds, a small community in Sioux City with a population of 5,500. The church has a medium-sized parish hall with a well-equipped kitchen.

The program ran every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at lunch-time, beginning the week that school let out for summer and ending the week that the new school season started in 2009. A free lunch was provided to all participants.

We targeted elementary-age children but never turned anyone away. Although there are many programs focused on feeding children during the school year, there are very few that provide meals to them during the summer. Not wanting children to go hungry, this program was developed to fill this gap. Approximately 110 people were served each week.

Members of the Social Ministries Committee were actively involved in promoting and implementing the program. Notes were placed in the church newsletter and bulletin; fliers were provided to all students in the local elementary school; and postings were placed on the community and church outdoor signs.

Through the generosity of many of our members and friends, baked goods, garden produce, purchased



food items, and necessary funds were provided. Local manufacturers and food distributors donated lunch products. We requested and received many food items from the local food bank. Every distribution day, we purchased fresh bread from a grocery store located near our parish hall. We also purchased fruit that was marked down for quick sale. We had approximately five to seven volunteers each day who helped prepare the food, serve it, and clean up.

We also had volunteers who moved from table to table, teaching the participants a short table prayer, be it spoken or sung. Our pastor, James Travis, often attended the lunch event and visited with participants or worked with them on selected table prayers. He witnessed to the unchurched and encouraged the church to con-

tinue their faith path. What an awesome sight to see teenage boys singing the Superman prayer along with Pastor Travis! Participants were invited to attend our vacation Bible school, Wednesday Bible Journey, and Sunday school.

After trying several ways of providing the lunch items, our final method was to provide an empty brown bag and allow the participants to place their chosen items in

the bag. This helped eliminate waste. The participants had the option of eating the lunches on site or taking the lunches with them. Small cards were placed in the bags, providing church information as well as short table prayers. The children affectionately named them "prayer cards."

A table full of items was provided for attendees to take home. Donated popped corn from a local popcorn factory was divided into bags and distributed. Many garden produce items from our backyard garden were provided for "take home."

Not only did we enjoy meeting many children and providing them with a meal, but we have three or four that are potentially looking toward baptism and are inquiring about the church. Hopefully, in a few months, we will add new members to the congregation!

What are you passionate about?

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MISSION SNAPSHOT



Bessie
Fick

Christian youth share Christ so others may know Him

One of the ministries supported by your mission dollars is to the international students who attend Iowa State University. Bessie Fick, coordinator, shares part of the story. (To hear the rest of the story, consider inviting Bessie to speak at your congregation!)

* * *

I am awed by how God works to reach out with His love. He has sent many people (usually more than 100 each year!) to help with the work here at Memorial Lutheran Church and Student Center. It has been our wonderful privilege to help these volunteers learn to share God's love in the communities where they go on to live.

Recently I heard from Lay Lim in California. She shared that she is serving in her Chinese church as a Bible study leader. In the past she has traveled all over the world going to universities on mission trips to reach the Chinese students attending those universities.

Many of the people who are in Bible study are excited to share with others the news that God loves them. Fang was a visiting professor at Iowa State last year. She was hungry to learn more about God's Word. Fang attended every Bible study available and brought as many friends with her as possible. She prayed for her husband to come to know Christ and for her

daughter to continue to grow in faith. Now she is back in China and leading a Bible study group there. We pray that her husband will continue to study God's Word. The international peer ministers here have invited her daughter to the college fellowship, and we pray she will come regularly.

The international students arrive lonely and afraid, looking for friends. God prepares special people to serve as conversation partners and mentors. We were so thankful for friends from Memorial and Trinity, Boone, who have taken these students into their homes and hearts. Ken and Sally Hartmann took Kebede and Workitu under their care and brought them to the Memorial members' care. Now Kebede and Workitu serve as agricultural missionaries in Ethiopia. One family reaching out to another has brought astounding grace! The congregations in Ethiopia now reach out to more than 10,000 people!

God sends special helpers in our young people who attend Iowa State. We use peer ministers to help in the many activities and Bible studies. We are so thankful for the wonderful leadership preparation of our congregations of students like Joe Eisenbacher and Andrew Stanzyk from Carroll, Iowa, who lead Bible studies such as the one Fang attended, or Hannah McCulloh of DeWitt, who studied in South Africa for a semester and, on returning, befriended Mashaba.

Mashaba now serves as our world



contact volunteer. She works to make contacts between returning international students and Christians in their communities.

As we make the contacts, it is encouraging to hear from friends like Olivia from China (another friend of Hannah's) who shares that she is meeting with International Ministry (ISM) friends in Texas; or from Xiaoling who attends a Bible study in her home in New York.

It is awesome watching the ties that God builds so that others may know Him! These Christians then grow to share that love with friends and family in places where they have not had the opportunity to hear about the wonderful love God has for us.

We must continue to pray that those God sends to us may come to know Him and share God's saving news with their friends and family so that we can all celebrate with joy and thanksgiving that we are one family in Christ.

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Gary
Thies

Special family from Iowa West plans to come to Mission Central!

It might be halfway around the world in a little seminary in Taiwan, but they still celebrate Christmas! One of our longtime professors of the New Testament who has taught for many years in our Lutheran Seminary in Taiwan is our dear Iowa West Missionary Dr. Steve Oliver.

Dr. Oliver went to Taiwan about 15 years ago to teach and went as a single man. While in Taiwan, the Lord brought him a wonderful lifetime helper in the form of Maggie. Dr. Oliver had to wait 47 years and then God provided him with his first son, Isaac (can you think of a better name?). Last year on June 14, God blessed the family with their second son, and you would never guess what they named this



boy: Gary! Yes, they called from Taiwan to tell old Missionary Gary that they have named their second son Gary after the old missionary at Mission Central! There is no doubt about it that this will have some

very serious consequences!

The Oliver family plans to come to Mission Central to “collect” this summer—on July 7—and will speak in the barn at both 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Mark your calendar to come and hear this special family report on their work in Taiwan. See the Christmas photo below (left) of this special Iowa District West family.

Like father, like son!

On Dec. 18, 2009, at a special gathering of pastors and their wives at Mission Central, the special guest was our very own Iowa District West missionary family in Hong Kong—Rev. Carl Hanson—who gave a report on his work in Asia. What was so great is the fact that Pastor Hanson and his father, Dr. LeRoy Hanson were together for this special report that evening.



Rev. Hanson indicated that the encouragement and example for entering the mission field came from his parents and particularly his father who always encouraged him. In photo above are Pastor Hanson, his father and staff members Maxine Thies and JoAnn Thies at the gathering.

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Rev. Hanson told how the Christian church is exploding in that part of the world, with many people eager to hear about Jesus.

A visit to a farm in the snow

During the heavy snow time in Iowa and Nebraska, a special family called as they were having their family Christmas on the farm. It was hard to get to the farm because of large drifts, and it was tough breaking through several drifted areas. But, there in the hills, the farm house was filled with family members.



It was the Beck family, and the five daughters and their father had invited old Missionary Gary to come and tell them about the missionary family of Rev. Carl Hanson from Des Moines, Iowa. The entire family of about 30 people was crammed into the small farm home, and they all wanted to provide for the Hanson family for their 2009 Christmas gifts!

There was no gift exchange, but all their gifts went to support Iowa District West's Rev. Carl Hanson and his family in Hong Kong! It was such a blessing to see the joy that the family had in praying for and supporting this family with their Christmas gifts!

In photo above are Missionary Gary with all five daughters in front, and their dad in the back row. It was a Christmas that many of them will never forget. We couldn't keep the Hanson family in Hong Kong without special families like the Becks!



Ellie Menz

What a contrast!

The IOWAY mission team of 26 volunteers recently experienced sharing the love of Jesus in two very different venues: in beauty and in poverty.

The one-week mission trip to California offered many opportunities to share the love of Jesus with others. We were able to appreciate the beauty of God's gorgeous flowers and the power of the mighty Pacific Ocean. We also had a unique experience and our eyes were opened to a very different world—the world of life on Skid Row, where between 7,000 and 10,000 homeless people of all ages live.

Kathryn Sprecher, Trinity Lutheran Church, Des Moines, Iowa, an IOWAY team member for the past five years reflects:

“A box. It is a simple geometric figure. It can come in all sizes and shapes. We can put presents in it. It can store things in an attic. The word *box* also can conjure up different ideas: a boxing ring, to feel boxed in, a mite box, a tool box.

“To think ‘outside the box’ is to think differently, unconventionally, or from a new perspective. That is what the IOWAY team (Individual Outreach With Adults and Youth) did while working in the Los Angeles, Calif., area. The week began by meeting Gerald and Kimberley Fortier, leaders of a Skid Row ministry, and sorting thousands of items collected by the team to be distributed on Skid Row.



“The first two and a half days of the trip were spent in Pasadena working on floats for the famous Rose Bowl Parade. We were part of the 4,000-plus Petal Pusher volunteers who worked through Lutheran Hour Ministries with gorgeous flowers in many creative ways.

“On Jan. 1, the group enjoyed watching the amazing parade. The theme of the Lutheran

Hour float, the only Christian float in the parade, was ‘The Ten Commandments—Jesus Fulfilled,’ included eight men carrying the Ark of the Covenant featured the Ten Commandments and three crosses.

“All this was comfortable and inside ‘our boxes.’ Then the students, farmers, employees, and pastor all found themselves in a totally new environment—outside our boxes.

worship service and they received a Bible. We then served them a hot meal, gave them a backpack with hygiene items, underwear, and other clothing. The underwear and hygiene items were brought by the IOWAY team members in extra suitcases. The clothing was provided by another local church that assists with the Skid Row outreach each month.

“‘Thank you’ and ‘God bless you’ were the words we heard over and over again. The words were from people who had barely more than the clothes on their back. How often do we thank those who serve us? Do we remember to thank God for all of His gifts—a fresh slice of bread, a bar of soap, a warm home, clean clothes, our job?

“Each IOWAY team member has come home with a new appreciation for what our awesome God has done for each of us as He is a ‘cut above the rest’ (2010 Rose Parade theme). ‘Our boxes’ have been opened to look at His people with new servant eyes and hands for serving.”

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Carole
White

K.I.D.S. in Zion, Denison

Zion Lutheran School, Denison, is starting off 2010 by teaching the pupils how to be financially smart. Using the LCEF Kids Into Disciple and Stewardship (K.I.D.S.) program, children will learn to say thanks and I love you to God by giving back some of their money to Him. They also will learn the

importance of saving their money and how it can be fun to save toward a goal.

Principal Brian L'Heureux invited Carole White and Ruth Gerken to talk to the students about the program last November. They explained the program to the pupils and how letting LCEF use their

money helps the church also. LCEF uses the money to loan to mission starts, churches, and schools to expand and upgrade ministry facilities right here in Iowa District

West and in our neighboring states so that the message of Jesus Christ can be proclaimed.

At the beginning of January, K.I.D.S. stamp coordinator and teacher Nancy Sewing went from classroom to classroom explaining when and how to start saving with



LCEF. Each child receives a K.I.D.S. stamp book. Stamps can be purchased for 25 cents or \$1 each. Once full, the \$25

book is sent to the Lutheran Church Extension Fund and placed into an investment in the K.I.D.S. saver's name with a parent or guardian as the custodian.

How exciting that our children have the opportunity to learn how to
(Continued on Page H.)



Nancy Sewing

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PARISH NURSE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness month. Cancer of the colon or rectum is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States. Colorectal cancer is also one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers. The risk of developing colorectal cancer increases with advancing age. More than 90 percent of cases occur in people age 50 or older. It is estimated that as many as 60 percent of colorectal cancer deaths can be prevented if all men and women age 50 or older were screened routinely. Screening tests can find precancerous polyps so that they can be removed before they turn into cancer.

Some studies show that increased physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight may decrease the risk for colorectal cancer. There is no consensus on the role of diet in preventing colorectal cancer but medical experts recommend a diet low in animal fats and high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend a colonoscopy every 10 years and a fecal occult blood test (stool specimen) every year. Contact your health care provider if you are having blood in your stool, abdominal pain, bloating, or changes in your bowel habits. Find out if screening needs to be scheduled. Be an active participant in your health care.

*In His Service,
Darlene Rueter, RN
Iowa District West Parish Nurse Rep
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(Information obtained from Centers for Disease Control Web site.)

CELEBRATIONS

WHAT MADE JESUS ANGRY?

(Continued from Page A.)

give us real hope, to offer Himself as the one and only sacrifice for the sin of the world and to give us access to God.

Others were angry that day. The temple authorities demanded to know who gave Jesus the authority to do these things. They wanted to see His credentials. They demanded a sign!

Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." They thought He was talking against that magnificent building. This was nonsense. His words angered them. They would twist His words and use them as the charges against Him. Even as He hung on the cross, they mocked Him, "You who would destroy the temple and raise it again ... come down from the cross, and

we will believe you."

This was a prophecy of His death and resurrection. The temple that He had spoken of was His body. After He was raised from the dead, His disciples recalled what He had said, then they believed the Scriptures and the words Jesus had spoken. Then this Word confirmed their faith!

May His Word also strengthen your faith. Jesus was put to death—the one and only sacrifice for your sin. He arose on the third day, just as He said He would, and He promised you eternal life.

Here is our hope! It's not in a particular place of worship, nor any offering that we might give, but through Jesus' death and resurrection we have been cleansed, forgiven, and we have access to God.

IOWAY

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Cheryl Larson, Immanuel, Livemore, shared:

"Being a part of IOWAY and the Petal Pushers have been experiences that helped me grow as a Christian witness. The bolder we are, the easier it becomes, and we can truly say, 'I love to tell the story of Jesus and His love.' We don't always know the effects of our witness, but the Lord will use our words as He

changes hearts."

Ann Carrick, Faith, Adel, noted:

"We know that singly we might not make much of an impact, but together we are able to do so much more. Being together also gives us a confidence that we can share the good news of salvation and also allows us to grow so that we can witness when we are

Roster changes

Transfer out of IDW:

- Rev. Paul Frank from Trinity, Manilla, to Hosanna, Mesa, Ariz. (Pacific Southwest District), on Jan. 1.
- Rev. Marcel Kohlmeyer, from St. Paul, Ireton, to St. Peter, Orchard, Neb. (Nebraska District), on Jan. 1.
- Rev. Erland Asmus from Zion, Auburn, and Pilgrim, Lake City, to St. Peter, Afton, Minn. (Minnesota South District), on Jan. 11.

We congratulate

Birthdays

March 5—Ruby Duncan, 95, Zion, Denison.

March 18—Dora Kruse, 100, Zion, Storm Lake.

March 28—Helen Christiansen, 90, St. Paul, Sioux City.

Anniversaries

March 27—Richard and Marilyn Auen, 50, Zion, Denison.

K.I.D.S. IN ZION, DENISON

(Continued from Page G.)

save and help with the mission of the church!

LCEF's K.I.D.S. Stamp program offers free K.I.D.S. stewardship boxes to help teach the basic concepts of sharing,

investing, and spending. Remember to always encourage offerings first as we give back to the Lord in love and thankfulness for all that He has given us. For more information on starting a K.I.D.S. Stamp program to help children understand the blessings and responsibilities of money, contact Ruth Gerken at ruth.gerken@ialcef.org.

back in the 'real world.'"

Craig Carrick, Faith, Adel, shared:

"I was surprised at the mechanics of the framework for the floats and the large amount of time the operators and drivers spent inside the floats."

For photos and updates of the team's events and member's thoughts, check out IOWAY at www.idwlcms.org.

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