

## **Cherished-Chosen-Challenged – April 25, 2010**

### **Missionary Spirit**

#### **“And you shall be My witnesses.....” Acts 1:9**

The Greek word which is translated “witness” in English could be translated “martyr” also. A martyr of course, is one who gives up his own life for the cause. It is more than just “taking one for the team”. The disciples were told that they would become witnesses for Jesus, first in Jerusalem, then in Samaria, then to the uttermost parts of the earth. A good number of them literally had to give up their lives for the sake of the Gospel.

When we think of witnessing to others, most often our thoughts turn to those poor souls in some far-away place who have not heard of Jesus. Maybe they’re in the inner cities of the world, or some third world country, or in the remotest jungles of wild and untamed Africa. Sending missionaries to them is a good thing to do, so they will hear of Jesus also. No doubt, like anyone else, their only hope is to know Jesus as Lord and Savior.

You might be surprised to learn a few things about the concept of being witnesses. In America, recent statistics tell us that there are approximately 11 million Lutherans of all brands and stripes. Did you know that in Africa there are more than 22 million Lutherans? Well, that figure may be eye-opening, in some respects, but things are different in Washington, Austin, and Colorado Counties. Our neighbors may not all be Lutherans, but certainly are Christians. After all, America may not be a “Lutheran” nation, but we are surely a “Christian” nation. Do you think so? Again, you may be surprised at what you learn. 2010 Statistics for Washington, Austin, and Colorado Counties, indicate that on any given Sunday between 6% and 11% of the residents of these counties are in church. *That means, simply speaking, that on any given Sunday approximately 90% of the residents of these counties are not in worship at any church.* Statistically speaking, that speaks volumes! The witness given here is that we are not a Christian nation! And, it makes you stop and ask, where is the real mission field?

There is a reason Jesus said the disciples would start their witnessing in Jerusalem. It was not because Jerusalem needed it more than other places---it was because that was where they lived! And what was their first and best witness to the people of Jerusalem? They were faithfully in God's house being about God's business. Our "Jerusalem" is where we live. We are challenged by God to be faithful witnesses in this place. We are to reach out first to family, neighbors, even strangers in our community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that they too may come to know Him and worship Him as Lord and Savior.

- Remember: Someone brought you to Jesus. It may have been your parents, a friend, or even someone you had never met, but someone else told you! Now go and tell someone else!
- Remember: The best witness to Jesus Christ is to be in church each Sunday! This may require a sacrifice on your part....but God meets us in Word and Sacrament to forgive our sins and to strengthen us to meet the challenge of being His witnesses in the world wherever He places us. See you in Church and Sunday School.

How blessed we are to be the people of God. He has chosen us to be in this place. He has prepared us for this time. He has equipped us for service to Him. **Don't wait for someone else to do it. If you wait on someone else to do it...it will never get done!** God bless you in the growth of your faith and in service to Him and His people, for your labor in the Lord is never in vain.

Pastor Jacobs

**Cherished-Chosen-Challenged 2010**