

International Vacation Bible School

By Dr. Richard Manus

This outreach was based upon the experience of the WELS campus ministry at The University of Wisconsin at Madison, depicted on the video "*The World Mission at Work at Home*" (Campus Ministry Foundation Inc., Tape #93, P.O. Box 9288, Madison, WI 53715-0288, 608/836-8343).

Pastor Neil Bockelmann, Bethel Lutheran Church, Bryan, Texas, and Pastor Brian Bestian, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, College Station, Texas, shared the video with members, resulting in a volunteer staff comprised of people from both congregations.

The program and staffing assignments were decided upon at a few planning meetings. The program format and content were standard: Bible stories, (*Adventures in Prayer*, CPH), puppets, classroom, music, handicrafts, and refreshments.

Adult leaders and high school youth from the congregations distributed doorknob-hanger invitations containing a message printed in English, Chinese, and Korean. Posters and advertisement in the university newspaper were placed to reach the international community and especially the married student housing area which has about 700 apartments.

Attendance grew each evening, topping at about 50, with 25 children and 15 adults. The adult group was comprised mostly of women, some who spoke no English. Countries represented included China (PRC), Korea, Indonesia, and Nigeria.

The format of the adult section was derived by those in attendance. A Jewish person in the group helped by serving as translator.

The student leaders associated with married student housing enabled our use of the on-site building and pavilion. However, we were not told that the locks would be changed during the course of the week.

Thankfully, some of our Lutheran pastors and members know how to use a hammer and screwdriver to advantage. The door was off just in time to begin!

During the closing evening we passed out flyers inviting people to the *All Nations Hour* to begin Sunday, August 7, 1994 at 5:00 p.m. This is the follow-up to VBS, offering Bible teaching and singing for children and adults. This weekly program could be similar to a Sunday school. A Chinese-speaking graduate student (Tam) will translate the English teaching into Chinese and will help with the singing.

There will also be time for prayer and sharing. If *All Nations Hour* continues, we will solicit helpers from our congregations in order to maintain a Gospel presence in the married student community.

What are the praise points resulting from this experience?

1. God, through His Word, draws people to Himself.
2. In ministry, we walk by faith.
3. Our LCMS believers are eager to share Jesus' love and to collaborate with each other and with the university community in order to accomplish this.
4. We can go and establish the Word where people are.

This is the Bible study that Rev. Richard Manus used with the adults in VBS to interest them in reading the Gospel of Mark.

BIBLE INSPIRED

Define:

Example: Musician

God-breathed

Cannot be proven
God must convince us

By reading the Bible, we open selves to God. 2 Tim. 3:16

All scripture is God-breathed . . . 2 Peter 1:20–21; Romans 15:4

In the Bible, God gives us hope.

JESUS USED BIBLE

BIBLE TELLS (testifies) US ABOUT JESUS John 5:37–40

BIBLE IS POWERFUL BECAUSE IT IS GOD'S WORD

Shows us how we displease God our Father.

Show us God the Father's love (Prodigal Son). John 6:63

MANY RELIGIONS — WHICH IS RIGHT?

Bread/Rice

Truth $1 + 1 = 2$

No room for two or more equally correct opinions John 14:6
yourself.

Investigate for

Read Gospel of Mark

Prayer:

"God, if this really is Your Word, please speak to me now through its pages."

See what happens.

Why So Many Churches?

Many different churches believe the same teaching about the Bible and Jesus.

Gal. 3:26–29

Some people have different understandings about certain teachings in the Bible.

Some of these differences are serious.

Read the Bible for yourself.

Mark 1 64

There is much bad news in our *world*. We read it in newspapers, hear it on the radio, and watch it on television. Sometimes there is bad news in *our lives*.

Unemployment

Sickness

Loneliness

Family problems

Death

Sometimes we wonder how we will handle the bad news. "Does anyone really care about me?" we might think.

Gospel means, "*good news*."

God's Good News comes to us in the Bible which tells us about Jesus. Jesus is God's Son who comes to us, showing us that God cares about us. At the New Year celebration in Rudder auditorium, an announcer introduces the next entertainer on the program.

Jesus' cousin, called John the Baptist, comes to introduce Jesus to the people of Judea, known now as Israel, in Asia. People leave the cities and go out to the desert. They were sorry for displeasing God their Father. John *baptizes* them. As a *sign* that they are sorry for displeasing the Father in heaven.

Can you think of someone who looks or appears strange and different? Such people draw our attention. John, who announces Jesus' coming, dresses differently and eats differently than other people. Have you ever eaten locusts? I have. They taste terrible and make your mouth very dry. By his clothing and food, which are very simple, John shows that he is depending on God to take care of him. Do you think that all people are like John, living simply and depending upon God?

No. Sometimes people believe that they will be happy only if they have expensive houses, cars, clothing, and a big bank account. They worry about having more than enough food.

John is happy to serve God by announcing that Jesus, God's Son, is coming into the world. John is very popular. He can persuade the people to follow him. Instead, he places himself below Jesus, saying that he isn't worthy to untie Jesus' shoes.

Later on, Jesus will say, "*The last shall be first and the first last.*" "*Anyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be exalted.*" John says that Jesus will give people what, he (John) cannot give—God's Spirit. God lives in those people who believe in Him; who trust Him. Yet, God is still separate from and above us.

Same people say that God is in everyone and everything. What do you think?

Mark 1:16–20:

Jesus associated with common people, such as fishermen. They were hard workers, good businessmen, and could be trusted. When at sea they depended upon each other to do their jobs. (EXPLAIN DRAGNET) They knew how to work together. After bringing in the catch, they met people in the market in order to sell the fish. They were used to dealing with people. Many people knew them. *No wonder* Jesus chooses fishermen to follow Him. They will still fish, but for people. They will be Jesus' representatives, telling the good news that in Jesus, God is with people. If someone calls us to follow it is unlikely that we will leave what we are doing and simply follow. We tell our children not to talk to strangers and to run away if the stranger tries to get them into his car or house. We are very cautious about following someone just because he asks. Peter, James and John are busy but follow immediately.

How will they live and eat? What risks will they take? Peter is married—how will he care for his wife? What is so special about Jesus that they follow? After all, they could refuse. No one forces them to follow! Jesus does not ask for their money or for a little of their time. He asks for them—*all* of them. Whatever is most important in their lives no longer is. No their lives are changed forever.

Jesus is now the center of their lives.21–28:

What do we think of when we hear the word "*authority*?"

1. Power of the government over us?
2. The judges or police force?

3. The power of a professor over her students?
4. The power which parents have over their children?

Now we begin to see *why* Jesus is special. We can begin to understand why Peter, James and John follow Him without question. Jesus has God's authority because He is God's Son. (EXPLAIN SYNAGOG) He teaches about God without quoting other teachers (as we do when we write papers, thesis and dissertations). Jesus has power to drive out evil forces which make our lives miserable. The forces of evil cannot resist the power of God. People recognize that Jesus is not like other religious teachers, but the question remains whether they will follow Him. Although His fame spreads, later on, many people will reject Him. If God has power over the forces of evil, why is there so much evil in the world?

29–31: Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law, showing that God's power goes beyond our ability to understand. She goes back to doing what she normally does—running the house and providing for others.

Describe duties

Describe religious role

Today there is still some debate about women's role in society. Is her primary task to care for family? To pursue her own goals and career outside of the home? Both?

Read Proverbs 31:10–31.