

*For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. (Luke 5: 9-11)*



"You should have seen the one that got away!" doesn't seem to be a part of this fish story. With Jesus, they simply hear the call ...and leave everything to follow him and become fishers of men. Imagine that!

I've heard it said that faith is not so much *taught* as *caught*. As disciples, we are all called by The Holy Spirit, to be both casters and receivers in this catching ministry. It is not something to be delegated to the Evangelism Committee, letting us *off the hook*. The old fashioned, yet effective, door knocking style of evangelism doesn't hold much appeal for many of us. Yet, we are nonetheless already engaged in casting our net for Christ by offering our time, talent and treasure in various ways that share the welcoming and healing arms of Christ to those who are suffering, both here at home and around the globe. We are engaged in casting our net each time we share our faith walk with a neighbor, friend, or coworker; each time we invite or welcome a visitor to our congregation; each time we reach out to help someone in need. This catching ministry Jesus is calling us to, is not really about increasing worship attendance, though that may often be the natural outcome.

I was pleased to read recently that the State of Florida has enlisted the help of Lutherans to receive Haitians and accompany injured Haitians entering the US from earthquake-ravaged Haiti. Florida's Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) asked Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) and Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) to gather Creole-speaking volunteers to help with translation services needed at Florida airports and hospitals. LDR coordinators reported that volunteers are providing translation services around the clock. "When they are greeted by a volunteer with a friendly face and who speak Creole, they are comforted. As the people arrive, some are nervous. The look of relief is so overwhelming." May God bless those volunteers who left everything to be Christ's healing presence to these Haitians.

We don't need to go as far as Florida or Haiti to find someone whose world has been rocked. All Jesus is asking us to do is cast our net as we go...to work, to school...to the supermarket...to share the immeasurable richness of His grace, which we have received so abundantly from Him.

Lord, you made the church to be a net gathering people together. Now teach us the skills to proclaim your gospel with clarity and fervor. You filled this world with good things and with an abundance of riches for us to share. Now give us generous hearts and caring hands. Make good your purpose in us, oh Lord. Amen.