



Call him, "Mr. Tattoo." His whole body was covered with tattoos like Queequeg in the novel, *Moby Dick*. Some of the tattoos were pornographic. I could see most of them as he rested on his hospital bed in his gym-shorts.

His skin was a deep brown color because His father was from Spain and his mother was an Apache Indian. His hair was long and very bushy. With black and gray streaks, his hair stuck out

his precious soul was now in the arms of Jesus. He even looked forward to reading his Bible and learning more about his Savior.

I am told that getting a tattoo can be very painful. Today, people volunteer to go through this kind of pain to have marks on their bodies. They want to make some kind of statement.

Some want to say something sentimental or about someone they love; others



Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

straight like an Aboriginal bushman. His bushy beard was massive and his eyes bulged brightly.

This wild-looking man in his 30's had asked for a chaplain visit. A bit uneasy because of his looks, I sat down at a safe distance.

Mr. Tattoo had lived a pretty rough life, and it was catching up with him. He had broken his back in an accident. The rest of his life would change. Now he had time to meditate upon who he was and where he was going in life.

Amazingly, in that process, he had picked up a Bible and started reading. He had grasped the basic facts of Jesus' life, but could not put together what it all meant for him.

Before I saw a wild-looking man, but I pulled up my chair close and now saw him as a precious soul for Jesus. His looks had really fooled me.

We talked for a long time about sin, Jesus, forgiveness, and Christian living. I even sketched out for him a picture of God's great exchange for us.

Mr. Tattoo began to understand, and

say something decorative or rebellious. However, all of their marks are only skin deep, and the meanings can change.

On the other hand, when Jesus says "look at the nail marks through my hands," and, "look at my side pierced by a spear," Christ shows us the "tattoos" of His amazing grace. These marks are more than skin deep. These marks proclaim His saving death upon the

cross for all of our sins and God's finished work of salvation.

The "tattoos" of the cross helped Mr. Tattoo to have real peace with God and a new spirit. He would go

home with new strength and direction from Jesus. May the next tattoo you see, remind you how Jesus' painful body marks saved you forever!

**"Christ shows us
the 'tattoos' of His
amazing grace."**

Chaplain Ken Wenzel

Chaplain Wenzel serves those with and without tattoos at the UW Hospital and its Children's Hospital in Madison, WI, as well as other area hospitals, reminding them of Jesus' love and saving grace.





Be an Ananias

Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

He was on his way to Damascus. His name was Saul. He was going there to punish, imprison and persecute the followers of Jesus. Saul was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, a citizen of Rome.

He was a contemporary of Jesus, but rejected him as the promised Messiah. With Jesus dead and lying in a grave outside of Jerusalem, Saul's focus was still on the rules, regulations and requirements of the Old Testament law, totally overlooking the beautiful Gospel promises found in the Old Testament.

Saul's mission was to persecute the followers of The Way. He dragged them out of their homes and synagogues to put them in prison. He even requested papers of authority to go to Damascus to carry out his mission of persecuting followers of Jesus.

Paul, in the book of Acts, describes his former life as Saul as being a "violent man." "He persecuted the followers of Jesus to their death."

It was on the road to Damascus that he experienced a wondrous great light, was brought to his knees and became blind. He then heard a voice from above. Saul called out, "Who are you Lord?" The voice answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."

Wow! Jesus wasn't dead after all. All the while Saul thought he

was persecuting the followers of Jesus, he was persecuting Jesus himself.

At this point we are introduced to Ananias, a disciple of Jesus living in Damascus. The Lord instructs him to go minister to Saul during his blindness. He was a bit hesitant, but he was obedient to the Lord's second command to go. He ministered to Saul's physical and spiritual needs.

So, what kind of a man was Ananias? I believe he was a faithful follower of Jesus, who in a quiet, humble, unassuming way went about sharing the good news, doing the will of his Lord, without looking for honor, praise, attention or glory for himself. We can never be a Paul, but we can all aspire to be an Ananias.

There is so much ministry to be carried out at WLIM. If you are a volunteer sharing the good news of Jesus love and forgiveness, stay the course. If you are not, prayerfully consider joining us.

Live a life of prayer, worship and service. Be an Ananias.

Franklin Gauger
Lay Ministry Volunteer
Coordinator



Franklin aspires to be like Ananias as he shares Jesus' love with residents of senior living centers and trains and encourages others to serve as WLIM volunteers.

TEN
YEARS
OF
GRACE



Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry (WLIM) is always looking for ways to follow up with people after they go through treatment programs.

"For a lot of recovering drug and alcohol addicts going from being 'on the street' to sitting in the pew is a big jump," said Phil Merten, WLIM chaplain. "We need to bridge that gap." Salem (Cramer St.), Milwaukee, Wis., wants to get more involved in the community.

"We constantly look for ways to serve people in the community - the mentally ill, the depressed, the addicts. It's the focus of the congregation's outreach," said James Sonnemann, pastor at Salem.

Together they found a way - a program called Grace Oasis.

Developed in (July) 1995, Grace Oasis brings together recovering addicts, pastors, and volunteers for fellowship, games, songs and Bible study every Friday night at Salem. About 10 to 15 people attend every week.

"Treatment facilities liked our idea," said Merten. "They told us a Christian perspective would fill a void in the recovery community."

Salem also helps "bridge the gap" for addicts with church services held in the lounge on Wednesday nights. Salem members as well as the unchurched attend.

"The services are very informal," said Sonnemann. "They're more of an interactive discussion of the Bible."

But why the name Grace Oasis?

"The addicts are always under the law, but grace is where the liberty is," said Merten. "It's a desert out there. This is a place where they can be refreshed."

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The above article first appeared in the Fall 1996 issue of *Compassion*. By the grace of God, for the past TEN years, Grace Oasis has provided a place where people recovering from alcohol/drug abuse or depression can feel welcome meeting together with fellow Christians. For more information call 414-259-8122

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COINCIDENCE?

I THINK NOT!

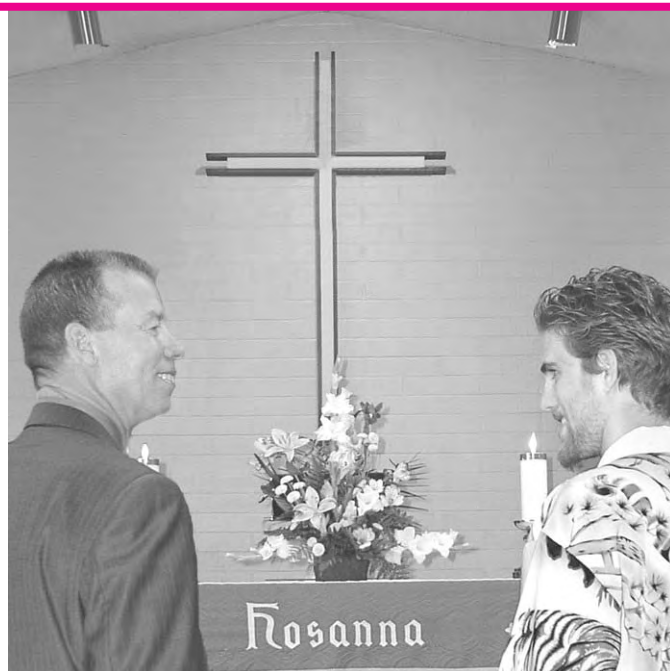


Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

Last summer, a young man named Roger came to my county jail Bible class. He came mostly to visit his brother, who coincidentally also was in jail at the same time but in another cell block. He kept coming and the Holy Spirit kept working.

Another young man in the class, Jake, got a job and was approved for Huber release privileges, so he could not continue in the class. The following week Roger also got Huber privileges. Jake wrote me a letter and said how much the Bible study had meant to him and asked if I would keep in touch with him.

I made an arrangement with the jail staff to meet with Jake every Tuesday for Bible study. Jake's bunk was next to Roger's, so he asked if Roger could join us. The staff okayed it and we began going through Eichmann's "Wonders of God" last October. Both of them, really fine young men, came to faith in Jesus early in the course and were always very eager to hear more of God's word.

In another coincidence, both were able to get out "on the bracelet" GPS system to complete their sentences. That was in January. The jail approved them meeting at church each week to continue the course and for worship on Sunday.

A few weeks ago we finished the course and Roger expressed his desire to be confirmed and join the church. Jake wants to wait until he completes his sentence and then will be confirmed. The three of us continue to meet every week and we are studying the Gospel of John.

God had another coincidence for Roger. It turned

out that my pastor was just finishing up an Adult Instruction Class (AIC) with six people at the same time Roger and Jake finished with me. So, Pastor suggested to Roger that he join the other six for confirmation. Roger agreed.

While Roger and I were standing in the narthex before the confirmation service, a man in his late 30's or early 40's walked up to him and said, "Well hello there Mr. Smith." He told Roger he was there to be confirmed. Roger said, "Me too."

When we sat down in the pew, Roger leaned over to me and said, "Do you know who that guy is we spoke to in the narthex?" I'd never seen him before, so I said, "No." Roger explained that the man was the police officer who arrested him for the offense that landed him in jail!

A few minutes later they both stood at God's altar, as brothers in Christ, and confessed their faith in Jesus as their Savior from sin.

"A few minutes later they both stood at God's altar"

It doesn't get any better than that!!

Coincidence? I think not! I know that it was the Holy Spirit that brought Roger and the police

officer together the first time and the Holy Spirit that brought them together again as brothers in God's family of believers.

Bill Finn

County Jail Lay Ministry Volunteer

Bill is a lay ministry volunteer who brings the Gospel to inmates at the Fond du Lac County Jail and to local group homes and nursing home residents.





Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

There are circumstances of life which can take us where we never thought we would go, doing things we never thought we would do and identifying with people we never thought we would

fight instead of bringing out the gun as he did. Thankfully, the gun was not used and Jonathan was *only* facing months in a juvenile detention facility or probation as opposed to thirty years in adult court if the gun

WHERE ENEMIES CAN BE FRIENDS

understand. I would guess that the irony of life makes God smile sometimes.

He was a boy with scars. His arms showed scratches (which I assumed he had inflicted on himself). His story spoke of scars carried on his heart.

Jonathan began by saying that part of his problem was his failure to take his medication. He listed off a fairly long prescription list. If he had been taking them as he was supposed to, he felt the disagreement he had been in may only have only led to a fist

had been used.

Despite the limited punishment he could expect, this boy was like all the others and desperate to go home.

Getting to know each other better, Jonathan shared with me that he had been a part of a White Supremacy group. We talked about what that group stood for and he explained to me the objective of having every race have their own part of the world, essentially separation from one another. If the members of a race refused to leave, Jonathan and his

group believed that they should be forcibly kicked out.

I sensed some fears and anger when I asked about that; where does the desire to be separate come from?

Jonathan shared that he had many bad experiences with people from minority groups. He had primarily gone to schools in which he was a minority. He had lived in areas where he didn't feel that he fit in. Jonathan shared the experience of being "jumped" (beat up) by a group of Hispanic boys for about three minutes. He said he wasn't hurt badly because he had learned to turn his body into a ball so that they couldn't get to his head.

This was just one of many traumatic experiences that made Jonathan think, "We, white people are the good guys, they are the bad guys." He spouted his rhetoric, "90% of the people in prisons are from minority groups. Doesn't that tell you how much things would be without them?"

I identified with the anger of being victimized. It's natural and normal to feel angry if you've been hurt. Jonathan gets angry at people hurting him, too.

However, then we talked about God's love; His love for the world in John 3: 16. We talked about how the answer to our pain is not for us to take revenge personally.

I had Jonathan look at Romans 12 to read the verse where God tells us to hand over our desire for revenge to God and let Him be in charge. We can take the peace that He gives us to have.

Forgiveness and love from God can give us peace inside our hearts, and in turn give us love toward others. Jonathan said that he had been laying on His bed and thought just came to his head: "God a chance. He said that he wanted that God said to love our enemies."

And then, before reading the letter in Romans about revenge, Jonathan also read something that touched his heart. Jonathan read aloud from

Romans 12, "You must always ask God to bless those who hate you and are trying to kill you. Yes, ask Him to bless them, and not curse them. You must be happy with those who are happy, and cry with those who are crying."

Jonathan had a funny grin on his face and I asked about it. He said, "It's funny that it had that part about crying. Before court, in the holding cell, an African-American boy and I were both crying."

There they must have been. They were not two boys of different races hating each other. Instead, they were two scared teenage boys who had messed up and were now facing painful consequences. They both felt sad and lonely.

And I thought, "How ironic! What an awesome experience to be face-to-face with someone you had learned to hate and to feel a surprising sense of camaraderie and closeness."

Tragedy, pain and crisis can do that. It can bring us to a vulnerable place where enemies can be friends and our own limitations and needs are seen.

Jonathan said that he was just glad that he hadn't gotten the swastika tattooed on his chest as he had planned. I too thank God that He hopefully caught Jonathan in time before

his hatred was permanently made a part of his body, before he may have held a gun that actually did go off or before he may have died not knowing that His Savior, out of unconditional love, died for Him.

Even now as we live in this sinful world with our sinful hearts and minds, God can start us on that path to peace and love right now.

Deaconess Sarah Owens



Deaconess Owens daily shares her faith in Jesus with teenagers at the Juvenile Detention Center, and also with those she has developed a relationship with who are serving sentences in prison and other detention facilities. She also does Christian counseling and one-on-one ministry at area nursing homes and care centers.



Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

ANGELS WITHOUT KNOWING

Recently I asked a group of recovering addicts to tell about a time when God had broken through their defenses and denials and gotten through to them.

Damien spoke up right away and told this story: "I had relapsed and gone back to smoking crack cocaine, and I owed the dope man some money.

"He wasn't a very forgiving guy, and I didn't have anything to pay him with, so I was going to take my eight-year-old's Nintendo and sell it to raise the money.

"My son caught me. And he got all upset. He said, 'Daddy, what you doing with my games?' I had to explain to him that I owed a man some money and I needed to pay him quick or I'd be in trouble."

"And right away he went from trying to defend his Nintendo to trying to defend me. He went and grabbed a bat and he said, 'Just tell me where this man is, Daddy! I won't let him do nothing to you. Just tell me where he is!'

"That did it for me. The next day I told my parole officer about my relapse and I started getting some help."

I know Damien's family. His son is named Malachi, which means "my angel" or, "my messenger."

Malachi was a messenger from God that day, communicating to Damien, "You're worth defending. You're worth taking a risk. The dope man just wants your money, but I want you."

The Bible talks about how some people have encountered, "angels without knowing it." ^{Hebrews 13:2} Sometimes the angels themselves, like Malachi, don't know they're being angels.

This ministry encounters people every day just like Damien. And, to God's glory, we also encounter messengers like Damien's son, Malachi.

Chaplain Phil Merten



Chaplain Merten shares his faith in Jesus with men, women and teens who are in recovery from addictions to drugs and/or alcohol. He is also the director of WLIM's recovery fellowship program, "Grace Oasis," for which we will be celebrating 10 years of God's grace in July, 2005)



Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

Mothers constantly watch their little children and worry that their children will get into trouble or hurt themselves. Of all the warnings that we have heard our mothers

Watch out! You'll get burned!

utter, none has been spoken with more force than when we were close to something burning. "Watch out! You'll get burned!"

To this day we have a healthy respect for fire. Every time we see one. Every time we feel the heat of the flames, we find ourselves keeping a healthy distance.

I don't think our mothers yelled at us quite as loud when it comes to meeting people with serious disabilities, but I do think that somehow we got the message that this is another, watch out! situation. Watch out for people with disabilities! You can get burned!

I was thinking about this as I listened to Linda who was with her eighteen year old son at

Children's Hospital. Her son was there because he had multiple medical problems brought on by the fact that he has multiple disabilities. He and his younger brother, who also has many disabilities, need lots of medical attention.

Linda and her husband have their hands full working and taking care of their two boys.

As Linda talked about how hard it is to find people to help with the medical problems, I began to see that they are pretty isolated in their community in terms of help and support from friends and neighbors.

That really became clear to me when Linda told me about the day when a customer asked her, "How are the boys?"

She told me that she often has the feeling that people ask just to be polite or just because they are nosy and not because they care. In this case, she replied as a way to move this woman away from the subject of her boys, "Oh, they're just fine. They're sassy just like their mother."

To which the woman replied, "I thought they were supposed

to be dead by now."

Linda was so wounded by this remark that she had to walk away. By the cruel remark of this woman and by the avoidance of Linda and her family, she had gotten the message.

Most of the people around her

"It made me angry"

had the feeling that they needed to watch out. They had to watch out for Linda's boys, because they didn't want to get burned; Burned by Linda's pain. Burned by questions that defy easy answers. Burned by our thinking we are tolerant and open minded, only to discover we are uncomfortable with people we don't understand.

It made me angry to hear what

had happened to Linda. I was burned by the pain of this mother and father.

Linda also told me of one of her husband's friends who would come to their house and make it a point to speak to the boys and kid around with them. My heart was warmed by the fact that this one man had found out these boys needed love and who could give love.

It was then that I realized there is a sacred fire that can burn away our fears and prejudices and open our eyes to see what our Lord wants us to see. Moses took off his shoes as he stood before the burning bush because he realized he was standing in the presence of the living God. As he stood by the fire, his fears and despair were burned away.

Burning bushes still appear in the most unexpected places - in hospital rooms, in nursing homes, in jails, and in private homes. Wherever people are hurting and suffering, struggling and searching, we need to enter into that place.

At first we may feel the flames of fear and discomfort, but if we stay a while, listen and observe, we will eventually see that the other fire is also there. The living God is present in this place. Our God doesn't run away from suffering. He embraces it and then He transforms it.

I encourage each of you who have avoided painful and uncomfortable situations, because you are afraid of getting burned, to not be afraid. Enter in. Listen. Offer what you can by way of help. And then you will find that you will get burned. Burned by the warmth and the transforming power of the fire of the living God.

Chaplain Steve Stern



Chaplain Stern gets "burned" sharing the living God with people undergoing bone marrow transplant at Froedtert Hospital and with inmates at the Milwaukee County Jail.



We Would Like To See Jesus!

Photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

got something I don't have," and then ask: "How can I get it?"

A woman in one of my Bible study groups said her answer is, "I've got Jesus!" Then she said, "I tell them what Jesus means to me in my life and then I ask them to sign up to attend our Bible study."

The ministries of WLIM are not glamorous, high-powered, sensational, widely acclaimed, nor do they reap phenomenal funding. Even a lot of WELS members don't know WLIM exists or know little about the work we are called to do.

True, WLIM needs to continually inform our fellow Christians of our ministries and ask for their fervent prayers and generous financial support or our

work could not continue. But it's not the primary purpose of our para-church organization to be out there beating the drums, spreading publicity and garnering generous support for our work.

The WLIM staff and my fellow institutional missionaries go about our daily callings and Gospel ministries in rather quiet ways without fanfare and accolades. By God's grace we're out there in the trenches, bringing the Word of God, both Law and Gospel, to the hurting, the infirm, the aging or dying, the addicted, the hospitalized and the incarcerated. We work with and among those whom many consider to be the scum of society.

But they all have souls, souls that only Jesus can comfort, cure and save eternally. As God put Philip at the time and place in the temple court, so God puts us out there to help, assist and bring souls to see Jesus.

I, as well as all with WLIM, look forward to receiving your continued prayers and financial gifts. Like you who know Jesus, we want to bring many more to come to see Jesus and rest their faith in Him, our only Savior.

Chaplain David Tetzlaff



Chaplain Tetzlaff serves as an institutional missionary at the Taycheedah (Women's) Correctional facility, Oshkosh Correctional and Green Bay Correctional, among others, where he brings the saving Gospel of Jesus to both women and men.

You can imagine how surprised the disciple Philip must have been when some strangers approached him in the temple court at Jerusalem and said, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus!" John 12:20-22

They were not Jews but Greek, people who embraced the Old Testament faith and had come to worship. Their question may have caught Philip off guard. For whatever reasons, Philip did not respond immediately but consulted with his co-worker Andrew.

Then both in turn told Jesus. The gospel writer, John, says nothing more about this incident. But it would not be like Jesus to refuse such a request and He probably met with them. One thing is certain, Philip was not out recruiting people to bring them to Jesus. Yet he had a God-given opportunity to bring people to the Savior.

I am asked often: "How do you recruit inmates to come to your Bible Studies?" Department of Corrections rules prevent me from using marketing techniques or promotions, or even advertising my studies within the prisons. I do train and rely on members of my Bible studies to be evangelists and invite others by word of mouth to join us.

Christians never go unnoticed, even in prison. Men and women in my Bible study groups tell me that others come up to them and admit: "You've

"Christians never go unnoticed, even in prisons"



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Heb 12:14

“Make every effort to live in peace with all men”



“YOU GAVE ME HOPE”

As I was leaving McDonalds with my cup of coffee, a woman stopped me and said, “Aren't you the chaplain who conducts a Bible class at the jail.”

“Yes I am,” I said.

She invited me to sit down and explained that a few years back she was a prisoner. She went on to explain how sad and depressed she was until she attended the jail Bible class.

“You gave me hope and how I needed that,” she said. “In fact, I don't know how I would have survived without your Bible class. I just wanted to thank you for the hope you gave me.”

After that brief visit, I was feeling quite elated. “Thank you. You gave me hope,” kept ringing in my ears, though it didn't take long for me to get off the pride-ride and come back to reality. No, I did not give her hope. That was the Holy Spirit working through His Word. I was just a messenger. That's all I was.

Even being just a messenger of the hope creating good news is a real privilege and source of joy. When I fully retire some day, I will miss hearing the words, “thank you, you gave me hope” or words similar to that.

You too can be messengers of hope to those who are sad, lonely, depressed or filled with guilt or fear. Bringing them the good news of Jesus, you too will experience great joy, even though you are just a messenger. You are bringing a message of great joy to the saddened, a message of peace to the guilt ridden, a message of hope to the hopeless, a message of healing to those in pain and a message of salvation to the lost. It is a message which also enriches the life of the messenger.

Be a messenger. Try it. You'll like it! Consider being a WLIM lay ministry volunteer. Enjoy the feeling, but always remember you are just a messenger. The Holy Spirit, through the Word, does all the work!

Chaplain Ken Lenz

Besides sharing his Savior with others over a cup of coffee, Chaplain Lenz ministers to people receiving outpatient cancer treatment at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee and to inmates at the Milwaukee County Jail. He's been one of God's messengers for over 47 years.