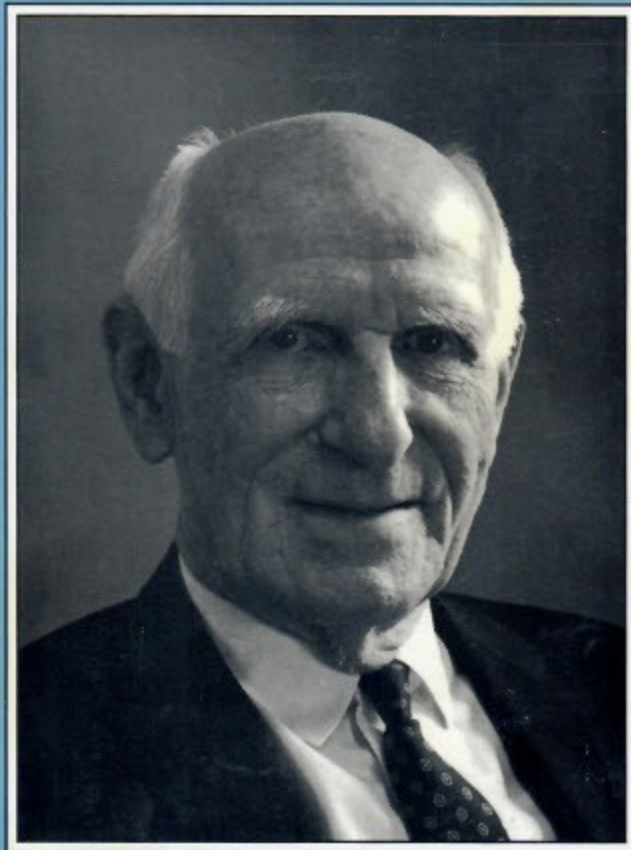


**FRANK C. LAUBACH:
MAN OF FAITH**



by J. Gregory Lawson

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BY

J. GREGORY LAWSON

BAPTIST LITERACY MISSIONS CENTER AT BAYLOR

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FORWARD

Most persons who become acquainted with Frank Laubach first learn of his work in literacy. Greg Lawson “met” Dr. Laubach in a seminary class on spiritual development. Lawson’s professor began each class by reading from Laubach’s devotional writings. Lawson was impressed by what he heard and wrote this book as a result of those impressions.

Frank C. Laubach: Man of Faith is an account of one man’s struggle and eventual victory in the arena of Christian faith and practice. The book will inspire those who appreciate Laubach’s contribution to world literacy even as it will call to action those who seek practical expression of Christian witness in a hurting world.

Moving the text of this book from Lawson’s computer files to your hands has been a cooperative effort. Sandra Farris, former secretary for the Baptist Literacy Missions Center at Baylor, has typeset and prepared the book for printing. Maurine Frost, materials specialist at the Center, assisted in proofreading. John Bayer of the Baylor Printing Service provided assistance in arranging the layout of the book.

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I strongly recommend *Frank C. Laubach: Man of Faith*. You will sense God’s leadership in the midst of an unfolding life of modern discipleship. Greg Lawson has captured the essence of “the Apostle to the Illiterates.”

Lester Meriwether

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J. Gregory Lawson

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CHAPTER 1

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Frank C. Laubach was a missionary, educator, literacy pioneer and prolific author with over forty books and numerous articles to his credit. He became known both as a great educator and Christian leader. This chapter provides a biographical overview of his life. Particular attention is given to significant educational and spiritual milestones in his development.

The Early Years: 1884-1915

Frank Charles Laubach was born in Benton, Pennsylvania, on September 2, 1884. His parents were John Brittain Laubach and Harriet Derr Laubach. Harriet, known as Hattie, had been teaching school in Munch, Pennsylvania, when she met Britt. Laubach's father had a prosperous dental practice which he learned through being an apprentice. Frank had a sister, Bertelle, who was two years younger than he was.

Frank Laubach enjoyed a normal childhood. He would swim in Fishing Creek, a bank of the Susquehanna. Other activities he and his friends were involved with included football, soccer, bobsledding, bicycling and tree climbing. Sometimes when going to the country to visit his ten cousins, Laubach would help feed the pigs and chickens and milk the cows.

Apparently, religious development played an important role in Laubach's early life. He sat on his mother's knee and had her read him Bible stories. Helen Roberts writes concerning this stage of Laubach's life:

The truly Christian family background and training helped to make religion more than just a creed. The church helped to establish the importance of group worship, while the Sunday School and Epworth League provided opportunity for fellowship, study, recreation and cooperation with other young people.

Laubach frequently engaged in the activity of reading. A cousin noted that whenever Laubach visited them on the farm, sooner or later he could be found stretched out on the floor with his face in a book. One reason his interest in reading continued to grow may have been due to the influence of O. E. Little, a jeweler who rented office space in the Laubach's house. Little was an avid reader who took care of the community library of some six hundred books. It included a selection of classics and popular books of the period. By the time Laubach entered adolescence, he was spending more time in the library reading than playing outdoors.

The most influential book Laubach studied during this time period was The Imitation of Christ by the fifteenth century German monk Thomas a Kempis. This book dealt with issues such as prayer, meditation and other disciplines of the Christian life. The interest this book fostered in Laubach served as a spiritual foundation which he built on in later years.

Laubach's family was influenced by several Christian denominations. His mother's family had been strong Baptists with his uncle serving as a Baptist minister in one church for over fifty years. Laubach's father was a member of the Disciples (Christian) Church. The Methodist Church, located across the street from his house, also influenced Laubach. At this church he was stirred during a revival service to make a public decision for Christ. He joined the Methodist Church and was baptized, but not in the usual method of that church. Since his father believed in baptism by immersion, Laubach followed in this baptismal mode. From the time he was ten until he left Benton, the Methodist Church across the street was the center of his religious and social life.

Laubach taught Sunday School for several years at the Methodist Church and eventually became superintendent. He conscientiously studied "The Sunday School Times" to help prepare for more effective teaching. Influenced by Tommy Ash, a Sunday School teacher, Laubach decided to become a minister. He writes, "It was through him that I started toward the ministry. His class was more valuable to me than all the books, because it led me to Jesus Christ."

After graduation from Benton High School, Laubach took a course in teacher training at Bloomsburg Normal School. The fundamentals of teaching, and extracurricular activities, such as debate and public speaking, were a part of his education. During chapel one day, Laubach heard a U. S. Army lieutenant express the great need for teachers in the Philippines. Laubach considered this to be God's call for him to go to that nation. After completing training at Bloomsburg, Laubach taught school for three years in country and village schools. The experience was good but it showed him the need for additional education.

Laubach's next venture in formal education took him to Perkiomen Seminary where he was offered a teaching scholarship. This was a famous "prep" school founded by German Quakers at Pennsburg. Laubach wanted to attend Princeton, but at this time could not meet the entrance requirements. At Perkiomen, he attended a mission study class each Sunday as well as the Student Volunteers, an organization spreading the missionary zeal of Protestant churches among college students. After graduation from Perkiomen, he was accepted at Princeton.

Laubach attended Princeton University from 1905-1909. He was president of the ministerial association and took an active part in the Student Volunteer Movement and YMCA. At Princeton, Laubach began the practice of letter writing for which he later became famous. He also contemplated the deeper issues of life. Concerning the issue of war, Laubach gives an idealistic prediction with a place for pacifism:

I suppose in the long years to come, when the people shall take a backward glance over four centuries in history, they shall call the seventeenth century the period of freedom from religious intolerance, the eighteenth the century of the freedom of a race from bondage, the twentieth, the century of the freedom of the whole human race from the curse of war.

These thoughts were part of a speech Laubach delivered before Princeton University President Woodrow Wilson, who became President of the United States three years later. This speech was a success. Wilson presented Laubach the Maclean Prize and congratulated him on his inspirational address.

After graduation from Princeton in 1909, Laubach spent the summer working as a cowhand aboard a livestock transport ship traveling to Europe. When he returned to New York that fall, he began work at a slum settlement house. This ministry was sponsored by the Spring Street Presbyterian Church. During the year, Laubach ministered to many of the forgotten of society such as the poor and alcoholics. He also studied at Columbia University in the master's program in Sociology. Meanwhile he took courses at Union Theological Seminary. At Union, Laubach wrote his mother a letter describing one of his adventures:

Now I shall make your aristocratic blood tingle. I was down to the home of James Talcott on Tuesday night and met his Highness Count Leo Tolstoy, son of the late Count Tolstoy of Russia.

This was an indication of Laubach's ability to relate to people from varied social and economic backgrounds. At times this shocked some of his relatives and friends, especially when he wrote his master's thesis at Columbia on the subject of The Social Value of the New York Saloon. In this thesis, Laubach suggested that the saloons were welcoming those who would be made to feel uncomfortable in a church. It was Laubach's opinion that the church should be doing more to meet the needs of the down-and-out. He received the M. A. in Sociology from Columbia in 1912.

May 15, 1912, proved to be a significant day in Laubach's life. He married Effa Seely, whom he had known from their childhood days in Benton. She completed training as a teacher and nurse and also studied at the Biblical Seminary in New York City. The young couple honeymooned in Nassau, Bahama Islands, where for five months Laubach replaced the Presbyterian minister in the Scottish Church. He writes his father describing the ministry:

I have preached fearlessly what I thought this community needed, and am pleased with the reception which my remarks have met. I am thankful to say that the church has been full every Sunday evening and the size of the congregation is steadily increasing.

After returning to New York, Laubach continued his studies at Union Theological Seminary and graduated in 1913. At the seminary, he was influenced by the teaching of "higher criticism." This liberal theology caused him to question his fundamentalist background. It would impact Laubach for nearly two decades until he began to return to his prior belief in the truth of the Bible. Mason writes concerning this period of uncertainty in Laubach's life:

Laubach accepted the liberal position without completely understanding the answers to some of the great theological questions of the day. He was left with an uneasiness. He felt lost and uncertain of anything except the fact that love was superior to hate. This was the beginning of a period of uncertainty which stayed with him for almost two decades.

Laubach worked in churches and charity organizations while he engaged in doctoral study at Columbia. The working environment allowed him to gather material for his doctoral dissertation titled Why There Are Vagrants. This study continued his interest in the social and individual factors leading to vagrancy. During this same period, Laubach was informed that the Congregationalists were looking for missionaries to go to Mindanao in the Philippines. After a time of decision making, he was ordained as a Congregational minister and appointed to work through the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The Union Congregational Church of Upper Montclair, New Jersey, sponsored the Laubachs as missionaries. At the end of 1914, the couple departed for the Philippines. In 1915, Laubach received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Columbia graduating in the absentia.

The Philippine Experience: 1915-1929

After a long voyage from San Francisco, the Laubachs arrived in the Philippines. Following a brief visit in Manila, they traveled to Davao, a small town on the island of Mindanao where the Congregationalists had a mission station. Laubach was impressed with the beauty of this area. He wrote his father, "We are on top of a high hill overlooking the Gulf and cit of Davao. It is as beautiful a spot as I have ever seen in all my life."

It was the Laubach's intention to begin missionary work with the warlike Moros in Mindanao. After the United States took the Philippines in 1898, the Moros resisted the Americans as fiercely as they had the Spaniards. U. S. Army officers stationed in Mindanao refused to allow Laubach to begin mission work. Moore writes of this disappointing moment in Laubach's life:

The commandant and other officers were kind but affirmed that missionary work among the Moros would not be possible at the time. Moro datos (chieftains) from the hills still led raids into towns below, burning schools and disposing of those who cooperated with occupying forces. The officers felt strongly that if missionaries were brought in a non-Muslim religion, it would inflame the rebels even more.

Laubach wrote his mother concerning this dilemma: "The Moros are jealous of their Mohammedan faith and will not tolerate anything which seems to threaten their religion."

After a few months, the Laubachs left Davao to go to Cagayan on the northwest coast of Mindanao where they lived and worked for seven years doing interesting, but routine, mission work. During these years, the couple faced many physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges. On occasion, they had to be concerned with their physical safety. Laubach wrote a letter describing how they were visited by a thief three times who had taken a total of fifteen dollars from Laubach's coat pocket. "Effa is scared about burglars every time it gets dark now. It is not any wonder."

There were, however, much greater hardships than losing fifteen dollars to a thief. A son, Robert, was born October 25, 1918. During the first few months of his life, he developed boils which is a symptom that often precedes malaria. Effa Laubach and her infant son traveled to the United States so Robert would have a better chance of survival. Concerning the other Laubach children, Moore writes, "Two previous sons, born while they were on Mindanao, had died in infancy. A third died at age three, 34 days after Robert was born in a Manila hospital."

Laubach continued to be plagued with theological uncertainty. He was unsure about what he believed in the Bible due to the "higher criticism" school of thought. Laubach returned to Union Theological Seminary while on furlough from the Philippines. For two years he held a fellowship at Union under Daniel Fleming, a noted expert in missions. Laubach studied in two key areas that would have a profound impact upon his later ministry. In a course on mysticism, he wrote a major paper on the mysticism of John Wesley. The second area of influence came from reading Daniel Fleming's book, The Mark of the World Christian. In this book Fleming discussed the problem of illiteracy and how it impacted two-thirds of the people throughout the world. Laubach had not previously understood the significance of the issue of literacy.

Under the direction of the American Board, the Laubachs were asked to live in Manila on their return to the Philippines in 1922. For several years Laubach taught sociology, psychology and education in Union College and Union Theological Seminary in Manila. He also wrote books and articles about the Philippines. A turning point came in Laubach's life when he was considered for a position as the permanent college president of Union College. He served on the board of trustees and desired this position intensely. There was another candidate for the presidency who was not a member of the board. Out of respect for the other man, Laubach's vote was cast for his competition. Laubach lost the election by one vote. This apparent failure was momentous not only for Laubach but for millions of other people.

The defeat for the presidency of Union College left Laubach disappointed and bitter. He became a semi-invalid for the next two years. Physical ailments that he suffered

included flu, appendicitis, paratyphoid, a strained leg muscle and an ulcerated eye. The Laubach family traveled to Baguio where the cool mountain air relieved some of his tensions.

The Laubachs returned to the States for a furlough. As his body continued to heal, Laubach sensed a deeper longing for God. His desire to work among the Moslem Moros intensified. Laubach kept praying that the field would open and the appropriate person be selected to meet the need. Before the end of his furlough, Laubach received word from the American Board that he had been selected to begin this work. In 1929, the Laubachs returned to the Philippines with a fresh vision of ministry. After arriving in the Philippines, Laubach wrote his father and family in Benton assuring them he was in God's will:

It was very hard for you I know but I see clearly that it was the right thing for me to do. I know I am much more useful here than in Benton or New York because people are much more open here.

The Beginning of "Each One Teach One": 1929-1935

When the Laubachs returned to the Philippines, they faced new challenges. The Lanao, the land of the Moros, was considered to be on the edge of danger. For this reason, Effa and Bob were sent to Baguio until Laubach's educational ministry was established. This left Laubach lonely. The Moros were also resistant to educational reform especially if it was Christian in nature. Just five years prior to his arrival, there had been an unfortunate incident at the public high school in Dansalan. Several of the teachers were killed by the Moros and a number of the 40 school houses burned.

As Laubach walked around town, he attempted to make friends by talking to the men in the bazaars or in the marketplace. They greeted him with cold dark eyes. The men listened to Laubach without responding and then turned away. He realized he was getting nowhere in his effort to minister to the Moros.

In an attempt to deal with his failures in ministry and the loneliness of being separated from his family, Laubach began an evening ritual of climbing Signal Hill with no companion but his dog, Tip. Laubach poured his heart out to God. These encounters with God left him with a desire to think of God every minute of every day. Then one evening in a never-to-be forgotten moment, Laubach's lips began to move and it seemed as if God were speaking through them. He felt God say to him that he did not love the Moros and felt superior to them because he was white. Laubach believed God spoke to him and told him to love the Moros by showing an interest in their religion. He was to study the Koran with the Moros.

With a new excitement, Laubach contacted the Muslim priests and told them he wanted to study the Koran. He studied the Korean and exchanged religious knowledge with the Muslim priests. Laubach viewed this study as a way to build

bridges which could be used to lead the Muslims to Christ. The Muslim priests began to tell their people to go to Laubach because he was a man who loved God. During this time he continued to engage in spiritual experimentation as he learned to practice the presence of God. He records the following:

Last Thursday night, I was listening to a phonograph and allowing my heart to commune, when something broke within me, and I longed not only to life my own will up and give it completely to God, but also to lift up all the wills in the world up and offer them all in utter surrender to His will.

Laubach realized that he was going to develop an effective ministry to the Moros, he must learn their language. It was known as Maranaw. An American officer recommended that a Moro named Pambaya, an ex-convict and a murdered, help teach Laubach the language. Pambaya taught Laubach and his assistant, Donato Galia, who was a graduate of Teachers College, Columbia University, and had arrived to help in the normal school which Laubach proposed to begin. There was not a dictionary in the Maranaw language, so they decided their first step was to make a dictionary using the Roman alphabet. In six weeks they had a box filled with cards of thirteen hundred written Maranaw words and their meanings.

The Moros learned of the work on the dictionary and were overjoyed. They felt Laubach was one of the first people who really appreciated them. The Moros expressed an interest in learning their own language. Through several miraculous developments, Laubach secured a building for a school, a printing press and a printer. This led to the development of a newspaper. The type was set for the first page of Maranaw ever to be printed. For a while the newspaper, Lanao Progress, included both the Roman text and the Arabic script. The Muslim priests insisted Arabic be used since they believed it was the holy script of Mohammed.

Laubach noticed that none of the Moros but Pambaya could read the side of the newspaper written with Roman letters. Also, it was discovered that only a few Moros in the whole province knew any Arabic. The only way to expand readership was to teach the Moros to read. This provided the impetus to launch Laubach into literacy education.

At first, the literacy training took a traditional approach. It soon became evident that a simpler method was needed. After careful experimentation, Laubach and his friends developed a teaching chart. It was based on three common words containing all the twelve consonants of the Maranaw language. When these letters were combined with the four vowels, the students could read all forty-eight words found on the first chart. The news spread from village to village that a miracle was taking place. In about an hour or less, the students could master the reading of an entire page of their own Maranaw language.

Laubach's popularity increased as word of the literacy movement spread. He was constantly being sought by the Moros to assist them in learning how to read. By

1931, Laubach employed twenty paid literacy teachers and directed numerous volunteers working among the Moros. These were the days of the Great Depression in the United States, so financial strain was felt by Laubach. It became evident that several of the paid staff members had to be released because there was no other way to balance the missions budget.

The day approached when Laubach called in a large group of the Moros to inform them of the bad news. He writes, "I told them the truth, that it would be much easier to jump in the lake than to face them with the news." The teachers did not show any resentment.

Suddenly the course of world literacy training changed as Kakai Dagalangit stood and addressed the crowd. Laubach recalls that great moment:

Kakai Dagalangit, a tall chieftain with fierce black eyes, stood up. He has thirteen wives and all he has to do is to look at them and they behave. He looked at me with those fierce eyes and said, "This campaign shall not stop. It's Lanao's only hope." Then he looked at those teachers with his fierce eyes and said, "I'll make everybody who knows how to read teach somebody else, or I'll kill him." Everybody taught. Nobody died. Everybody liked it. I did not like the motto "teach or die" and so changed it to "Each One Teach One."

The success of the literacy campaign stimulated an evangelistic harvest. This began with the changing of attitudes of the Moros toward Christianity, resulting from the efforts of "Each One Teach One." Laubach explains this change:

The attitudes of the Moros toward Christianity swung from one pole to the other. It was unmitigated hatred when we arrived; love, goodwill, and cooperation when we departed.

Conversions to Christianity began to be the norm. "As one after another of the younger generation was baptized during the last two years not a word of opposition reached our ears," shares Laubach.

Laubach continued his Christian growth during this period of his life. Mason writes, "In the mid 1930's, it was his habit to arise at 3 or 4 A. M. to reach, think, pray and write." Other members of Laubach's congregation followed his example. He writes, "The members of our church were trying to keep God in their thoughts every of the day so that, as they said, 'the Moros will see Christ in us.'" This action was an adaptation of Brother Lawrence's effort to practice the presence of God. Brother Lawrence, a monk who lived in France from 1611-1691, became known for his quiet, serene faith and for his simple experience of practicing God's presence.

While these events took place, Laubach wrote his father in Benton, Pennsylvania, to describe the happenings. Many of the letters were printed in the Benton Argus. Excerpts from the letters were published in the United States under the title Letters

By a Modern Mystic. News about the literacy breakthrough spread around the world. Laubach began to be asked frequently to take his approach of literacy education to other fields.

Letters of inquiry about the unique approach to literacy education came from several faraway places. Church leaders in India responded immediately and indicated they would not have a strong indigenous church until more members could read the Scriptures. Laubach prepared to visit India on his way to the United States for a furlough. His secretary, Minnie Schultz, was the person who pushed him over the brink into world literacy tours. She persuaded him to prepare a letter for persons along the route to America via India and the Suez stating an openness to visit and work on the problem of literacy. Laubach accepted invitations from Singapore, Ceylon, parts of India, Pales, Syria and Turkey. On January 20, 1935, he set out with no money except a furlough allowance.

The visit to India was a significant experience in Laubach's life. He met Mahatma Gandhi and presented him with a recently completed reading chart in the Marathi language. Gandhi expressed his concern over whether or not India should become literate. He thought the literature published in the West was not fit for India to read. Gandhi indicated that many of the greatest benefactors of the human race, such as Mohammed, had been illiterate. Laubach's response was that if Gandhi had not been able to read and write, he probably never would have been heard from. Gandhi responded to this statement with humility.

Laubach presented a Christian witness to Gandhi:

The greatest single blessing that ever came to this world was the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. If Christ's life had not been written and if we had not been able to read the gospels, we would know very little about him.

Gandhi responded by nodding his head up and down and then changing the subject. In later years Gandhi became emphatic in his belief that literacy must be decreased in India.

The Worldwide Literacy Campaigns: 1936-1954

During Laubach's furlough in 1935, he shared his burden of the great needs faced by the world's illiterate masses. In the fall of 1935, Laubach and a group of his friends formed the World Literacy Committee. The Foreign Missions Conference in 1941 invited this committee to join them, thus form the "Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America." Laubach continued to lead in literacy campaigns for the Committee until his initial retirement at the age of seventy in 1954.

In the summer of 1936, Laubach left the United States for the Orient. After attending a seminar on Pacific Education held in Honolulu, he returned to the

Philippines. He was persuaded by the University Press in Manila to finish a biography he had been working on about one of the greatest Filipino heroes in their national history, Jose Rizal. When the manuscript was complete, Laubach went to India and was informed that his delay had disrupted a carefully planned program in southern India. He also found that his literacy method had to be refined and further adapted to make sure every word utilized was found in common usage among the people.

As the literacy movement was flourishing, Laubach continued emphasizing his own Christian development. On January 1, 1936, he wrote in his diary, "God, I want to give You every minute of this year. I shall try to keep You in mind every moment of my waking hours." In his diary, he recorded his realization of the relationship between his success in literacy education and the prayer regimen God called him to follow:

These days have been closer to God than any five days of my life, and I want to make all 1937 like that, without a waking hour away from God. The thing that God has asked me to do for India and for the whole world will not be accomplished unless I make good on this new resolve. If God can only have his perfect chance, the thing he desires for India and for the illiterates of the world will come to pass.

Laubach left India traveling from Bombay to Mombasa, Kenya. He went to Africa as a result of an invitation from the League of Nations. This fifty-day adventure in East Africa was exploratory in nature and was considered a success. The development of instructional material in Africa turned out to be easier than in India because the alphabets were much simpler and more phonetic in nature. Charts were made in the Kikuyu language, which was spoken by over a million people. Lessons were developed in Swahili as well as many other dialects that were less common.

Some people were not pleased with the advancements made in literacy such as in the African campaign. An official of a gold mining company spoke to Laubach and told him that he had nothing against him personally, but professionally Laubach was his enemy. The man said, "If you teach these savages to read, they will soon think they are as good as we are. Can't you see that you will start unrest and labor troubles all over Africa?" This helped Laubach realize he was working not only for illiterates, but also for the emancipation of Africa.

From 1938-40, Laubach was involved in a new India-wide campaign for literacy. Using Lanao as a base, he developed a series of lessons even simpler than those previously used in Africa. This demonstrated the continuing progress of "Each One Teach One." The visit found the harvest ripe. Publicity was excellent with newspapers all over India pushing the literacy campaign. Both Gandhi and Nehru were supportive during this effort. Special attention was given to women because only four percent of the women of India were literate as compared to twelve percent of the men.

Laubach has a tremendous amount of hope for India, but expressed potential problems:

And yet I was afraid of the thing I was doing in India—unloosing something that had been chained since the dawn of time. Nearly three-fifths of the human race might in a few years be throbbing with a new nameless terrible hope as were these people. If Christian missions can lead this new uprising, if the way can be opened for Christ to satisfy the hunger of these new literates, they will be the meek who will inherit and bless the earth. But if, after starting this thing, we allow the leadership to slip from the Christian brotherhood in all lands, if this unthinkably vast multitude becomes educated with pagan idols, God pity the future.

In the summer of 1941, Laubach's fourth five-year missionary tour was over, and the entire family returned to the United States. On December 4, 1941, he sent a letter to the Japanese Ambassador suggesting a proposal he hoped would avert war. Laubach felt war would be devastating both countries. He wrote the following statement to Ambassador Nomura, "The two countries must avoid war for the reason that both would probably lose the war and only Mr. Hitler would win." In only a few days after the writing of the letter, the United States was thrust into the war. Laubach's immediate plans had to be altered, but they were soon adjusted to include a vision of literacy education in Latin America.

In June, 1941, Laubach traveled to Mexico and spoke at the World's Sunday School Association Conference. The following year he started on the first of three tours in Latin America. The literacy campaigns in these countries were of the same pattern as campaigns conducted throughout the world. Missionaries and church people were usually the first to show an interest in literacy education. Other people tended to be either in doubt or despair. Laubach writes about this challenge:

These few courageous souls proved that by phonetic lessons people could be taught quickly, that illiterates were eager to learn, and that the "each one teach one" method is practical and very inexpensive.

After the initial success was demonstrated, government officials normally became interested in this approach. The Latin American tours found Laubach sharing his method of literacy in Mexico, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Paraguay, Haiti, and Cuba.

In 1946, Laubach was deeply involved in a major prayer effort. Through the Laymen's Movement for a Christian World, he helped mobilize prayer for the Paris Peace Conference. This was followed with an effort to encourage prayer for the United Nations. Laubach personally visited twenty-five cities in the United States to urge groups to continue praying for the U. N. Another important project that Laubach was involved with in 1946 was the preparation of literacy lessons in

English. He published Streamlined English, which utilized an eclectic method combining the story and phonetic method.

The following year proved to be a great challenge. Literacy campaigns took place in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Ethiopia, London, Scotland, Sierra Leone and the Philippines. The trip to the Philippines was a particularly emotional experience. Laubach remembers about these journeys:

Our journey through the Philippines was one of the most painful experiences of my life, for I learned that half of my old friends with whom I had prayed and worked had been killed during the war.

Effa Laubach took a special part in the Philippine trip staying for eight months at the old Laubach home in Cagayan. She helped with the distribution of food and clothing for a benevolent group, Church World Service.

On January 1, 1948, Laubach and his son, Bob, arrived in Monrovia, Liberia. They found a spirit of cooperation for the literacy effort between Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, and Roman Catholics. This was the first time these religious groups had cooperated on any Liberian project. The visit to Liberia was followed with literacy campaigns in Nigeria, Ghana, Belgian Congo, Rhodesia and South Africa. Laubach had an interesting encounter at Wembo Nyama in the Belgian Congo when a man from a distant village walked for several days to the literacy training center because he heard he could receive an injection for ignorance. Laubach immediately taught him in front of everyone else. He told the man to go back to his village and teach because he was now very intelligent. The man "stark crazy." He laughed and shouted until the place was in an uproar with everyone laughing or crying with joy. Class had to be dismissed until the following day.

Whirlwind trips like the one, which took place in Africa sometimes brought criticism. One reason was that Laubach did not always provide immediate follow-up. Also, he would not wait for the conditions to be completely satisfactory before he developed the lessons. This was the only way he thought the millions of illiterates could be reached. The financial situation was also a factor in the short stay because Laubach and his company were guests of the people where he worked. He preferred to move on rather than be a burden to the people with whom he was staying.

Laubach also found an interest in literacy in one of the intellectual centers of the world, Cambridge University. He met with three hundred West African students attending that school. The students had such a desire to help their countries with literacy that Laubach experienced a strong emotional response. Similar experiences took place at London University and St. Andrew's University in Scotland.

The Orient was the next area of conquest for Laubach. In February, 1949, he traveled with a small group of people to Thailand at the invitation of the Thai

government. The Thai alphabet was the most difficult he had ever faced. It had twenty-one consonant sounds and forty-four consonant symbols that had to be incorporated in the charts. Laubach turned to prayer for the answer to this problem. "I think I never prayed so hard in my life and God answered that prayer in a remarkable way." Through the assistance of an intelligent young Thai named Saram, a workable plan of lessons was developed. When the final graduation took place there were eight thousand people who participated. The campaign was considered an amazing success.

Additional visits in 1949 took Laubach to India, Pakistan, Korea and New Guinea. The New Guinea venture included one of the most exciting literacy experiences of his life. When Laubach arrived in that country, he saw a nation that had risen from the stone age of savagery to a Christian educated culture in one generation. He attended a church service on a Sunday and saw some four hundred natives with no clothing above their waists. The women wore grass skirts but according to Laubach looked as "devout as madonnas." He felt the Christian church in New Guinea was having a more profound impact upon their culture than the Church in the United States was on its culture. He gives this analysis concerning the difference:

One realizes that the ability to read and write or the money to buy a fine house, an auto, refrigerator and radio, is far less important than the transforming contact with Jesus Christ.

Laubach believed this was a transformation that the entire world should see. In one generation the people had gone from being "cruel, filthy cannibals" to being devout Christians.

In the midst of this great spiritual experience, there were tremendous breakthroughs in literacy education. As Laubach studied the Medlpa language, his group was flooded with people interested in learning to read. He writes, "They simply stampeded us in their eagerness to learn The crowd was so big that we simply got lost. We could not take names or count the students." The people continued to come and be trained until the day of graduation. The graduation day was a victory celebration. Laubach continues the story:

More than 10,000 people—some say 16,000—gathered for the great occasion. About 4,000 of them were in the church. When they reached the crescendo in their singing, it sounded like a clap of thunder, the mightiest peal of singing I ever heard.

Every person who received a diploma was expected to immediately become a teacher.

The year, 1950, found Laubach returning to Africa. His literacy campaign included the following countries: Liberia, Angola, Mozambique, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Uganda, Ruanda-Urundi, and the French Cameroons. The following year, 1951, was

also busy with trips to Algiers, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, India, Afghanistan, Burma, Singapore, Malaya and Indonesia. Even some of the people Laubach worked with felt the effects of his hurried schedule. In Kabul, Afghanistan, a Moselm priest threw up his hands and exclaimed, "He gives us no time to sit lazy."

A significant portion of Laubach's time from 1951-53 was spent in India. A major development in literacy education took place with the publication of on Anand the Wise Man. Anand was a fictional character who in every lesson learned a secret that made him healthier, wealthier, wiser, happier, and more respected in the community. This book gave instruction in health, hygiene, farming, and care of animals. For many years, it was the most used literacy primer of India.

In July, 1952, Laubach was employed through a contract between the United States Government Point Four and World Literacy, Incorporated. The new organization, World Literacy, was organized to contract with governments such as India. The World Literacy and Christian Literature Committee of the National Council of Churches, known as Lit-Lit, felt there would be greater freedom if governments dealt with an organization that was not church-related. The trustees of Lit-Lit created the non-sectarian World Literacy so the separation of church and state might be complete.

Laubach's working relationship with the United States Government Point Four and World Literacy did not mean he was losing or leaving his religious convictions. In April, 1952, he traveled to a literacy institute at Raiwind, Pakistan, that had one hundred delegates. He wrote, "We trained those 100 delegates to go back to their homes and organize their the congregations into teaching armies, with the motto 'Each One Teach One and Win One to Jesus.'"

The Golden Years: 1954-1970

Laubach achieved a significant milestone in his life in 1954-1955. This was the last year of his sixth decade and the first of his seventh. In 1954, he reached the mandatory retirement age with Lit-Lit. There was a seventieth birthday luncheon for him held September 7, 1954, at the George Washington Hotel in New York. Laubach was presented a "Book of Remembrance" which included words of praise and best wishes from people all over the world. The "honored guests" at the luncheon were actually seen as being the "little people" with whom he had spent most of his time overseas. One of the secrets of Laubach's success was that he could take a "nobody" and make a "somebody" out of him.

Even though Laubach retired from his position with Lit-Lit, he continued to engage in literacy campaigns. During the years 1954 and 1955, Laubach spent many hours with teachers who were going abroad to convince them it was wrong to use the American approach to teach languages with regular alphabets. He began to establish literacy education schools designed to train foreign missionaries and those

who desired to teach illiterates in the United States. New schools were established in all parts of the United States as "Each One Teach One" became fashionable. In this same time period, Laubach confronted the growing power of Communism. In some countries such as India, the Communists were following the literacy campaigns and printing Communist propaganda. Laubach saw some Christians turning to Communism and expressed his concern:

In the last few years the best missionary strategists have come to a sharp realization that a missionary program anywhere must not only stir up people's aspirations but also help fulfill them. We see that our lopsided missionary program in the past has made many Christians unhappy by indoctrinating them with Christ's "good news for the poor" without relieving them of hunger or ignorance.

Laubach believed that both the Christian church and the United States government could meet the challenge of Communism. The missionaries must be concerned with such practical ideas as teaching a hungry person how to farm and use proper hygiene. Laubach thought that the governments of underdeveloped countries were alarmed at the demands of their illiterate people and would gladly welcome the United States' educational and technical assistance. To Laubach there was a world dawning which followed a new pattern. It was a war for people's minds, a war of ideas which both the church and the government must face.

Another significant change occurred in Laubach's life in 1955 when he organized the Laubach Literacy and Mission Fund. Its purpose was to offer his literacy experience and skill to both governments and mission boards. Laubach was convinced by his friends of the necessity to use his name to help give identification to the new organization. Initially, the organization was based in New York City, but in 1961 the headquarters were moved to Washington, D. C. In January, 1963, the organization moved to Syracuse, New York, with a branch office being maintained in Washington for foreign embassy contacts.

In 1956, Laubach participated in an around-the-world literacy tour for World Literacy, Inc. This trip was possible because of a major gift to World Literacy. Laubach writes about the interest in this literacy campaign:

We have been invited by thirty-five governments to come and hold conferences or prepare lessons in their countries, but we were able to visit only twenty-one of these countries that year.

He saw that many positive changes had taken place since his previous visits to these countries.

It was Laubach's belief that the American people were neglecting Africa and Asia. Instead of going on another world tour, the entire year of 1957 was devoted to encouraging the churches and the people of America to hear the call of Asia and

Africa. Laubach pressed for greater government and church involvement in literacy education. He challenged the United States Government to have more direct contact in the lives of illiterate people around the world. Churches were requested to work through their own mission boards and develop a program where one hundred people in the congregation would agree to give one dollar a week per year to support a technical missionary on the field. There were many churches that accept this challenge.

The years 1956-57 also brought a new approach to teaching literacy. Laubach was offered an invitation to establish a program for literacy education on television in Memphis, Tennessee. The motto "Each One Teach One" was changed to "Each One Bring One" for the purpose of this particular campaign. In the spring of 1957, Laubach went to Memphis to participate in the world's first television literacy graduation. There were three hundred graduates in the initial graduation. Laubach saw tremendous possibilities for this literacy approach.

In 1958-59, Laubach continued a busy schedule of writing and conducting literary campaigns. Mason writes about this period:

His desire for variety, change, and travel never wavered. Often Mrs. Laubach complained about his being away from home so often. Yet his drive and determination constantly took him from one state to another, from the United States to some foreign land, from one project to another. This seemed to be what he loved most of all—to create more things to do and more places to go.

Laubach found more places to go in 1960 with another around-the-world literacy tour. He was particularly touched with what was taking place in Viet Nam. He writes, "It is very dangerous to become a Christian now in Viet Nam. Communists are killing off, first, government employees, then second, friends of missionaries." He heard many accounts of Christians being killed in horrible deaths. The 1960 tour included a visit to the Philippines. Laubach returned to Signal Hill and had a touching experience with God: "I cannot find words to express what happened. The New Testament tells of men and women possessed by the Holy Spirit. It happens today. It happened to me."

The 1960's found Laubach building the volunteer literacy army in colleges, seminaries and missions. In 1962, he wrote Each One Teach One and Win One to Christ. He sent thousands of copies of this book to missionaries abroad. In 1964, Laubach spoke at Asbury College and Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. He returned in 1969 to Asbury Seminary and taught a course in literacy evangelism. In the spring of 1967, he taught a similar course in literacy evangelism at Oral Roberts University.

Laubach experienced a movement toward literacy education that crossed denominational lines. He writes that literacy education is a true ecumenical movement:

One of the strongest aspects of the “each one teach one” literacy program is that everybody, conservative and liberal, endorses it. Everyone believes in helping the underprivileged. Catholics and Protestants work together on this project.

Literacy education is a religious effort, which leads to action and not just talk. Other significant events, which occurred in the 1960's, included the Laubach's golden wedding day on May 15, 1962. On September 2, 1964, Laubach had his eightieth birthday. Maintaining his great sense of humor he writes, “I have good news for you. The first eighty years are the hardest. The second eighty, so far as my experience goes, is a succession of birthday parties.” The birthday parties had a purpose other than just honoring Laubach. His birthday was used as a springboard for setting up coordinating committees in every state in the Union to involve more people in the fight against illiteracy. At one of the birthday parties Laubach was asked when he planned to retire. His response is indicative of the deep love he had in his heart for the illiterate. “As soon as everyone in the world is literate.”

As Laubach drew close to the end of his life, he engaged in serious spiritual contemplation. “When we turn to the Christian way,” he reflects, “we find to our surprise that it is not difficult. It is glorious! Love is going with the laws that God made.” His times of practicing the presence of God continued to be an important part of his life. On July 7, 1968, Laubach wrote, “I find that I can shut my eyes eagerly and step into the presence of the King with joyous expectancy.” He went on to say that “the eternal is spiritual, not material.” On June 11, 1970, at the age of eighty-five, Frank C. Laubach passed away. He remained active until a few hours before his death from acute leukemia. His wife Effa followed him in death on March 28, 1973. They are buried in Benton, Pennsylvania.

Conclusion

Frank C. Laubach lived a rich and rewarding life as evidenced by the millions who were touched through his life. Laubach's Christian development proved to be a motivating factor in his worldwide literacy campaigns. Many spiritual milestones helped shape his development, such as growing up in a Christian family, attending Sunday School from an early age, reading the Bible and Christian classics, working at a slum settlement house, and becoming a missionary.

A turning point came in Laubach's life in 1930 as he started missionary work with the Moros. In an attempt to deal with his loneliness and failures in ministry, he began an evening ritual of climbing Signal Hill. He poured out his heart to God and learned how to continually practice the presence of God. Immediately, Laubach's

literacy work was transformed. This was the beginning point for the famous “Each One Teach One” method of literacy education. Laubach soon found this approach to literacy training was a successful way to engage in missionary and evangelistic activity.

The remainder of Laubach’s life was devoted to sharing both his breakthrough literacy education and his understanding of the Christian life. He became known as the “Apostle to the Illiterates.” Laubach fought the worldwide problems of hunger and oppression realizing that only through literacy and Christian social responsibility could there be a permanent solution to the world’s problems. In his many years of distinguished service, Laubach traveled to 103 countries developing literacy primers in 312 languages. His influence has continued to grow throughout the years both in the areas of literacy education and Christian development. In 1984, on the date of his one-hundredth birthday, Laubach was honored by the U. S. Postal Service with the issue of a commemorative stamp, included in the “Great Americans” series. His life will continue to be an example that can be emulated by educators and Christians alike.

Chapter II

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES

Frank C. Laubach's desire to teach the world to read came from his relationship with God. He sought to make every thought and action of his, including the literacy work, dependent on God's plan. The Christian disciplines, such as praying, spiritual experimenting, practicing the presence of God, developing his walk with God and studying the Bible, played a pivotal role in his spiritual development. For Laubach, a Christian discipline is not defined in a rigid militaristic sense, but as a relationship. "We need sensitivity to the spiritual world," writes Laubach, "so that we are alert to the voice of God. So we learn this discipline as a way of getting the answers we need in a world which baffles us."

The Christian disciplines held a central place in Laubach's life. "I have chosen prayer as the foundation of my life, and I love more than anything else in the world to pray every moment about every question." Laubach acknowledged the impact of prayer on his literacy work:

Ten thousand people in American promised to pray for our literacy work. Their prayers have opened the doors of men's hearts around the whole world like an invisible love force, and have made impossible obstacles melt away like steel before a blow torch. The enormous results which appear when many people pray is what makes me sure we can do any good thing if enough of us pray enough.

For many years Laubach was referred to as a Christian "mystic." He was not ashamed of this designation:

In point of fact, everybody is a mystic, if he believes that God answers back when he prays. Most of us are mystics occasionally, but a true mystic believes that he hears God answering back habitually, and perhaps all the time.

Laubach was aware of the probability of criticism for being a mystic but said, "what a stupid world this would be if one never did anything different for fear of criticism."

The Christian disciplines enabled Laubach to grow in an intimate relationship with God and helped serve as a foundation for the development of his literacy work. Ernest Thomas writes concerning the advancement made by Laubach in these areas:

Laubach has pioneered in methods of prayer and personal devotion. Indeed, it is probable that the encouragement, which he has given to the devotional life will give him as lasting a claim to fame as will his literacy program.

Prayer

Prayer played an important role in the life of Frank Laubach. It undergirded his Christian development and impacted his contributions to adult literacy education. Laubach, writing in How to Pray Today, said he came to the conclusion that a person had to spend a significant amount of time during the day to pray. For Laubach, it was a question of priority. "You can't have the triumphant Christian life today," he believes, "unless you take it violently You can't hurry it, you can't do in two minutes what should have taken two hours to do."

Laubach felt that it took time to be holy. A relationship with Jesus Christ had to be cultivated. Christians should give Jesus the best part of the day such as when they are fresh in the morning, or in the early afternoon, not at night when they are sleepy. It is up to the individual to find the best time for prayer. After this is accomplished, it is necessary to be as honest and faithful with that time as with any other commitment. Laubach believed faithfulness was essential because prayer was the most important engagement in the entire world.

Conditions of Prayer

Certain conditions are necessary before prevailing prayer can take place. Laubach gives these prerequisites:

This high level of prayer demands that we pray not only when we feel like it, but even more when we do not feel like it. We are disciplining the savage within us, and he is a wayward rebel, full of whims and stubbornness.

Prayer is difficult and at times can be considered hard work. Laubach's conviction concerning prevailing prayer was that it had the greatest potency just when a person struggled hardest to pray. This prayer is more likely to bring about a deep concern that produces greater results. An example would be when a person prays for an enemy whom he or she is tempted to hate or curse. Laubach believes that this prevailing prayer has the greatest power.

Another condition of prayer is concentration. Laubach writes, "Many people would rather do anything in the world that think hard, and prayer demands thought, and thought requires concentration." Since prayer is hard work, it is often hard for lazy minds.

Laubach believed it was necessary to understand the nature of prayer. He says prayer is a pipeline or a conducting wire for the mightiest force in the universe, which is the power and will of God Himself. Prayer is the button, which tunes a person in with God's will and power. It turns on a power greater than all the electricity in the world. God will not grant an answer to prayer unless it is consistent with His will. If a prayer is not answered, it is because God knows it would not be the best either for the person praying the prayer or for those whom the Christian prays.

Effective prayer should be constructive in nature. It is important for a person to pray for what another person could become and not about personal dislikes. When a complaint was lodged against a person or even a group of people, Laubach suggested converting that complaint into a prayer for the person, which would bring positive results. When this takes place, prayer assists in creating a better world.

Laubach sensed the effect of constructive prayer as he lived among the Moros trying to teach them to read. He saw that God was using him to assist the Moros:

I see what happens as I look into their eyes and pray for them. No man need try to persuade me that God does not reach them, for I see the thing happen, and now I know that every person we ever meet is God's opportunity, if only, if only we were not so much of the time shut off from God.

It is also necessary that a person be "grounded" before engaging in effective intercessory prayer. Laubach explains this position:

You can't have God until you are grounded and the Holy Spirit flows through you down to other people. That's what is happening when your prayers become intercessory prayers—they are grounded.

A prayer is grounded when it is concentrated on someone such as the President, Congress, or the illiterates of the world. This type of prayer must include an attitude of concern for others. Laubach saw the results of grounded prayer as he prayed for the illiterate Moros. Prayer helped bridge the gap between Laubach and the Moros and established a foundation for the development of his program of literacy education. He writes, "Their responsiveness is to me a continuous source of amazement. I do nothing that I can see excepting to pray for them and to walk among them thinking of God."

On certain occasions while Laubach was praying, he received thoughts from God giving direct instruction for his literacy work. He gave an example of one important idea that he believed God spoke to him. Laubach refers to these thoughts from God:

When you are teaching the Moros to read, your art is to say as little as you can and leave them to say as much as they will. This is why I leave you to do

and say as much as you can, while I say little. You learn by doing, even when you make mistakes and correct them.

Prayer for World Leaders

One way Laubach suggested giving prayer away was in praying for world leaders. Laubach writes, "People must all feel responsible for saving the world. They must pray for the men and women who lead in public life." He challenged people to make a list of world leaders who in their personal opinion are the most important. Each person should have an individual list and pray through the list on a regular basis. Laubach says, "It is an excellent practice to write to the people for whom we pray telling them that we were praying for them to seek and find and do God's will." Nothing pleases the leaders of the world more than receiving letters assuring them that they are being constantly prayed for. Laubach believed the greatest sin of the Christian Church was the sin of not writing letters and influencing the people at the top of society who need prayers and support.

Prayer is the door that opens the minds of the world leaders to God so they may know the needs of the world's illiterates. According to Laubach, the most ordinary person can participate in this activity. Laubach states, "Millions of us ordinary people must pour an incessant white light of prayer upon our world leaders, day after day." By praying for the world leaders, a person helps God reach the illiterates of the world. Laubach thought it was a mistake to assume God would act without the assistance of the prayer of individuals. Believing prayer influenced national leaders toward involvement in literacy education, Laubach writes, "It was God who inspired President Nixon to declare war on illiteracy in the United States and to attempt to liquidate illiteracy by 1980."

For the people who did not know exactly how to pray for the world leaders, Laubach developed a model prayer designed to be appropriate for anyone:

Lord, use my prayer to help _____ to feel a great hunger and thirst to know thy will, to lift his head up and listen to thee, and when he hears thee speak, may he do thy full will for the world.

With slight modifications this prayer could be prayed for any world leader. According to Laubach, "This prayer lifts the leaders to God, puts their ears close to his lips, and their God can speak."

One particular area of prayer for world leaders in which Laubach participated was praying for the United Nations. He shares his dream:

Some of us are hopeful that eventually ten million Christians will form the daily habit of praying for the delegates to the United Nations, for our President, for the rulers of Russia, China and in other countries.

Christians can be more influential in praying for the members of the United Nations than they realize. Laubach imagined the spiritual impact of one hundred thousand churches praying for and writing to every delegate in the United Nations. One hundred thousand letters from American churches to each delegate would be a greater number of letters than any of them ever received on any subject. Laubach not only challenged others to pray for the delegates to the United Nations, he personally supplied this principle in his life:

I have prayed for the delegates and have written to all of them a number of times. I have a letter from every single one of them, except those behind the Iron Curtain.

For Laubach this approach was a way for the delegates to receive the wisdom of God. The world was in such a condition that human wisdom failed to provide a remedy. It was important for the delegates to know people were praying that God would help them receive His wisdom. Laubach believed that only through the wisdom of God could the leaders of the governments of the world understand the complex problem of illiteracy.

Prayer and the Church

Laubach believed there was one factor, which could control the destiny of the world. The need was for a pentecostal awakening of the American church. Prayer is the power that turns dead churches alive and makes weak Christians strong. Christians in American have a sense of being needed, a gripping cause, but they do not yet pray enough. Laubach writes about how this condition of prayerlessness has worldwide implications:

Our peril today lies in just this, that we are in a new low spiritual depression—in power, in faith and in love. A similar condition prevailed in Germany, and Hitler became possible.

Intercession designed to change the world must be part of every church service. Laubach explains this need:

Most prayer of intercession one hears in church are tragic disappointments, meager, vague, half hearted, powerless, and small. People seldom pray as if they realized that prayer changes the world.

Evangelical Christianity must discover that the center and power of its service should be prayer, not preaching. Also, the minister and congregation should spend more time preparing for the service by praying at home.

Laubach recognized that one person alone whose heart was burning with spiritual passion could influence an entire church. This process could be very difficult and might take a long time. The more people whose hearts are devoted to prayer, the

easier the task. A prayerful person can easily mobilize the church members to pray for the pastor while he is speaking. If the congregation prays for the pastor, it helps him so that his soul is stirred and the ideas seem to flow out of heaven. Laubach recognized the results of this method of prayer. He writes, "If you have tried this as I have many times, you have been astonished at how much better the preacher preached the moment you began to pray real intensely for him."

The church should provide opportunities to participate in prayer groups. Laubach saw the need for this kind of intimate prayer: "Everybody needs a prayer group with others to stimulate continuous individual prayer. Nobody prays alone much unless he also prays with others." According to Laubach, a spiritual leader should not try to get along without the assistance of a prayer group. Two people are enough to begin a prayer group. The members of the group should look for others who are spiritually in unity with their prayers. Being of one mind is a condition that helps make possible the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual power may not be evident in a group unless there is perfect harmony and mutual confidence.

Laubach saw tremendous potential for prayer groups that focused on the problems of illiteracy and poverty in the world. He was convinced that prayer group members needed to pray for a definite cause. He writes, "Prayer needs a definite cause in which the people are involved, for people will not pray long unless they are devoted to a task they consider important." Laubach acknowledged the importance of this type of prayer for the advancement of literacy evangelism. He asserts, "Experience has shown us that literacy evangelism dwindles unless it is reinforced by much prayer." The prayer groups allow God to pour into the world the powerful spiritual forces of His infinity.

Prayer for the Oppressed

Laubach believed prayer helped others. People can ask God to reach a person that they pray for. The way to reach people in need, both Christian and non-Christian, is through prayer. Laubach was convinced there was no wall so thick, no curtain so high that prayer could not penetrate or transcend. Prayers are answered across an ocean just as easily as across a room. In prayer someone can join with Christ, with missionaries and other Christian workers in building His kingdom and in bringing peace on earth and good will among humanity.

Many people are oppressed as victims and separated from others by barriers of fear, hate, and politics. Laubach sometimes enlisted personal friends to help him pray for those caught in this cycle of oppression and illiteracy. For example, Laubach was pleased to mention Marion Johnson of Brookline, Massachusetts. Laubach comments, "She has been an invalid for twenty years so she spends her waking hours in intercessory prayer and in writing letters." Laubach indicated that people such as Marion Johnson lived on love and would someday receive a great reward for their efforts in prayer.

Laubach was convinced that “if we could tell the people of Asia about our concern for peace and our desire to help them; if they could know more about our prayer and religious devotion, their fear and hate would melt away.” For this purpose, Laubach developed the “Fellowship of the Three Billion”:

There are now three billion people in the world. We all need prayers, but the vast majority of us do not know how to pray, as the “Fellowship of the Three Billion” is praying for all of us. You may join this fellowship by making a habit of including the words we three billion at least one time in all of your prayers—in public services, in prayer groups, in blessings at the table, in your own private devotions.

Laubach indicated there was no membership list for this fellowship except in heaven, no officers but Christ, and no dues. The only requirement for membership was to pray daily for the world.

Jesus and Prayer

The prayer life of Jesus was a model Laubach attempted to follow. Laubach felt the secret of Jesus’ power was in his moment-by-moment listening to the inner voice of God and doing nothing, unless God told him to do it. He referred to Jesus as his senior partner who knew every answer and would tell him what he needed to know. Laubach comments on the need to emulate Jesus:

If we are to make the spiritual discovery that will save our age, it will be in the direction Jesus took: intense, unwavering, day-after-day listening prayer, and instant, unwavering, daring obedience when God speaks—listening and saying yes at whatever cost.

Laubach placed particular emphasis on the Lord’s Prayer. “More people, “ states Laubach, “repeat the Lord’s prayer than all other prayers put together. It is the prayer most used and least understood.” The reason why this prayer is often misunderstood is that people think they are asking God for something while they are actually offering God something. This prayer is helping God do what He wants done.

The phrase in the Lord’s prayer, “thy will be done on Earth,” was considered by Laubach to be the heart of the Lord’s prayer. He thought this part of the prayer meant changing the world according to God’s will. Laubach used the outline of the Lord’s prayer to pray for the world’s illiterates. In the following example Laubach prays for the illiterates in India: “Thou knowest how to prepare their ears to do what Thou dost desire. This is thy work and it must go on.” Laubach believed God’s will on earth included illiterates learning to read.

Laubach suggests the following prayer that could be included in every devotional period:

Christ, what are the large world thoughts, which thou dost desire me to share? I pray not to ask thee for anything, but to ask what service thou dost desire me to share with thee.

He was concerned that every person contribute toward the building of the kind of world that welcomed the kingdom of Jesus Christ. In this way the will of God would be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Prayer and Healing

Laubach believed in the power of prayer for healing. He writes, "We have settled down to a false idea that when the Bible closed, the age of miracles stopped. It isn't true! They who have faith today see miracles." For Laubach, this was an area of personal growth and development. He said that for many years he had not experienced miracles of healing but now, according to his faith, he was seeing them.

Laubach shared his belief that other Christians should be involved in pray for miracles of healing:

Not only I, but I think everybody here should be praying for people who are ill. Not praying, "Lord, if it be Thy will, if You are as good as You were in the days of Jesus, make this person well." That kind of prayer is doubting. Jesus never, never said "No," never "Perhaps," but He said, "According to your faith, it will be unto you."

Although Laubach believed in divine healing, he did not disregard the value of medical science:

Your part and mine is to study what others are doing, and not to fear to pray for healing in those who are suffering. We must be careful to employ all that modern medicine knows, adding prayer to that knowledge.

Medical science should never be used as an alternative to believing that ultimately Jesus Christ is the healer. Laubach writes concerning healing, "You must be sure, from the very bottom of your subconscious mind, that Christ heals today. This is the fundamental request."

Laubach stressed that healing does not depend upon a person's individual goodness. He writes, "Healing does not depend upon your past record—not in the least. He accepts your yielding; instead of goodness, without yielding, nobody is good enough." The grace of Jesus Christ works through a person's yielding who allows Christ to be the great physician.

Spiritual Experimentation in Prayer

One of the primary breakthroughs in Frank Laubach's life occurred in his spiritual experimentation in prayer. He observes the excitement found in his prayer time:

Some of us are tingling with the zest of adventure, for over every hill and around every corner new breath-taking surprises greet our eyes.
Adventuring in prayer is exciting fun.

According to Laubach, these adventures in prayer please God who loves surprises and endless variety.

As the result of prayer experimentation, Laubach was spiritually transformed. He records the life change:

Before 1930 I held what many people call the university man's religion. I believed that Jesus was probably the best man who had ever lived. But that beautiful memory of Jesus lacked power. I was a failure in my spiritual life. Then I had a personal experience of Christ in Mindanao, Philippine Islands, which left me sure that he not only lives, but lives in my heart. When He entered my heart, he brought to me a tender compassion for the multitudes which has been the driving power of my life ever since. The living Christ put it there.

Practicing the Presence of God

The turning point in Laubach's life came as a result of learning to practice the presence of God. Ernest Thomas writes concerning this change in Laubach's life:

It is important to understand the transformation of Dr. Laubach's life, which occurred about the year 1930. Prior to that time he had rendered outstanding service to the church in the Philippines, but his approach was not that of a mystic.

On January 3, 1930, Laubach, writing in his diary, accepted the challenge of a continuous encounter with God. He writes, "As for me I resolved that I would succeed better this year with my experiment of filling every minute full of the thoughts of God than I succeeded last year."

This was the beginning of a spiritual experience, which played an important role throughout Laubach's life. In How to Prayer Today, he writes of the experience:

Once about twenty-one years ago when I was in the Philippines struggling with my work and very lonesome (my family was a thousand miles away), I in despair, had gone up on Signal Hill. I was talking to God, and suddenly my lips began talking to me. It was God using my lips. That was a new day for me. Ever since then I pray both ways—I to Him, He to me when I can get away alone.

Laubach felt there was historical precedent for his new found “mystical” experience in prayer. “The prayer masters of every age have devoted all, or nearly all, their waking hours to prayer. They have prayed while working—Brother Lawrence prayed while washing dishes.” This became Laubach’s way to “pray without ceasing.” Out of a spiritual void in his life, he writes of the way to a deep intimate relationship with God:

The deep sweet mystical sense of his presence and love comes and goes. I supposed he gives it when I need it . . . Loneliness is the best doorway to this mystical experience.

For Laubach, practicing the presence of God was what Christianity should be all about. He writes, “For many, Christianity is a philosophy, a belief, not a way of life. It needs to be converted into a way of life, into practicing the presence of God.” This spiritual experience must lead to practical application. “The secret of the mystical expression is perfect obedience. It is more than passive obedience. It is actively seeking and listening intently for Thy voice.”

Practicing the presence of God helped transform Laubach’s attitude toward people of other races. This helped him in his missionary and literacy efforts. He writes of the effects of practicing the presence of God:

I became color blind. Ever since I have been partial to tan, the more tan the better! Every missionary goes through some such experiences as that—or comes home defeated.

Through this Christian development, Laubach experienced acceptance by God in his life. Speaking of God he says, “I feel that you have welcome me into your family circle. And such a love, such a love as I feel for you and you feel for me! There are no words to tell it.” He became convinced that continuous fellowship with God was one of the main reasons for his existence. On Dec. 21, 1958, Laubach writes these thoughts:

Is it possible that all the religious training I have had, had as its final goal this intimate sweet familiarity with Him? Yes, it now seems that this is why Christ had to come, why I had to walk with him for years until I learned what he knew and what he is moment by moment. This is what my life was for. Does it mean that I have arrived? No, it means that I have started. I have found my compass, and the end is infinity.

Practical Ways to Practice the Presence of God

Laubach developed practical ways to help people learn how to practice the presence of God. “This habit which I am acquiring and recommending to others is not the

only way to step into the practice of his presence, but it is one good way, so good that my hearts tells me to share it," challenges Laubach. He defended this ancient practice. "Practicing the presence of God is not on trial. It has already been proven by countless thousands of people." Laubach stated several advantages of this practice. "Christians who do it today become more fervent and beautiful and are tireless witnesses. Men and women who had been slaves of vices have been set free." This is a practice which can meet the spiritual needs of all types of Christians, both Protestants and Catholics, conservatives and liberals.

Even though practicing the presence of God requires a tremendous amount of discipline, Laubach developed what he called The Game of Minutes. He used the term "game" because the practice of the presence of God was such a delightful and exhilarating spiritual experience. It was more than a game, however, because it presented a new experience where people could come from a state of spiritual darkness and really start living a deeper Christian life. Beginning the game would be either as easy or hard as the forming of any other habit. The game consists of thinking of God each minute when a person is awake. Laubach indicated it requires a real effort at first but becomes easier with practice. The greatest mistake a person makes is to give up too soon.

Laubach suggested ways to begin practicing the presence of God:

Select a favorable hour; try how many minutes of the hour you can remember God at least once each minute; that is to say, bring God to mind at least one second out of every sixty.

He insisted that this practice not become legalistic. "We never attempt to keep a minute-by-minute record, since such a record would interfere with normal life. We are practicing a new freedom, not a new bondage." Laubach said it was important to focus on Jesus and not be burdened by score keeping, thus losing the glory of the practice and its spontaneity. All that is required is simple faith. With faith and practice a person can begin to hear and discern God's voice.

Since this "game" is unique in its approach, it is possible for everyone to win. "We may not win in all all or even half of our minutes," states Laubach, "but we do win a richer life, which is all that really matters. There are no losers excepting those who quit." Laubach listed several benefits or "prizes" of winning this game:

1. We develop what Thomas a Kempis calls "a familiar friendship with Jesus." Our Unseen Friend becomes dearer, closer and more wonderful every day until at last we know Him as "Jesus, lover of my soul" not only in songs, but in blissful experiences. . . .
2. All we undertake is done better and more smoothly. We have daily evidence that God helps our work, piling one proof upon another until

we are sure of God, not from books or preachers, but from our own experience.

3. When we are playing this game, our minds are pure as a mountain stream every moment.
4. The Bible and Christian hymns seem like different books, for they begin to sparkle with the beautiful thoughts of saints who have had glorious experiences with God. We begin to understand their bliss for we share it with them.
5. All day long we are contented, whatever our lot may be, for he is with us. When Jesus goes with me, I'll go anywhere.
6. It becomes easy to tell others about Christ because our minds are flooded with him. Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.
7. Grudges, jealousies, hatred, and prejudices melt away. Little hells turn into little heavens. Communities have been transformed where this game was introduced. Love rises like a kindly sea and at last drowns all the demons of malice and selfishness. Then we see that the only hope for this insane world is to persuade people to practice the presence of God.
8. Genius is ninety percent concentration. This game, like all concentration upon one objective, eventually results in flashes of new brilliant thought, which astonish us, and keep us tip toe with expectancy for the next vision which God will give us.

Laubach suggested several places to begin the experiment of practicing the presence of God. An appropriate place would be while attending a church service. Another opportunity for this experiment would be when a person is going home from church. It is also possible to offer a quick prayer for anyone that a person talks to. An instantaneous silent prayer can be prayed while looking people straight in the eye. Laubach said that a half-hour spent walking and praying for everyone a person comes in contact provides a sense of ever heightening energy, like a battery being charged. This is a good way to overcome a depressed feeling. While these activities are taking place, it is important to remember that God is interested in every detail of a person's life.

This game could be practiced in privacy or in a crowd. Laubach writes, "We whisper 'God' or 'Jesus' or 'Christ' constantly as we glance at every person near us. We try to see double, as Christ does—we see the person as he is and the person Christ longs to make of him.

Laubach believed that important spiritual ministry could take place in a meeting by whispering “Jesus” and then helping people whenever there was an opportunity. Practicing the presence of God could also take place at meal time. Laubach suggested leaving an empty chair that signified the presence of Jesus in the room. Practicing the presence of God can take place while reading a book, when thinking and when walking alone. Laubach suggested reading a newspaper or magazine to Jesus. Since thoughts employ silent words, Laubach suggested that instead of talking to one’s self, a person form a habit of talking to Christ. Making thoughts a conversation with God results in an instantaneous purification. When this takes place a person thinks and works faster and more efficiently. This same process can take place when a person is walking alone. It is possible to think of God each minute when seeing that every flower and tree, river and lake, mountain and sunset, is God speaking.

Laubach found it beneficial to employ reminders to practice the presence of God. He lists the following that have been useful to him:

1. Have a picture of Christ in front of you where you can glance at it frequently.
2. Have an empty chair beside you and imagine that your Unseen Master is sitting in it; if possible, reach your hand and touch that chair, as though holding His hand. He is there, for Christ promised to be with us always.
3. Keep humming to yourself a favorite prayer hymn—for example, “Have Thine Own Way, Lord, Have Thine Own Way.”
4. Silently pray for each person in the circle.
5. Keep whispering inside: “Lord, put thy thoughts in my mind. Tell me what to say.”
6. Best of all, tell your companions about The Game With Minutes. You cannot keep God unless you give Him to others.

Laubach suggested aids available to practice the presence of God for those working primarily in the home:

1. Whisper to God about each small matter, knowing that He loves to help;
2. Hum or sing a favorite prayer hymn;
3. Show the children how to play the game with minutes, asking them to share in playing it which renders discipline almost needless;
4. Have pictures of Christ around the house, as a constant reminder;

5. Say to God, "Think Thy thoughts in my mind."

It was Laubach's opinion that everyone should be encouraged to practice the presence of God. Since it was not only a spiritual discipline for adults, students in school could be trained to form this life habit. Laubach offers the following suggestions for students in school:

1. When in study period, say: "God, I have just forty precious minutes. Help my wavering thoughts to concentrate so that I may not waste a moment. Show me what is worth remembering in this first paragraph"—then read the lesson to God instead of reading it to yourself.
2. When going to recitation, whisper: "Make my mind clear, so that I will be able to recall all I have studied. Take away fear."
3. When using to recite before a group, say: "God speak through my lips."
4. When taking an examination, say all during the hour, "Father, keep my mind clear, and help me to remember all that I have learned. How shall we answer this next question?" Visualize Him looking over your shoulder every minute you are writing. God will not tell you what you have never studied, but He does sharpen your memory and take away your stage fright when you ask Him.
5. To be popular with the other students, acquire the habit of breathing a momentary prayer for each student you meet, and while you are in conversation with him or her.

Practicing the presence of God has special significance for those in love. "Sweethearts who have been wise enough to share their love with God have found it incomparably more wonderful. Since 'God is Love,' He is in deepest sympathy with every fond whisper and look." Laubach applies this principle to married couples:

God is the maker of all true marriages, and He gives His highest joy to a man and wife who share their love for each other with Him, who pray inwardly each for the other when they are together looking into one another's eyes.

Laubach knew troubles in life came to those who practice the presence of God but believed they were better able to deal with them. Sometimes the problems present a struggle from the beginning to the end. The joy found in practicing the Christian disciplines does not depend on external circumstances. Even though troubles come, they seem trivial when compared to the joyous experience of knowing God in an intimate way. Laubach was not sure whether practicing the presence of God brought material prosperity or prominence but knew it was the way to live with an understanding of eternity.

Experiencing the Depths of God: A Christian Diary

Frank Laubach was a prolific writer, but few of his writings influenced people as much as his devotional diaries. He writes about this realization:

If I have anything to offer you it is in the realm of prayer. My experience with prayer has not been like a gradually rising plateau. It has been up and down, perhaps like other people, perhaps more than other people.

Practicing the presence of God led Laubach to write many of his thoughts that came from experiencing God. He recorded these thoughts on a consistent basis in various forms. The diaries allowed people to personally identify with Laubach's struggle to develop an intimate relationship with God.

Laubach realized the significance of his devotional diaries. On September 11, 1968, he records this meditation:

Today I am asking Him, what we will do. I have had no answer about the whole day, and I assume when there is no answer the thing to do is just what I am doing now—recording these thoughts, for in the past I know that my meditations have proven to be helpful to a great many people and the most widespread book that has come from my pen is the Letters By a Modern Mystic. I think that perhaps these meditations will prove more valuable than other material that I might write.

As Laubach experienced the presence of God, he submitted his will to God:

I am feeling God in each movement, by an act of my will—willing that He shall direct these figures that now strike this typewriter—willing that He shall pour through my steps as I walk—willing that He shall direct my words as I speak and my very jaws as I eat!

To become like Jesus and respond to God “as a violin responds to the bow of the master” was Laubach's desire. This experience left him yearning to live in continuous inner conversation with God and in perfect responsiveness to God's will for his life.

Since Laubach desired continuous divine communication, he wanted to learn the vocabulary of God. “God,” he prayed, ‘since every minute this year is to be directed by You, I must learn Your language. I must study Your full vocabulary.’ Laubach observes a relationship between learning the vocabulary of God and his literacy work:

Over three hundred and thirty million who cannot read are calling for help. The need is Your language, is a word from You. How to approach this problem is baffling.

As Laubach was dealing with the great problems of life, God was teaching him obedience.

Laubach did not take his friendship with God for granted. In prayer he thanked God for their friendship:

God, thank You for being my friend when there is no other friend in sight. Thank You for speaking through my voice and telling me that my new life close up to You makes you very happy.

This friendship with God led Laubach to realize the faithfulness of God in his life.

God, I have felt Your hand leading today. You have not failed me once in the moments of testing. . . . You, whom, we call king, are the most faithful of us all, giving all, the sun, food, everything endlessly, love never growing lax.

Laubach saw God's hand at work in all areas of creation. "It makes me dizzy to think of this capacity of God The more we know about the bewildering universe, the more amazed we become at God."

Even though Laubach was convinced it was possible for people to maintain continuous communication with God, he believed there were times God would choose to limit the communication. "God has built countless bridges to men's minds," asserts Laubach, "but He has placed one limitation on Himself: He does not cross the last draw bridge into our minds until we invite Him." Laubach did not completely understand the reason for this choice by God, but he felt it had to do with God's decision to provide mankind with free will. Laubach believed all people had a draw bridge in their souls which only they could choose to open to God:

In fact, there are two draw bridges in the castle of our soul, and the man within has control of both. One opens up towards God, and the other opens out towards our fellow men. If we open both our draw bridges, we become God's highway.

Laubach compared and contrasted the change that took place in his life as he submitted to God's leadership:

As for me, I never lived, I was half dead, I was a rotting tree, until I reached the place where I wholly, with utter honesty, resolved and then re-resolved that I would find God's will, and I would do that will though every fiber in me said no, and I would win the battle in my thoughts. It was as though some deep artesian well had been struck in my soul and strength came forth.

When submission to God took place in Laubach's life, money, praise, poverty, and opposition became less significant. He realized these issues would be forgotten in a thousand years but a heart and mind set on continuous surrender to God would have eternal benefits. The dying to self that took place in Laubach's life was especially significant as he allowed God to take away any desire for fame. In the following entry in Laubach's diary, he believed God spoke to him concerning this issue:

My boy, forget all about your own fame. What real difference will it make in a thousand years whether you are known or unknown. You may be sure that you are just one of the countless millions who live and die almost unknown soon to be forgotten. So be the first to forget yourself. There is something of infinite importance going on around you daily. The question whether these people whom you touch shall or shall not know me is of infinite importance for it is your golden opportunity now.

Laubach found each day with God to be a new experience. "Now that I have discovered Him," he reflects, "I find that it is a continuous discovery. Every day is rich with new aspects of Him and His working." He experienced a relationship with God in such an in-depth manner that finding words to express it was very difficult. Laubach said it was difficult to convey to someone else the joy of having broken into the relationship of realizing God's nearness. He found, however, that it was necessary to express to others his experience with God. "I must talk about God, he concludes, "or I cannot keep Him in my mind. I must give Him away in order to have Him . . . What one gives one has, what one keeps to oneself one loses." Laubach established a pattern throughout his life of expressing to others the rich insights he obtained by experiencing the depths of God.

Laubach's Relationship With Jesus Christ

Laubach had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He was "born again." Laubach writes, "You must be born again. That must happen to each of us." For him a personal relationship with Jesus meant total surrender and obedience. "This is far, far more than being intellectually convinced. To say, 'Lord, Lord, I accept Thee as my Saviour' is not enough. It is unconditional surrender all the way down the line," states Laubach. To Laubach accepting Jesus meant to leave all and follow Him.

According to Laubach, when a person is born again, the desire for evil melts away, and a whole new lifestyle begins. Believing this to be the only hope for a transformation in the world's condition, Laubach comments on this conviction:

It is the miracle of rebirth within us that makes us so sure that eventually Christ can perform His miracles of rebirth for the world. What will give the world itself a new birth is an ever-increasing number of reborn people and nothing else holds out any hope without them.

He believed there was not anything that would save the world from its own evil except Christ.

After becoming a Christian, Laubach realized that the primary purpose in his life was to continually develop his relationship with Jesus. The essence of Christianity was cultivating the friendship of Jesus Christ. He felt one became more like Jesus as the relationship was nurtured. This involved allowing Jesus to take control both of the heart and priorities of life. Jesus was sometimes crowded out of people's lives because their hearts and hours were full of other things. He pushed out of people's minds because they would concentrate on their own selfish tasks. Laubach solved this dilemma by inviting Jesus into his heart to take complete control of his life. He prayed, "Come into my heart Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for thee. And when you are there take the old Frank Laubach out and bury him." Laubach wanted his old nature to die and the new nature to be controlled by Christ at all times. He wanted to be totally submissive to God.

Laubach realized that the most meaningful thing about walking with Jesus was His love and forgiveness. Christ touches people with a holy divine love, which far exceeds any other act of love. Laubach writes of Christ's love:

When I think of his love, and of the terrible price he paid for winning my love, and the shameful way in which I have ignored him, I feel like crying. O Christ, I am not worthy of this.

Laubach said the beautiful thing about his relationship with Christ was that Christ took care of his past failures. He indicates that the Bible gives assurance that although a person's sins are enormous, they can be forgiven. The worse a person is, the greater the miracle Jesus can perform if given a complete chance.

Laubach states his acceptance of the reality of the historical Jesus and his view of Jesus as his personal hope for eternity:

Unless Christ lives in us we cannot enter the kingdom of eternal heaven. We are in heaven only if Christ is in us, for he alone can enter heaven, taking us with him, if we and he are inextricably bound into one. We may live forever somewhere else, but it will not be in heaven unless Christ lives in us and we live in him. This is the New Testament teaching.

The intimate relationship Laubach had in his own heart with Jesus Christ was something he desired to share with others as he drew near the end of his earthly life. In a diary entry, Laubach records these thoughts:

This door of retreat to the inner Christ grows wider and better, and this is why I am writing my experience. There are many, there seem to me to be millions, there may be half the human race looking for the answer, which I

have found after 83 years. If so it will be far and away the most important thing I can leave behind me when I move over to the other shore.

In Laubach's spiritual journey, he found Christ to be a refuge in the storms of life. Laubach believed his experience with Christ could be an example for others to follow.

Laubach's Relationship with the Holy Spirit

Laubach writes of his appreciation for the role of the Holy Spirit:

God is, and always was, a Spirit, "The Holy." As a Spirit he came upon Mary and she conceived. When Jesus baptized in the river Jordon, he saw the Holy Spirit come upon him as a dove.

The Holy Spirit was significant as the motivating factor behind the growth of the early Christian church. This was referred to as Pentecost. Laubach brings application of this event:

Pentecost is the coming of the Holy Spirit into a man or into a group. When the Holy Spirit comes, there is the Church, and without the Holy Spirit, the Church is a dead shell.

The Holy Spirit produced incredible changes in the lives of Jesus' disciples after they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Laubach wrote of the impact of the Holy Spirit:

1. There was new, irresistible desire to tell others. It was too good to keep! They talked to anybody who would listen; their joy was infectious.
2. They had power. Everybody who heard them was convinced. Difficulties had folded up and blown away. Under the glory of the Holy Spirit they were irresistible.
3. They had courage. Seven weeks before, Peter had denied Jesus three times, during the trial. All the disciples had run away and hidden. After the Spirit came, these men were afraid of nothing
4. They were incredibly unselfish. Nobody needed anything, because these Spirit-filled followers of Jesus spent all their time and thought trying to be helpful to one another, and to everybody. It was the mightiest explosion of unselfish love that had ever appeared on the face of this earth!
5. Pentecost was an atomic explosion of the Spirit Jesus had said: "Ye shall be my witnesses to the ends of the earth." We shall never know how many hundreds of thousands of those Spirit-filled men went forth

through the deserts and on the Roman highways to tell the gladdest Good News the world ever knew.

According to Laubach, it was the will of God to meet every generation with a fresh Pentecost. He observes, "God, the Maker of the Worlds, God who took for himself a human form, God, who comes into us as Holy Spirit, is the same God yesterday, today, and forever." Laubach explains that, when a fresh Pentecost takes place, the results are similar to what occurred at the first Pentecost:

There has never been another Pentecost with a rushing wind and tongues of flame, because no two Pentecosts come in the same way. But there always is one thing in common with Pentecosts: a wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and a wonderful sense of repentance and forgiveness—and a new life. God used his own way, and it is always the best possible way, whenever we are open to receive.

A continuing outpouring of the Holy Spirit is possible, Laubach believes, if Christians' minds are full of Jesus, if they are of one mind, pray without ceasing and expect the Holy Spirit to come. Laubach was open to the manifestations of the Spirit and desired to see these occur among both educated and uneducated people. He comments on this belief:

We think these "manifestations of the Spirit" are produced by ignorance; perhaps they really depend upon surrender, faith, unity of spirit, generosity, utter penitence, and humility. Some of us are seeing unexpected and marvelous visitations of the Holy Spirit among highly educated people whenever they become humble and full of love and are united into "one accord."

Laubach describes an important relationship that he believed existed between the Holy Spirit, prayer and literacy education:

Prayer gives God a chance to set our hearts on fire with His Holy Spirit. This is essential, for when the volunteer teacher's heart stops burning, he will stop teaching.

Laubach realized that through prayer and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the hearts of literacy teachers would be set on fire with a desire to serve, and the lives of many illiterates could be transformed.

The Bible

The Bible played an important part in the development of the Christian disciplines in Laubach's life. "Reading the Bible," he confesses, "is different from reading other books. It leaps across 2000 years. It brings the Bible times up to this very minute. After a time of uncertainty, he defended the validity of the Bible and opposed

“higher criticism” that questioned the dependability of the Bible. Laubach speaks to those who questioned the truthfulness and importance of the apostle Paul’s letters:

It is therefore not only philosophically and scientifically sound, not only psychologically normal, not only the source of power and goodness and joy, but it is a grim world necessity, the only thing that can save us from our present world of madness.

Laubach believed that as people read the Bible, they should see it as a book, which is alive and exalts Jesus. “The highest value of the Bible comes when it makes us vividly aware that Jesus lives. The question is how we can read so as to help Jesus step forth from those chapters.” One of the reasons Laubach was concerned that people experience Jesus in their Bible reading is because he never wanted a devotional time to become dull rote. Laubach recorded this development in his devotional life:

I still remember the delight with which as a boy I first read the gospels and met Jesus face to face For over fifty years I have continued to read the Gospels and to make them exciting.

For Laubach, this was one of the most important triumphs of his religious life.

In Laubach’s daily Bible reading, variety was the key. He never made a rule about how much a person should read:

One page, or even one verse, might be enough at times. At other times I found it interesting to read through many pages, perhaps even the whole of Mark at one time.

In his devotional reading of the Bible, Laubach put particular emphasis on the gospels, which are the accounts of Jesus’ life and ministry:

I have read the four gospels over and over. I have also read all the translations that I have found. I don’t recommend them all, but I wanted to see what they were like.

Laubach discovered some innovative and creative ways to study the Gospels. “Once I write out the entire Gospel story following the arrangement suggested by William E. Barton and Goodspeed’s translation making it an autobiography of Jesus.” With this approach, Laubach let Jesus speak the gospel directly to him. He felt that if people believe the Bible is the word of God, then they should allow it to be just that. “Let Him talk to you right off the page,” he shares, “by turning ‘He’ and ‘Jesus’ to ‘I.’ If it gets dull, then a person can try reading it another way. I have found this way helpful.” Other approaches Laubach used included: reading the gospels with a picture of Jesus in front of him and then talking to Jesus about the reading, imagining

the Bible as a drama, and reading the gospel with a pen and paper ready to write down stimulating ideas as they arrived fresh from heaven.

Conclusion

For Frank Laubach, the Christian disciplines were a way of life. Prayer was foundational in his missionary and literacy work. Laubach realized the success he experienced in literacy education came not only as the result of his prayer, but also the prayers of thousands of other interested people.

Laubach stressed the importance of prayer for world leaders. He realized prayer could open the doors of people's hearts around the world so the will of God could take place. Laubach believed that only through the wisdom of God could the leaders of the world understand the complex problem of world literacy.

Laubach learned the art of practicing the presence of God and through this development influenced many people. He had an intimate relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. His relationship with Jesus Christ was not only the stabilizing factor for his walk on this earth, but also his hope for the future.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPACT OF THE MISSIONARY CALL

One of the most important facets of Frank C. Laubach's life was being a missionary. When Effa Seely and Frank were married in 1912, they chose as their field of foreign service the island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines. They based this choice on the great missionary and evangelistic needs of that country. Only after a struggle with selfish ambition did Laubach commit to the missionary call. He writes of this decision:

If I were in a battle and with no orders from my captain, I would be a coward if I fought where we were winning; I would be a man if I fought where our ranks were thin and we were losing the battle. We are in a battle for Jesus Christ, to conquer the world, and the ranks are thinnest and the battle hottest in the Orient. So we are going where we are needed the most.

After having served for a few years as a missionary in the Philippines, Laubach became convinced in his heart of the importance of his call to missions. Writing to friends in the United States, he explained this conviction:

There is a wonderful blessing, which comes from being in the midst of soul needs and being able to satisfy them. The greater the needs, the greater comes the spiritual reward.

According to Laubach, there is nothing in this world comparable to seeing a community become Christian and people's souls filled with the Holy Spirit. These were experiences which he had not seen take place in the United States. "When I was in America," he reflects, "I did not have these marvelous experiences, but here they are occurrences I expect everyday."

This zealotness became a driving force throughout Laubach's life. It served as a motivating factor for his contributions to adult literacy education. This chapter explores the extent of the relationship of the missionary and evangelistic call to Laubach's work in literacy education.

The Importance of Missions

The missionary movement, according to Laubach, was the best illustration of pure compassion in the past two thousand years. He comments on the great challenges, which the missionaries faced.

Missionaries went because they had a burden for saving souls; this impelled them to undergo great hardships and danger, and sometimes almost intolerable privations.

Laubach saw opportunities for mission work that in the past centuries had not been possible. Envisioning global evangelization, he asserts, "It has become possible in our day to reach the whole world for Christ. It has never been possible before." Laubach perceived God was building bridges in this century that were tying the world together. Many of these "bridges" did not exist in the first century. He states, "Before our very eyes God is tying the human race together. He is doing it with miraculous inventions." The inventions included such items as the telegraph, automobile, airplane, motion picture, radio, and television. It had become a new world of opportunity for missionary activity.

Another development Laubach believed strengthened the missionary movement was an openness among missionaries to meet the material needs of the people they ministered to. A spirit of compassion compelled missionaries to do something about the people's physical needs. Mission workers found that in many cases they could not reach people's eternal souls unless they ministered to their physical bodies. This involved feeding the hungry and healing the sick. Laubach saw countries in Africa and Asia become independent nations and then refuse to give entrance visas to missionaries unless they had the technical skills, which the nations needed. Missionaries with these skills could provide services to the countries as well as minister to the spiritual needs of the people.

According to Laubach, one of the most important activities a missionary could be involved in was literacy education. He gave the following reasons why missionaries should be concerned about literacy:

First, they want people to read the Bible and the hymnals and prayer books. Second, they found that by teaching people to read they win many friends. Third, they see that only through literacy can people escape from poverty and disease and misery.

It was Laubach's desire to share his missionary experiences in literacy education with others. Laubach gave God credit for the advancements taking place in "Each One Teach One":

It must seem to you like sheer audacity for me to have undertaken to help other countries with only my Philippine experience. But after all, God, who had planned it all, pushed me on when I hardly knew what I was doing and He is working out the future far ahead of us.

Literacy and Evangelism

Laubach strongly believed missionaries should engage in evangelism. He writes of the main task of evangelism as winning souls:

Preaching the gospel is a means of bringing men to surrender to Christ. If it fails to win men, then the missionary cannot say, as some do, "I have done my part, and now it is up to the sinner to repent." The missionary has not done his part, nor can he wash his hands of the sinner, until he has explored all the means of fishing for men.

Laubach explains his belief that literacy education should be an integral part of missionary evangelism:

While "Each One Teach One" began thirty-five years ago as a way to teach and win non-Christians in illiterate areas, it now begins to reveal immensely other possibilities as a means of witnessing for Jesus.

When this method is used the correct way, it gives the teacher an opportunity to witness about Jesus.

Since the Laubach approach to literacy education uses an army of untrained teachers, the teacher should have only one pupil. For effective witnessing, Laubach thought it was necessary to use easy to teach lessons. The teachers are asked to follow the lesson plan with exact precision. One of the cardinal principles is for the teacher to remain silent unless it is absolutely necessary to talk. The teachers should never use a sentence if a word will do and never use a word if silence will do. There should not be any wasted motions. Laubach felt this rigid approach was essential since the teacher plans to witness for Christ at the end of the lesson. The student is conditioned to listen to the witness eagerly and trustingly.

Laubach discovered that people can win others to Christ if they teach them lovingly and witness right after each lesson "while the iron is hot." For this to take place, the student and teacher must have a Christ-like relationship. He notes, "More important than any specific service is the genuine love and sympathy of the teacher. Illiterates know intuitively whether we love them as brother or whether we look down upon them."

Since many illiterates live under various forms of oppression, they are sensitive to patronizing attitudes on the part of the teacher. Laubach says this is the reason why the teacher should view the illiterate with an attitude of equality. Also, the teacher should sit down beside the illiterate as he or she teaches the student. IT is never proper to stand above them. The teacher should continually pray during the time of instruction that the learner have the greatest hour of his or her life. A humble and loving spirit in the teacher will always be received by the illiterate. Laubach realizes that this attitude is necessary for a successful literacy campaign. "The spirit of Christ-like sympathy," he explains, "is the one indispensable factor for a successful

literacy campaign, for it is the only spirit that carries on permanently, in spite of any obstacles.

Laubach believed it was necessary to see the illiterates as children of God for whom Christ died. He affirmed that God is seeking the illiterates and waiting for the teacher to win them to salvation. This is the method Christ used. Laubach remarks, "We need to practice the gospel which we preach as Christ did. They turn to us in throngs whenever we open their blind eyes." God is doing His part in the world and expecting Christians to enter the doors that are wide open.

According to Laubach, the perfect way to lead the blind lost world to Christ is to love them and act like Christ. The illiterates need to know that Jesus loves and sympathizes with them and that He can help them as He met the needs of the hungry, sick and blind in His own day. The teacher does not need to plead for Jesus, but present Him where the poor, lost, groping, despairing, starving multitudes can see Him in all His radiant love. It is important to present Jesus in a personal way so the people can get a close look at His love. Laubach acknowledged that the most convincing reason Christians should engage in "Each One Teach One" is that they can put Christ in the hearts of their students while putting knowledge in their heads.

Laubach learned from experience that the following characteristics must be included, or the "Each One Teach One and Win One for Christ" method would not be successful. It is an holistic approach to missionary and evangelistic activity. The essential parts are

1. The textbooks must be easy to teach and easy to learn.
2. The teaching must be exactly right; the teacher must follow the lesson closely; he must say only what is needed and must not talk too much.
3. The teacher must be radiant with Christ-like love and generous with praise for his student.
4. At the end of every lesson the student must feel triumphant, grateful, and eager for more.
5. For not over four minutes at the end of every lesson, "while the iron is out," the teacher must tell the student about the compassion of Christ, winningly and lovingly.
6. The teaching must continue until the student reads well.
7. After finishing the primer, the student will read The Story of Jesus, which has been well-graded and easy to follow from start to finish.

8. Other follow up “know how” books must be right. They must teach the student how to earn a better income and how to rise out of poverty. Education for better living is our second aim.
9. The teacher must introduce his student to employees and agencies, which will help him rise to a new economic level. The student will need other guidance, in getting health insurance, in making a wiser use of money, in active participation as a citizen, in better recreational opportunities for himself and his family.
10. The entire congregation must extend to the new student a warm welcome into the fellowship of the church family. He must feel that he is a real member of its loving fellowship.
11. Many members in each church must be trained, each one to teach one and witness in the spirit of Christ.
12. The entire program must be bathed in prayer. This teaching will not work unless the church members are on fire with the Holy Spirit. God is love. Prayer permits God to fill us with His love.

Laubach was convinced every Christian should believe in literacy evangelism. He felt God believed in this method more than anyone. Laubach says, “He who died for the desperate, illiterate, hungry multitudes and said He had compassion on them is not only with this movement, He started it.” Laubach went on to say that if this movement is of God, nothing can stop it, and if anything ever came from God, this movement did.

Referring to a banquet for Laubach literacy, which was held in the Billy Graham headquarters in Minneapolis on April 1, 1968, Laubach realized his organization’s role in world evangelization. “Suddenly I saw that it was appropriate for Laubach Literacy to be there! For our goal is exactly the same. It is to enthrone Jesus Christ in the hearts of people everywhere.” Literacy education must play a vital role in people teaching others and winning them to Christ.

Mobilizing the Church for Missions

A major part of Laubach’s missionary call was to help mobilize the Church for missions. “It is essential,” he says, “for the church to train and send men and women who can reveal the love of Christ in their hearts by relieving suffering and meeting needs as Jesus did.” This is followed by witnessing for Jesus and His Kingdom’s purpose.

According to Laubach, members of churches are slower in catching a world vision than those who are actively involved in missions. He explains this phenomena:

When we become internationally minded, looking upon all the people of the world as challenges to preach the gospel, we find teeming opportunities and the little money we can find is totally inadequate to cover even a fraction of these challenges. The real difference is that the missionaries and secretaries of the Boards have caught a world vision while the members of the churches are overwhelmingly small in their outlook, and as a rule have caught only a community vision or at most a national vision.

Laubach believed church members should be educated to accept an international vision, which is a vital part of becoming a world Christian. When mission boards fail to meet their financial demands, it means church members have not accepted the command of Jesus instructing believers to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person. Another concern is that a relatively small number of church members give a large percentage of the total money given to missions instead of the responsibility being spread evenly among all the members of the churches.

Churches, according to Laubach, should be concerned with an holistic view of missions. He commented that many of churches, which were more liberal in nature had accepted the theories of anthropologists who believed that religions evolve to suit the needs of each culture. Also, there was a growing movement among professors in the college educational system in America who taught that it was improper to interfere with the habits and cultures of other people. As these viewpoints were accepted, interest in foreign missions dwindled.

On the other hand, Laubach observed that conservative churches sent young men and women to the mission field with a blazing passion to preach the Gospel and win the world as quickly as they could. Many of these people, however, were not concerned with the physical and material needs of the people they witnessed to. What developed was a vicious cycle where churches were sending people to the mission field who did not believe in an holistic viewpoint of missions. Their emphasis was either on saving souls or preaching the "social gospel."

Laubach was concerned about churches who fear that technically trained missionaries take away the emphasis from evangelism. Laubach believed these fears were not based on facts:

I have not seen evangelism neglected where really consecrated Christians go out with technical skills. Tent making did not distract from St. Paul's evangelism. A skill can be a mighty asset for God.

Christ desires to be a part of every person's vocation and use his or her technical skills for God's glory.

Since there were many people within the churches who desired a way to serve Christ, Laubach envisioned churches as the logical place to begin an "Each One Teach One" literacy education program. "There needs to be department of 'Each

One Teach One' in every church, both at home and abroad." Churches need to be stirred and directed toward concerted action. He gave the following ways that church members could be challenged to become involved in literacy education and what would take place in those campaigns:

1. Make the members of the Church alert to this good cause. Talk to people about the subject and point out the need for literacy. Tell them that it is the duty of Christian people to help their brothers who are illiterate.
2. Have special prayer long before the campaign begins.
3. Preach to the people from the pulpit on "Adult Literacy and the Congregation."
4. Challenge Sunday schools, high schools, colleges, hospitals, young boys' clubs, girls' clubs, etc., to teach.
5. Train church members to teach the primer before the campaign starts.
6. Conduct classes whenever and wherever possible on "Each One Teach One."
7. Open a library. Let the people come to read. Have interesting materials available for reading.
8. Be writers. Write for new literates. Write booklets and pamphlets and interesting, fascinating articles.
9. Encourage church members to advertise and sell follow-up literature.
10. After the students finish the Primer, have a graduation ceremony.
11. Give them the second book, The Story of Jesus.
12. Tell them why you are teaching them: Tell them the Story of Jesus and the Resurrection. Jesus is still here. He said, "Lo, I am with you always." He is trying to help you to join His Father's family. We must speak to Jesus to offer our lives. Prayer is speaking with Him. Tell the story of the Prodigal Son. Tell them that it is good for the followers of Jesus to join the church so that everyone can help one another. Tell them that if they will join the church you will be glad to have them.

Laubach indicated that it was essential for literacy campaigns to insist that the teaching of the lowest class of people available remain on the conscience of the church. He believed the church should search for different kinds of illiterates,

including illiterate adults of all races, foreign people who cannot speak or read English, dropouts from school, children who are likely to drop out of school and need remedial reading, retarded children and adults in institutions, prisoners, and juvenile delinquents.

Laubach believed the Church has the machinery and personnel to succeed in this vast missionary effort. He gives several reasons why the church must assume the leading role in an "Each One Teach One" literacy campaign. First, it is "real" Christianity. This type of Christianity is not only directed upward, but outward. Second, this is a way that the remainder of the world can be won to Christ. Third, the Church has men and women who are called to go and help the world. Fourth, many Americans believe in free enterprise with private individuals doing all they can do, with help from the government only when or where necessary. Fifth, the only profit the Church seeks is the salvation of souls. Sixth, Christians need this service for their own soul's ministry. Seventh, millions of people want to see Christianity engaged in an all-out world action. Laubach concluded that the Christian Church is ripe for this bold missionary challenge.

Laubach warned that the Christian church must face the missionary challenge of illiteracy or accept the dangerous consequences of inaction. He declares, "If the Christian church and other religious movements fail to do the job, it will be done without any religious influence. Indeed, it is pretty sure to be antireligious." The Christian Church has the Spirit of Christ who gives power to serve and win the illiterate masses and, in doing so, shape the future of the world by winning the world to Christ.

The Importance of the Bible in Missions and Literacy Education

The Bible, according to Laubach, must occupy an essential role in missions and literacy education. He reviews the historical role the Bible has played in the development of universal education. The Jewish people were the first group who taught all its people to read, so they could study the Mosaic Law. The Jewish law provided justice to one hundred percent of the people. The first century Christians took this idea beyond the confines of Palestine and influenced the Roman Empire. The Bible was carried around the Mediterranean, Europe and then across the Atlantic Ocean.

Laubach believed the Bible was concerned primarily with the divine rights of the common person, not the divine rights of kings. This provided a reason for the common person to read the Bible. Also, the common person's desire to read the Bible was the catalyst that began Western civilization's march toward universal education. The invention of the printing press was a breakthrough as well as the Protestant Reformation, which followed. The prevailing theology of the Reformation was that people had both a right and responsibility to read the Bible for themselves and not have to depend upon another person's interpretation of the

Bible. For this to take place, it was necessary for the common person to learn to read.

Laubach gave credit for the prominent focus on literacy to Protestantism:

The present new emphasis upon literacy stemmed from Protestantism. Protestant missionaries in all but a few instances originated the lessons now in use, and stimulated the campaigns, which they did not themselves conduct.

Often after missionaries worked on a literacy campaign, governments became convinced of its value, then took the work over and made it an official government program.

According to Laubach, the Bible is the most revolutionary document in the world. He writes, "Karl Marx's manifesto is nothing compared to the Bible." The Bible goes to the root of greed and oppression and says that it is wrong. The Bible acknowledges that every person is infinitely precious in the sight of God. Jesus Christ came that every person could have a meaningful life in Him.

Laubach believed missionaries carried a Bible that contained social dynamite. He writes, "Christ taught us that all men are children of a Father who wants them to live a rich happy life. Modern democracy grew out of the teaching of Jesus." The Gospels contain good news for poor and helpless people. Laubach said, "Whenever you see literacy, you know the Spirit of Jesus lay behind it."

Laubach saw literacy and Bible translation as related tasks. Addressing the relationship, he writes, "Perhaps it would be better to call them the two legs on which the Bible must walk into every mind and heart on earth." Even though he believed in the importance of Bible translation, Laubach felt the difficult task of translation was progressing at a more rapid pace than teaching people to read the Bible. He gave the following reason for this large discrepancy: "There came to be a feeling that making people literate was a rather secular job, while translating the Bible was unquestionably sacred."

Although there had been magnificent progress in Bible translation and in many instances more progress than in literacy training, Laubach indicated that literacy educators needed to appreciate the Bible. He also felt it was important that those who translate the Bible understand the needs of the illiterate person. "Everybody agrees," he states, "in India, Korea and in the Arabic-speaking countries that the translation of the Bible has been made far too difficult for the masses." Many difficult words were used which common people could not understand. "The translators might as well have used English or Greek words, as far as the masses are concerned." Laubach believed the answer to this problem was the development of easier to read versions of the Bible the masses could understand.

Christian Literature in Missions

In addition to the need for versions of the Bible that would be easier to read, Laubach stressed the importance of the preparation of Christian literature. He saw that one of the biggest needs in the world was the promotion of Christian literature. When a person learns to read, there is an immediate desire to find additional reading material. This need can be met either in a positive or negative manner with many people perhaps fulfilling the desire in a bad way. "Every time I pass a railroad newsstand and see the books sold there, I shudder to think of the possibilities for evil in literacy. It is good only if people read good things." On the other hand, if evil literature is used, there are many dangerous possibilities, which face the new literate.

Since literacy opens a person's mind to new ideas, it is necessary to take advantage of the immense hunger for reading. Literature must be developed that is full of the love and faith of Jesus Christ. Laubach thought Christian publishers should be challenged to produce, publish and distribute Christian literature designed for the remote areas of the world.

Laubach was also concerned that Christian publishers promote literature to meet the special needs of new literates. He expresses this in the following statement:

They have to produce an entirely new kind of literature, for new literates can understand only easy words and short sentences. It must be cheap, for these people speak a thousand tongues. It must be carried from house to house and sold to the people, for they have no bookstores and in many places they have no post offices. The Church must pay this bill, for we cannot expect Governments to pay for Christian literature.

It became obvious to Laubach that literacy education and Christian literature serve a strategic function both for missions and the improvement of the world's condition. He said this was a battle everyone must participate in, stating, "A few cannot win this battle. It must be a people's battle, writing, or printing, or distributing or financing the campaign." A necessary part of the battle is the utilization of Christian literature. As illiterate masses' minds are opened, they should be filled with Christian literature that is life changing.

The Open Door

Laubach was convinced the greatest open door in history was available for missionary activity, especially through literacy education:

The foreign governments need our help in lifting and satisfying the masses so much that they will permit us to enter their countries and teach their people, and witness that we are doing it because we learned it from Christ.

When this takes place, a Christ-like example is modeled. “The only way to save the world for Christ,” Laubach comments, “and for what we call our ‘free way of life,’ is to set the world an example.”

The world, according to Laubach, has no corners or limits. Wherever there are teachers of high integrity ready to lend a helping hand, the people listen to them. The people are open to listen when they hear they can have a meaningful life. Literacy has a role to play in leading people to meaningful living, but it should never been seen as an end in itself. Laubach writes, “Literacy is not an end in itself, or it would be a dead end. Learning to read is a door to a more abundant life. It unlocks the Bible and other Christian literature.” This door of opportunity is opened by acts of love and kindness. When this takes place, there are amazing results. Laubach acknowledges this great opportunity:

If we resolve, separately and all together, to urge a war of amazing, astonishing kindness, all the devils of the worlds will crumble before it, and the Spirit of Christ will be all to all.

Conclusion

The contributions of Frank C. Laubach made to literacy education were influenced by his missionary call. He believed the missionary movement was the best illustration of pure compassion in the past two thousand years. For Laubach, one of the most important activities that a missionary could be involved in was literacy education. Through literacy education, people escape from poverty, disease and misery.

Laubach thought literacy education should always be an integral part of missionary evangelism because it revealed many possibilities as a means of witnessing for Jesus. Laubach believed the Church should be mobilized to train and send men and women as literacy missionaries. If this is to take place, churches must develop a worldview that acknowledges the importance of stressing both evangelism and meeting the social needs of the people.

Literacy evangelism is followed by instructing the new literates to read the Bible and Christian literature. Laubach stressed that every literacy campaign be full of the love and faith of Jesus Christ. Laubach was convinced there was an open door for literacy education, which God had opened, and no man could close.

Chapter IV

CONCERN FOR CHRISTIAN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Frank Laubach's involvement in literacy education was part of his overall concern for Christian social responsibility. He believed in an holistic view of ministry based on the teaching and practice of Jesus Christ. Laubach valued the importance of his literacy campaigns but only if they expressed the ministry of Christ. "The world thinks it wants technical skill," he comments, "but it needs the character and power of Jesus Christ more than it needs skill. It needs both, but it needs Christ more."

Laubach, stressing that only Christ could save the world, writes of this conviction.

Knowledge will not save the world. Only Christ can do that. So the very success of this tremendous effort to lift the world depends upon sending out men full of the love of Jesus Christ.

He felt the work of teaching illiterates took place most effectively in the atmosphere of strong Christian devotion.

For Laubach, living the Christian life in a daily experience with God was more important than arguing over opposing theological viewpoints. He explains this concept:

I have met many people who agree with me in theology but who seem to have no religious experience, and on the other hand, I met people who seemed to me to be altogether wrong in their theological views but who have a deep religious life. The greatest question to ask of any person is whether they have found God. No doubt the devils have a right theological view but they are not in touch with God and therefore we cannot call them religious. While I will be glad to see men and women with the right point of view toward the Bible and theology, yet I do not insist that they shall agree with me on these things, but I do insist that they know how to pray, to earnestly endeavor to do the will of God wherever that will may be.

Laubach believed the will of God included a social concern for humanity. This was a driving factor behind Laubach's literacy efforts. He attempted to follow the pattern established by Jesus. Referring to Jesus, Laubach says, "Every day, He was out on the road hunting for people who needed help, and helping them whenever He found them." Jesus lived this way and insisted that His disciples follow His example. Laubach was convinced this type of compassion could only be found in Jesus:

We may truthfully say that compassion like that of Jesus was born on Christmas Day. One fails to find it in any human being or in any religion before the days of Jesus.

Laubach believed when one studies the life and teaching of Jesus, it becomes evident that He has the answer. Since Jesus was concerned for the whole person, He devoted His entire life to permanent cures. Jesus never did a job halfway but completely healed body, mind, and soul. He came to lift mankind out of despair and sin. Jesus always practiced what He preached by engaging in practical acts to relieve those in misery. It was this powerful loving kindness that convinced Jesus' disciples that their teacher was the Son of God.

Because illiterates were people for whom Christ died, Laubach was also concerned for them. He reflects on Christ's compassion for the illiterates:

He seeks them, waits for us to win them. This is His method. While they were blind He opened their eyes. Then when the multitude gathered, He saved their souls.

This was the method Christ used and Laubach tried to follow. For example, he states, "We need to practice the gospel which we preach as Christ did. They turn to us in throngs whenever we open their blind eyes."

Laubach states that one of the greatest needs of education was for it to influence the heart as well as the mind. For this to take place, the student must study the life of Jesus Christ. Laubach felt illiterates should be taught to read and then learn about the compassion of Jesus.

Literacy campaigns were an effective way, according to Laubach, to see the ministry and compassion of Jesus Christ take place. He explains how this is accomplished:

A literacy campaign puts the teaching of the lowest class of people on the conscience of the church. It keeps reminding the church of the commands of Christ; it offers a type of service that everyone who reads can perform. It breaks the shell of the church's segregation from the community. When members reach out to help others, they glorify Christ. Then the church people begin to set the kind of example in mutual helpfulness that the church was meant to furnish.

Laubach saw tremendous potential for the Church to engage in literacy campaigns. HE believed there was enough machinery, personnel, and money in the churches to accomplish the vast education of the world's illiterate. According to Laubach, Christians have over half the world's wealth. If Christians refused to give their money and time to help the world, Laubach considered them unfit for the Kingdom of God. The Christian church should take the lead in literacy campaigns because it can be involved in both soul and world saving.

The Christian church must be willing to suffer if there are to be real changes in the world situation. Laubach writes, "What the Church lacks is that strange combination of radiancy and pain. She is taking good care of herself. The Church needs her heart to be broken." Laubach thought it was important that Christians understand why there is suffering in the world. Seeing suffering as an opportunity for service, he explains this belief:

It is impossible to have compassion unless there is pain. So God puts pain and need into this evil world so that we who follow Christ may have real suffering on which to direct our compassion.

Laubach was convinced that Christians needed to have a correct understanding of God's Kingdom in order to row in their concern for social responsibility. He explains, "The Kingdom of God is not individual. It's made up of individuals, . . . just like the body's made up of cells and yet it's a total personality." He says the community aspect of God's Kingdom should not be discounted:

The Kingdom of God is social—it's not only within us, but it's also between us. It's all these beautiful things Paul describes such as love, joy, peace, meekness and kindness.

The greatest people in God's Kingdom, according to Laubach, are those who have done the will of God. Laubach saw the judgment of God facing America if it did not change from an inward to an outward focus. "To save your own souls," he comments, "you must save the world. Not only is the wrath of the hungry people piling up against America, but so is the wrath of God." The terrible imbalance of the world's wealth with so large a portion in America, while half the world is hungry and illiterate, pleases neither God nor mankind.

Laubach believes that Christians were facing the biggest opportunity they had ever faced. This included becoming involved in Christian social action. He sensed that many people had a narrow view of what Christian social action actually meant. He writes, "Social action has often been interpreted as meaning protests usually against the government for private agencies, and demanding that alien people reform." However, Laubach believed literacy education was an appropriate example of Christian social action. "Literacy is both evangelism and social action," he explains, "which is exactly what Jesus practiced as he went about doing good and preaching the Gospel."

The concern for Christian social action and responsibility led Laubach to accept the designation of being a "do-gooder." He comments, "Following Christ meant that I should try to help the world; that I should be what many now call a do-gooder." He saw this as a vital part of his life purpose:

My life purpose could not be to gouge this old earth for myself but to do all the good I could. That was and still is the clear reason for living, for all who follow Christ.

Laubach offers a definition of what he considered to be a “genuine live Christian.” It includes living the Christian life in deed and not in word only:

1. A genuine live Christian gives a portion of his time to helping one underprivileged person in his own parish or community to rise out of illiteracy and out of poverty up to a more abundant life. HE becomes a big brother and tutor-friend.
2. He also gives a generous portion of his money to aid some expert missionary or native Christian in a foreign land, while that representative trains the native Christian to each one teach one and witness for Christ.

Laubach was convinced that if enough people became “live Christians,” the world could be saved from despair and self-destruction. When he spoke about the world condition, the discussion came to a declaration that each person is individually responsible, along with other Christians, for saving the world. He addresses the issue:

The man who will save the world is wearing your clothes. Not you alone, of course, but you and millions who will do what you should do. The woman who will save the world is wearing your clothes. Not you alone, but you and millions of other women like you.

The concern for social responsibility was an issue in which Laubach thought Christians needed to be informed. He refers to American Christians saying, “They are eager for something Christian they can do for the world besides wringing their hands in helpless frustrations.” He observed that many Christians in America acted like hypocrites, only pretending to follow Jesus Christ, and wanting someone else to meet the great needs of the world. The will of God, however, includes a battle for the future of the world, which must involve every Christian. To Laubach, this could mean dying for the people of the world. He shares, “The cross of Christ reminds us that the noblest deed of love is to lay down one’s life for others.” The only way the world could be saved is for people to follow the example of Jesus and live a sacrificial life for others.

The Christian Answer to the Threat of Communism

Laubach was concerned about the threat of Communism. He was involved with this issue during a large part of his life. He wrote several articles and essays responding to this threat both from the perspective of being an American citizen and a world Christian. He believed Americans had been in a war with the Communists even

when they did not realize it. Sometimes it had been a hot war and sometimes cold, but it had always involved a war of contrasting ideas.

The Communist threat also presented a war without rules. Laubach contends, "When the Communists set out to conquer the world in 1920, they knew it was war and they fought with every weapon available. There were no rules, no forbidden holds in their war." The Communists made alliances that were useful to them. Depending on the situation, they used a lie, a smile, or an action, if it met their needs. According to Laubach, the only morality that the Communists utilized was to win at any cost. He was quick to note that the Communists did not believe in or follow Christian ethical standards:

They are ruthless realists and pragmatists. What advances Communism for them is 'right.' Anybody who opposes them they call a traitor and send him to Siberia or shoot him.

Laubach saw the defection to Communism of millions of people in Asia, Africa and Latin America as not only a possibility, but a grim, dreadful fact. He concluded that half the world is hungry, angry, desperate, rebellious and discouraged. They are looking for a hand to life them out of their problems. Bombs and missiles are not able to satisfy those great needs. According to Laubach, many hungry and illiterate people see Communism as their only hope.

Even though Laubach was opposed to the Communist agenda, he emphasized the importance of Americans remembering their own national history:

In 1776, Americans threw off the oppression of King George of England, threw out kings, and became a republic. Our heart ought to beat in sympathy with oppressed people whether in Hungary or Algeria.

The French followed the American example when the oppression of Louis XIV became too great and the aristocracy was overthrown. Because of hunger and oppression, the people of Russia turned on their Czar and killed twenty million of the aristocracy and wealthy class. The Communists took control with a political ideology that in essence attempted to bridge the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots."

To Laubach, Communism involved more than a political philosophy: "Communism is a religion, world religion and a world crusade." He saw both Communist and non-Communist leaders such as Hitler and Stalin as being false Messiahs. Laubach challenges, "We must carry the true Messiah to the world adequately and swiftly. Hitler and Stalin both rose because of the sin of failing our Christ." Laubach believed the Communists wanted the masses to think Communism liberated those who toiled for their basic existence. He asserts, "This new hope did not begin with the Communists. It began with Jesus Christ."

Since Communism, according to Laubach, is a philosophy that is both political and religious in nature, America must respond in ways other than military action. He writes, "The only way for America to be safe from annihilation is for America to become Christian toward the rest of the world." Becoming Christian toward the world involves taking the initiative to reach out in love and meet human need:

I mean we must reach out and help our world neighbors, for the world has fallen among thieves, which have stripped it and wounded it and left it bleeding and half dead. It needs a present-day Good Samaritan.

Laubach writes of his belief that the attitudes of people were an obstacle to peace with the Communists:

Those bombs and missiles are not the real danger. It is the minds and hearts of men that are the danger. The bombs and missiles will not be made if men's hearts and minds are right.

Laubach wanted people to understand that stopping Communism would not be the answer to all of the world's problems. He expands this thought:

If every Communist died tonight, there would still be the terrible imbalance and this fierce determination of the disinherited four-fifths to come out of their misery.

It is impossible to cope with Communism until one understands it as a result of desperation, injustice and hunger. The dangers of Communism will not be alleviated until the oppression in the world is corrected.

Another way that Laubach suggested dealing with the Communists was to subvert them with a higher and better way of making a new world. This would involve Christians practicing what they preach. He exhorts them further:

We teach it in Sunday Schools, preach it in pulpits, sing it in our hymns, but we do not practice it. The moment we did practice it we would easily, swiftly, surely overcome communism. Our pretense fools nobody except ourselves.

For this attitude to change, the American Church must capture the "fire" that breathed life into the early Church. "If we had the fire of the early Church right after Pentecost, which captured the entire Roman empire in two centuries, "Laubach explains, "we could subvert, and convert the world to Christianity."

According to Laubach, if Christians are to practice what they preach in relating to the Communists, they must follow the principles of Christ:

We say that the way of Christ is the only hope of saving the world. We say that every human being is infinitely precious in God's eyes. We say that we believe that good ends can come only by right means and never by wrong means. We say that God helps those who cooperate with Him.

Laubach believed all of these statements were valid and important, but if they were not implemented in real life, then they were worthless.

Laubach taught that Christians should not attempt to follow the example of the Communists, but instead to show them love. He writes, "Getting as bad as the Communists only piles up more and more of this intolerable hatred and fear." Love toward the Communists must not only be in word, but in deed and truth. He believed American Christians have a great advantage over the Communists if they go and do Christian deeds among the oppressed people. Communists are only able to make promises to help people after a revolution is successful. Christians, on the other hand, can offer assistance to people in need without participating in a violent revolution. He felt Christians should provide the leadership in challenging governments to act in Christ-like love.

Christian isolationism was a prevailing attitude that Laubach criticized. He did not personally feel safe until all of the world came to accept Jesus as Savior. Laubach records these thoughts:

We have got to persuade men everywhere and not only in America, to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Even if we all became Christian in America we would be threatened by annihilation from abroad unless they come Christians.

It was evident to Laubach that many Christians in America were patriotic, but not Christ-like. "Now we are shocked into realizing that our neglect of other lands was a sin," he regrets, "and that our sin has found us out."

Laubach saw many Christians being deceived by an old saying, "Charity begins at home." According to Laubach, this saying is not in the Bible but was first spoken by a pagan Roman named Terence. Christ, on the other hand, gave the principle that charity begins where it is needed most. People from all races should be considered neighbors. Since the world is becoming smaller as a result of advanced communication and technology, each nation must work together as a neighbor.

According to Laubach, God was using Communism to wake up America:

I believe that God is using Communism itself to say to us "I could not take this any longer." He could not let this nation think that it was the most Christian nation on earth because it had accumulated half the world's wealth and allowed half the world to go to bed hungry every night.

Laubach was convinced that American officials made a mistake by analyzing the world situation only in terms of strategy and the possibility of losing countries to Communism. He thought many government officials did not have an understanding of the horrors, which he had experienced. "Over there," he reminisces, "I heard the groans of hungry men and the moans of starving children. I saw them starving to death. You do not know that horror."

The illiterate millions, according to Laubach, could be won if Christians would only love and help them. They are waiting for anyone to love them. He expresses, "The illiterate hungry masses reach up hands asking for help. Anybody, Communists or Americans, or anybody, who takes the hand can have them." Through many years of experience, Laubach saw the results of loving the hungry masses. He reflects, "I have seen them dance and yell with joy when they learned to write their names. They will die for you!" He shared one interesting example:

I remember in Yassaland a group of women after a lesson dancing down the aisle of the church shaking hands with everybody, laughing and crying with joy at the same moment.

Laubach believed it was important to understand the psychology of the oppressed people around the world. The Communists understand this psychology and offer the people hope, especially through education. Laubach writes that many of the oppressed people have a strong belief in education:

They want to be recognized as our equals. They believe that nothing can lift them, but education, and how right they are! So their one passion is to learn what we know, so they can be like we are. They are education mad! Unless we offer to help them with their education we shall lose them.

Laubach asserts that education is an opportunity which Christians can use to counter the Communist threat:

Every illiterate wants to learn to read because he knows the reason he is hungry and sick and easily swindled is because he is illiterate and helpless. So when we teach them we win their eternal gratitude.

When the illiterates are assisted by a voluntary literacy program, they are grateful. If they are not helped, they are disappointed. Laubach saw an open door for literacy education in the countries outside the iron curtain.

They don't even object when we make them Christian while we teach them, for the rulers have seen that the Communists are always plotting to seize the government by violence.

He indicates how he would witness to the new literates:

Jesus sent me here to help you read. You and your children and grandchildren will rise to a new level and will never need to suffer from hunger again. Jesus is your friend. He wants to do many more things for you if you take Him as your Master. I tried it and he is wonderful.

Laubach found it is as easy to encourage people to love Jesus as it is to teach them to read. He believes the only approach to achieve world peace is the Christian way:

So the way to save the two-thirds of the world from making a fatal mistake is to help them help themselves up the peaceful way, the Christian way. We must begin to wage a war of amazing kindness.

Laubach concludes that it would be impossible to lose this war if everyone did all they knew how to do for Christ. He wanted Christians to be able to stand before God one day and hear the following, "You did the best you knew how to do to save the world . . . For inasmuch as you did it to them you did it to me."

Governments around the world welcomed Laubach to help lead literacy education campaigns. He felt the main focus should be on the principles of Christ-like living. "An educated world without the moral restraints of Christian character would of all things be most terrifying in the atomic age," he writes. Since the government is restricted from teaching religion, Christians are left with the challenge to spread the message of Christ.

Laubach supported the Peace Corps but thought it should have been a "Prince-of-Peace Corps":

I am a little ashamed that a Roman Catholic President had to do what the Church should have done. It ought to be a Prince-of-Peace Corps, for the people who are really going out there will save these people. . . . The Church must start in a large way, an adequate way, a new missionary program that will not only go and preach Christ, but will also practice Christ. Teach Christ, and teach the people how to help themselves, so that they can have a better life. The moment you do that, the nations want you, the masses want you; and the doors are wide open.

Laubach warns that Christians must be awakened if they are to survive:

If free men are to survive on earth they must be awakened now. . . . We must go from our knees to the task empowered with a God consciousness of supreme destiny.

He believed the survival of the free world was at stake. However, he challenged people not to wring their hands in desperate frustration because there was an answer to this dilemma. It involved a Christian way of life. Laubach writes, "Christian churches are the strongest foes of communism. Therefore, they are eager

for us to come in and help. We teach love instead of hate.” A third World War must never come. It would not occur, according to Laubach, if Christian people in America provide the answer to the Communist threat.

Money and Christian Responsibility

Laubach believed one important aspect of life where Christians should show maximum stewardship is the area of finances. He relied heavily on the teachings of Jesus as the foundation for his theology. He believed the teaching of Jesus as clearly stated, so Christians could follow His example. “If one reads the teachings of Jesus carefully,” explains Laubach, “the answer is plain as day. It is always the same answer, and it is thrilling beyond our wildest expectations.”

Laubach asserts that Jesus’ teaching in the area of finances is thrilling only if a person does what He says. Laubach summarizes his thoughts on the central teaching of Jesus on money:

Whatever you do to help people who are in want and misery is laid up as your treasure in heaven. On the other hand, what you refuse to do to help people in want and misery is recorded on the red side of the ledger account, against you on the day of judgment, and this can keep you out.

Laubach believed in a paradox, which he termed “multiplying by giving.” When things are given away, they are actually multiplied. He explains, “He that tries to keep Jesus to himself, cannot keep Jesus.” Laubach believed people did not really have Jesus in their hearts unless they were willing to give Him away. This spiritual concept had material implications. Laubach used the example found in the Bible of the rich young ruler. The ruler came to Jesus desiring to be His disciple. The instruction that Jesus gave the ruler was to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor. After this was accomplished, the man could return and be a follower of Jesus. The rich young ruler walked away disappointed because he was very rich. Laubach believed that unless Christians follow Jesus’ instruction to the rich young ruler, they would not inherit eternal life.

Laubach clarified that it would be a mistake to leave the impression Jesus only asks for a person’s money. He writes, “He asks also our selves, our thoughts, our time, our way of life.” Laubach realized, however, that one of the greatest areas of difficulty that kept people from becoming a disciple of Jesus was selfishness in his own life. Addressing this issue, he writes, “What I believe is that what you give to help solve the problems of the poor is your treasure awaiting you in heaven and guaranteeing that you will get there.” He thought if people had a different idea, they did not receive it from Jesus.

The “complete Christian,” according to Laubach, is a person who is interested in needs that are local, but also international. Laubach writes that it is important for

the complete Christian to become both personally and financially involved in meeting those needs:

In other words he has two feet, one at home and the other abroad. He will help support one or more missionaries in some far country who will work with native Christians to help lift needy people and lead them to Christ. At home he will do this himself. He will be his own missionary. At home he will spend his time helping and winning people, abroad he will spend his money. At home his arm will reach down, abroad it will reach far out.

Laubach was convinced of the tremendous potential American Christians had if they would take seriously Jesus' call for individual spiritual and financial responsibility. He shares his vision:

Through renewed faith in our own spiritual resources, and increased confidence in our ability to give and work, we can be channels through whom Christ can reach across oceans and link all races in brotherly cooperation.

Laubach desired that the kindness of Christ replace the suspicion, selfishness, cruelty and greed of this age. He knew it would not be possible unless Christians accepted Jesus' challenge of financial responsibility.

Conclusion

The life of Frank C. Laubach was devoted to Christian social responsibility. He believed the life and teaching of Jesus should be the norm in demonstrating compassion to the world. Laubach was convinced only Christ could save the world. Laubach attempted to follow the example of love established by Jesus in his ministry with illiterates. According to Laubach, the work of teaching illiterates was carried out most effectively in the atmosphere of strong Christian devotion.

Laubach believed that the world could be saved from despair and self-destruction by "complete Christians." He saw Christian social responsibility as the answer to the Communist threat. Laubach thought Christians have every advantage over the Communists if they will go into the world and demonstrate love in action. This required both personal involvement and financial responsibility. Laubach was convinced the only hope for a change in the world's condition was Christian social responsibility.

Chapter V

LAUBACH'S LEGACY

The legacy of Frank Charles Laubach will continue to be influential for many years to come. As a result of the development of the "Each One Teach One" approach to literacy education, millions of people learned to read and enjoyed a more meaningful life. His method continues to merit the attention of educators around the world.

The contributions that Laubach made to literacy education cannot be separated from his Christian development. It was through his seeking after God in a deep intimate way that the "Each One Teach One" method originated. His life changed from that of an ordinary missionary who was performing his religious duty, to a man whose life was consumed with practicing the presence of God. He wanted every minute of his day to involve communication with God. As Laubach developed in his relationship with God, he experienced the miracle of "Each One Teach One" and saw many of the new literates accept the Christian faith.

Laubach's example in life was Jesus Christ and he accepted Jesus' holistic approach to ministry. Following the example of the compassion of Jesus, Laubach devoted his life to alleviating hunger, despair, and illiteracy from the earth. He was convinced literacy education took place most effectively in a Christian environment of kindness and compassion. For Laubach, literacy education was an extension of his Christianity. The teaching of illiterates exemplified the present day ministry of Jesus in a troubled world.

Literacy education, according to Laubach, was not to become an end in itself. Knowledge was important, but if it was not influenced by Christian values, it would cause greater problems for the new illiterates. Laubach realized literacy education was dangerous, especially if the new literates turned to Communism or developed a habit of reading materials that was evil in nature.

Laubach worked to mobilize Christians and the Church to accept their biblical mandate to help make the world a better place to live. He believed the Christian Church was ripe for the bold challenge literacy education provided. The Church had both the personnel and financial resources to engage in a war against illiteracy, hunger and despair. During Laubach's lifetime, his vision of a movement by the Church to stamp out the evil of literacy was not fulfilled as he desired. The challenge remains for the contemporary Church to lead the crusade for literacy education.

It is sometimes asked if one person can make a difference in the world. Is it possible to light a candle in the world of darkness that will really result in a positive change? Frank Laubach's life answers that question in the affirmative. Even though he was not completely successful, there were advancements made in the social and spiritual

climate of the world. The world will never be the same because of the life and ministry of Frank Laubach.



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