



Letters by a Modern Mystic: Excerpts from Letters Written at Dansalan, Lake Lanao, Philippine Islands, to His Father

Frank Charles Laubach

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Frank C. Laubach (Sept. 2, 1884-June 11, 1970) was a Christian evangelical missionary and mystic known as "The Apostle to the Illiterates." In 1929, after fourteen years of successful teaching, writing, and administration in Cagayan and Manilla, he pursued his long-standing ambition of settling among the fierce Moros, a Muslim tribe on Mindanao. There, in the province of Lanao, he underwent a remarkable series of experiences of God and simultaneously developed a technique for reducing the Moro language to writing with symbols closely correlated to their spoken words. This technique not only made it possible to teach them to read in only a few hours but also permitted them to teach others immediately. In 1928, two years before his transforming experiences, Laubach found himself profoundly dissatisfied. He then realized in 1930 that after fifteen years as a Christian minister he was still not living his days "in minute-by-minute effort to follow the will of God." He determined at that time to seek to begin lining up his actions with the will of God every few minutes. His confidants at the time told him he was seeking the impossible. Undeterred, he began to try living all his waking moments in "conscious listening to the inner voice, asking without ceasing, 'What, Father, do you desire said? What, Father, do you desire done this minute?'" He believed that this was exactly what Jesus did every day. "Letters by a Modern Mystic," first published in 1937, is a compilation of excerpts from letters that Laubach wrote to his father. The tremendous results of this experiment in living in moment-by-moment communion with God are found in the narrative of these letters. Dr. Laubach is probably best known for his work to address adult illiteracy in the world. He conceived a simple method of instruction that permitted even the most disadvantaged people in the world not only to learn to read but also to be able to teach others. "Each One Teach One" became the slogan for this instructional program, which is credited with equipping over one hundred million people with the ability to read. On September 2, 1984, the United States Postal Service issued a stamp commemorating the 100th anniversary of Laubach's birth.

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