

## A father forgives his son's murderer

BY CHRIS MILLER

EDMONTON (CUP) — When Dale Lang found himself embroiled in what he called "every parent's nightmare" after his son was killed in the Taber high school shooting last April, he admits he felt anger — but only for a moment.

The University of Alberta Convocation was nearly full last week as people listened to Lang tell his story and speak of the importance of learning to forgive others.

His son Jason was killed in a shooting at W.R. Meyers High School on April 28, 1999, only a week after 13 people were gunned down by a pair of armed students at Columbine High School in Colorado.

Lang and his wife had just returned home shortly after 1 p.m. when they received a call telling them their son Jason was in the hospital.

The two parents had been out shopping for a present for their oldest son's birthday, and, as they drove to the hospital, they had no idea that one son's birthday would be the day another of their sons would die.

"In a million years, no one could have convinced me, even after [the Columbine shooting], that my son would have been shot in the hallway of his high school," Lang told the audience.

When he and his wife learned their son didn't survive

the wound from a bullet that struck him near his heart, Lang said he felt "a twinge of anger."

The anger quickly dissolved into sorrow.

"As the day progressed," he recalled, "nothing ever came back in terms of anger into my heart."

Despite the tragedy of losing his son, Lang spoke evenly and softly as he related the events of that day.

He told the audience that his Christian faith has helped him and his family through their loss.

"God has been gracious to us all through this time," he said. "He's been able to hold us up so we don't fall apart."

Lang believes part of the reason there was a shooting at the Alberta high school was because the shooter had been taunted and ridiculed while he had been a student there, filling him with hurt and anger that eventually exploded into violence.

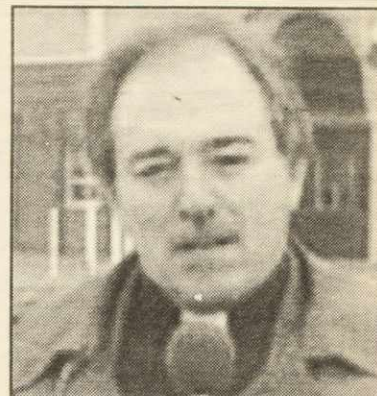
"[Anger] is a place of being trapped. If we try to stuff it down inside ourselves it will fester there," Lang said. "We have to get rid of those things in our lives. We're not meant to carry that kind of weight and that kind of anger."

He told the audience anyone can find freedom from anger.

"If you're here today and have felt the pain of being hurt, God is saying to you, 'You don't have to live with that.' God will set us free."

After the shooting, Lang and his wife stood on the spot where their son had been shot, and spoke with students at the school.

"We just began to hug those people who came over to talk to us. We knew we needed that. What we didn't realize was how



Surviving death and anger: Dale Lang (top) and son Jason who was slain by another student on a shooting rampage at his high school

much the kids needed that," he said. "It was God's love being spread through human touch. I believe God wants to hug us all."

Although they still live with the pain of their son's loss, Lang said they aren't interested in seeing his killer punished, but instead pray for him.

Lang says he would like to meet his son's killer someday.

"I want to be able to say [to him], 'I forgive you and God forgives you, and wants to heal the hurt in your heart,'" said Lang.

**gotta be KO**



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