

Lutheran Spokesman



For if we
believe that Jesus
died and rose again,
even so God will bring
with Him those who sleep in
Jesus. *1 Thessalonians 4:14*

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“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

Eyewitnesses to Christ’s Resurrection

It is said that “seeing is believing.” We witness the news daily through the miracle of television so that—through a camera lens and reporter’s account—we ourselves are eyewitnesses to world events happening thousands of miles away.

Through the Holy Scriptures the Old Testament prophets were also eyewitnesses of Christ’s death and resurrection. And so are we, even though we are removed from those events by a couple thousand years.

People say that it is unreasonable to believe that Jesus rose from the dead, but even our courts will accept eyewitness testimony as fact, even if that testimony is given in writing.

Which is what we have in the New Testament Scriptures! If we might paraphrase Paul, in our text he says, “If you don’t believe me when I tell you that Jesus rose from the dead, you can go ask Cephas, that is, Simon Peter! Go ask the other apostles! They saw Him. Go ask James, the brother of the Lord! He saw Jesus alive! In fact,” Paul says, “I know five hundred individuals who can tell you that they saw Jesus alive following His resurrection!”

Then Paul, in effect, adds, “Most recently I myself saw Jesus alive on the road to Damascus, not only after His resurrection, but after His ascension into heaven. Jesus lives!” The apostle goes on, “Whether it was I or they, so

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we preach and so you believed” (1 Cor. 15:11). That is, the Corinthian believers and we ourselves have received these eyewitness testimonies as they are “in truth, the word of God” (1 Thess. 2:13). Through that Word we are eyewitnesses, not only of Christ’s death for our sins but of His resurrection for our justification.

Because we have seen and believe that Christ is risen from the dead, we are not ignorant. We do not sorrow as those who have no hope, “for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus” (1 Thess. 4:14). Christ’s resurrection from the dead is the guarantee that all our sins are forgiven and that we too shall rise, body and soul, from the dead at the Last Day.

What Grace!!!

What grace God has shown us sinners! Look at the apostle Paul—formerly Saul, a violent persecutor of the Church of God! He says, “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” But because of God’s undeserved love for sinners and because Christ died for sin and rose again, Paul could say, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor. 15:9f).

Have we sinned? Ask our family members and they’ll bear witness to a whole list of things we’ve done wrong. But we don’t need witnesses, do we, to know that each one of us can lay claim to the title “chief of sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15)?

They saw that
the stone was
rolled away....



Mark 16:4

So how could we hope for God’s forgiveness? How can we who were dead in trespasses and sins lay claim to the resurrection unto eternal life? Only through the grace of God—only through the death and resurrection of Christ our Savior!

Did Christ rise from the dead? Over five hundred eyewitnesses say He did. More importantly, God says that He did!

Will we rise from the dead? God says we will, and He bears witness in His saving Word, “by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...” (1 Cor. 15:2f).

Our sins are forgiven! We will rise at the Last Day to enter bodily into life eternal; and we will see with our own eyes, and not another’s (cf. Job 19:27), that the Lord is risen—risen indeed! Hallelujah!

—Pastor Joel Fleischer
Marquette, Mich.

**“...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection”
(Philippians 3:10).**

Resurrection Power!

The message of our Bible verse above was the whole focus of Paul’s life after his conversion.

What a change! Before his conversion Paul had prided himself in his ancestry as a Hebrew, in his circumcision and keeping the laws, in his zeal for righteousness and defending the name of God against all heretics. The biggest heretics, in his mind, were Jesus Christ and His followers!

In short, Paul prided himself in his own strength and power to do great things (a common attitude also today).

However, Paul came to know a far greater power—a power so great that he counted everything else in his life as rubbish (see Php. 3:8). Now Paul wanted nothing more than to know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

This month we are celebrating the resurrection of Christ. We sorrowed to witness again His agonizing death. We lamented to know that our sins caused His bitter suffering. Yet we found comfort and peace in the fact that Jesus willingly endured all—FOR US! Now we are filled with joy as we see Christ risen victorious over death.

May we also long to see and know the **POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION**.

...Power Over Sin

We know Jesus died to pay for our sins, yet we may still be burdened with the weight of guilt. We still recollect some of our past sins, and that troubles us and causes some fear.

May we always know the power of Christ’s resurrection! It is the power to destroy sin. All our sins and every accusation against us, Jesus has taken “out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Col. 2:14). Jesus was “delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (Rom. 4:25).

Jesus’ resurrection has completely crushed all our sins, sweeping them away so that they will not condemn us. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). Not one single sin can condemn us before God, for we have been justified by Christ—declared righteous, perfectly and completely righteous.

Men want to trust in their own power to free themselves from the condemnation of sin. The thinking goes like this: “If we can just do enough good in our lives, that should make up for our sins.” “If we can keep God’s commands, then God will see that we love Him and deserve some slack.” All such thoughts are useless, for we are powerless to remove even one sin from our record.

May we always and only trust in the power of Jesus’ resurrection!

...Power Over Death

Where sin is destroyed, death is also destroyed. God calls death “the last enemy” (1 Cor. 15:26). Since the beginning of sin, it has been proven over and over again that humans have no power over death. Yet men still try

to overcome death by their own power, searching for ways to cheat death and eventually overcome it.

On our part, let us trust in the power of Jesus' resurrection, for it does have the power over death itself.

Jesus proved that power by rising victoriously over death. He has also conquered death for us. Now death has lost its sting. It has no hold on us. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

When we know and trust the power of Christ's resurrection, we can face troubles in this world without fear. What a great way to go through life!

...Power To Conquer Sinning

One of the great struggles in our lives as children of God is the on-going struggle against temptations to sin.

There too do we not often try to rely on our own power? Perhaps we think, "I've got to stop doing this or that," and we get frustrated, discovering again and again that by ourselves we are weak and helpless.

By ourselves we will never overcome sin in this life. As long as we have our flesh and blood, we will have sin clinging to our daily thoughts and actions. In this life we will never over-

come our sinfulness in thought, word, and deed.

This can lead us to despair and fear all over again. Remember, the power of Jesus' resurrection is for our forgiveness and salvation. The very reason why we trust Jesus' power to save is that we are truly helpless by ourselves. The on-going struggle against sin makes that crystal-clear.

The power of Jesus' resurrection is power for the Christian life. God tells us, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

Yes, in Christ's resurrection we have been raised to a new life. The power of His resurrection has made us a new creation. Christ rose not only to live again; He rose to live in our hearts, to rule our hearts and minds with His peace, to dwell richly in us through His Word.

We have been raised with Christ, so why should we wear the grave clothes of worldliness and sin? Let us live in the resurrection power of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

*—Pastor David Reim
Vernon, B.C., Canada*



A Good Friday Devotion—

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."—James 1:17

Good . . . better . . . best!

I realize that it's not Thanksgiving Day, but I'd like to ask you, "What good things are you thankful for today?" Take

a minute and think about it.

Now if you were to ask friends or neighbors what good things God has

given or done for them, you would certainly get a number of answers.

“What good things has God given me? Well, He’s blessed me with a Christian wife and helper. He’s given children into my care. He’s given me a good job and a good boss. He’s given me health and kept me safe and secure in the face of all enemies (especially the spiritual ones).”

These are all good gifts given by a gracious God, wouldn’t you agree? It’s true, God has given us good things for which we ought to be thankful. The good things mentioned earlier are all earthly and therefore temporary. They are good gifts, but God has given me still better ones.

When did God give me these other good things? Well, it just so happens that my loving Father in heaven provided the gift that shines out among all the rest. Fittingly enough, that good thing was finished, accomplished, on a day that is still called “good.” We call it Good Friday.

When the date of our birth rolls around we wish one another “Happy Birthday!” When celebrating the Savior Jesus’ birth we say, “Merry Christmas!” When rejoicing in the resurrection of the Lord, we invite each other to have a “Blessed Easter.” Do we wish one another a “Good Friday”? Well, probably not.

On Good Friday some tremendous things were done for us. Actually, God prepared to do this good thing for us before time began, as it is written (2 Timothy 1:9-10): “...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed



by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel....”

On Good Friday Jesus completed the work of redemption, marking the occasion with the words: “It is finished!” On that day He completed (that is, lived) the perfect sinless life demanded of us by the Law of God. He then completed that life by willingly suffering and dying to pay our debt of sin.

On Good Friday Jesus suffered the separation of hell in our place, crying out: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Thus in Him we will never be forsaken by God.

On Good Friday Jesus fulfilled many promises made by God beforehand, confirming that His Word is true and reliable—worthy of all confidence. Thus may we with confident hearts and minds turn to Him and His Word!

On Good Friday Jesus left a good example for us, when He—with His first words from the cross—asked forgiveness for those who hated and hurt Him. So will we gladly forgive those who sin against us.

On Good Friday Jesus showed the kind of love we are to have for our parents and superiors, when He saw to His mother’s need. May we also handle family relationships with patience, love, and devotion.

On Good Friday Jesus showed us what kind of confidence we can have in

the Father when we come to death's door, saying, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." So may we fall asleep in Jesus, confident that no one can tear us from the Father's hand.

Many good things come to us through the events of Good Friday—even the best, forgiveness for all sins and a place in the Father's House.

These good and perfect gifts were confirmed ours on Easter Sunday when the Lord of Life also rose from the dead to stand by us!

So, a "Good Friday!" to you and a "Blessed Easter!"

—Pastor Andrew Schaller
Watertown, S.Dak.



How Deep the Father's Love for Us

(Numbers 5 & 6 of a series of six Lenten meditations [2006] by CLC pastors serving congregations in southern Minnesota)

No. 5 — The Father Proclaims His Son Crucified for Us

Prayer: *Dear heavenly Father, I must confess that I deserve to receive Your just condemnation for my sins, but I praise You for Your grace and mercy. You sent Jesus to be my substitute—to die on the cross in my place, so that I might live forever in Your presence. He bore my sin and shame, so that I might appear before You as holy and blameless. Thank You, dear Father! Thank You, dear Jesus! Strengthen me through the hearing of Your Word and then move me to share that Word of salvation with others. Amen.*

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no pow'r, no wisdom,
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.



"God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world..." (Gal. 6:14).

How deep is the Father's love for us? It is so deep that He allowed His Son to be crucified in our place and for our benefit!

Death by crucifixion was a horrible way to die. A person crucified suffered incredible pain. Spikes were driven through the victim's hands and feet to secure the body to the cross. Searing pain was followed by intense cramping of the muscles alternately of the arms and the legs as crucified ones struggled to be in control of their diaphragm muscle, breathe, and ward off asphyxiation. Death came by suffocation slowly after many hours or even after several days. Crucifixion was indeed a horrible way to die!

Why, then, did God allow His Son to suffer such a death? The reason lies in His profound love for fallen mankind. The Father did not love us because we were worthy of His love. Oh, no! The apostle Paul makes that perfectly clear

when he states, “God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). The Father loved us purely out of grace and mercy. We did not deserve to be saved, but God allowed His Son to be crucified for us!

Therefore we must say with the apostle Paul, “God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!” When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the penalty we deserved for our sins. His blood washed away those sins, so that we might live with confidence here in this world and in joy throughout eternity. Such love moves us by faith to join the apostle in also saying, “The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” Let us then with joy proclaim the Father’s Gospel message—Jesus Christ crucified for us!

— Pastor Paul D. Nolting (Mankato, Minn.)

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, I come to You confessing my debt. I accumulate debt with You by not doing what I am supposed to do and by doing what You don’t want me to do. I also am guilty of secret sins which I don’t even know. Forgive me for Jesus’ sake. Thank You for sending Jesus to pay my debt—to pay the ransom that sets me free from slavery to sin and death and the Devil. With the joy of a ransomed captive, fill me with zeal to live for You. Amen.*

Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer.
But this I know with all my heart—
His wounds have paid my ransom!



“[God our Savior] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all...” (1 Tim. 2:4-6a).

The telephone rings. Mr. Smith answers.

Mr. Smith: “Hello.”

Voice: “Mr. Smith, we have your daughter. If you want her returned safely, bring \$1,000,000 tonight....”

Consider a much different ransom situation.

God the Father: “I created man and woman perfectly, but they have disobeyed Me. They have sinned against Me, and the righteous judgment upon them is death—separation from Me forever in hell! They are slaves to sin, death, and the devil.

Sinner: “But God beheld my wretched state before the world’s foundation, and mindful of His mercies great, He planned my soul’s salvation. A father’s heart He turned to me, sought my redemption fervently: He gave His dearest Treasure” (TLH, #387:4).

God the Father to God the Son: ‘Tis time to have compassion. Then go, bright Jewel of My crown, and bring to man salvation; from sin and sorrow set him free, slay bitter death for him that he may live with Thee forever” (TLH, #387:5).

Into the supposedly helpless condition of sinners, God injected His grace and mercy. The only ransom price that could buy sinners back from sin was a holy life and then its death. How could this kind of ransom be paid? Not by a million dollars or by any human being. Only God Himself could be holy, but how could God die and pay the debt we sinners owed? By the Son of God becoming man, living and dying for us.

Out of His deep love, God the Father sent His Son to be the ransom for our souls. Jesus paid the ransom price for our sins, not with gold or silver, but with His precious blood (cf. 1 Pet. 1:19). “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that you through His poverty might become rich!” (2 Cor. 8:9).

Thanks be to God for our Redeemer who paid the ransom—Jesus!

— *Pastor Wayne Eichstadt (Mankato, Minn.)*



An Easter message from our CLC President—

Is That All There Is?

How sad is the uncertainty and hopelessness of human beings facing the reality and inescapable fact of death!

A famous singer of my youth, Peggy Lee, sang a song entitled, “Is That All There Is?” The haunting lyrics of this song reflect the emptiness of the human heart. The spoken words tell how her house caught on fire when she was a little girl.

To her question, “Is that all there is to a fire?” came the sung refrain: “Is that all there is? Is that all there is? If that’s all there is, my friends, then let’s keep dancing. Let’s break out the booze and have a ball, if that’s all there is.”

As her song continues, her father takes her to a circus at twelve years of age. Later she falls in love with a young man. Each time the refrain “Is that all there is?” was sung. Finally, she spoke of why she did not simply

commit suicide. “Oh, no, not me. I’m in no hurry for that final disappointment, for I know just as well as I’m standing here talking to you, when that final movement comes and I’m breathing my last breath, I’ll be saying to myself: Is that all there is, is that all there is? If that’s all there is, my friends, then let’s keep dancing. Let’s break out the booze and have a ball, if that’s all there is.”

This is not an isolated example of this philosophy. The Epicurean philosophers of Paul’s day concluded, “Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”

Peggy Lee’s song (written by Stoller and Lieber) is actually taken from a story called “Disillusionment” by the English author Thomas Mann (written when he was twenty).

Most people in today’s modern world don’t know what else there is, either.



There is no certainty in the human heart about an answer to death. Jaroslav Pelikan, a Missouri Synod church historian (who later in life joined the Greek Orthodox Church), died May 13, 2006. He is reported to have said, “If Christ is risen, nothing else matters. And if Christ is not risen, nothing else matters.” “If...”

How will you face the final test—the day of your death? David was certain that because the Lord was his Shepherd, he would dwell in the house of the Lord forever. The angels at the

tomb confidently asserted to the women, “He is not here! He is risen!”

The Bible tells us not to grieve over those who sleep in Jesus. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus” (1 Thess. 4:14).

At every Christian funeral we will likely hear the Good News that now Christ is risen and become the first-fruits of those who sleep. The funeral of the believer is the sure testimony that “death is swallowed up in victory!”

There is another song which stands in stark contrast to the darkness and sadness of Peggy Lee’s “Is That All There Is?” That hymn is the familiar Easter hymn, “I Know that My Redeemer Lives.”

I know that my Redeemer lives;
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead;
He lives my ever-living Head.

—*Pastor John Schierenbeck*
Winter Haven, Florida



The Benefit of Discomfort

The Lord has created the human body with a wonderful capacity for healing. In connection with this, we find benefits for our overall health even in situations in which we are uncomfortable or even in pain. How lousy we feel when we have a fever, but your body is protecting itself by elevating its temperature to kill off the cause of the disease. When we sprain an ankle, the subsequent swelling can be a hassle, but again it is a reaction of the body to help repair tissue.

The Lord uses similar methods

THE PSALMS
THE CHRISTIAN'S
PRAYER BOOK
 —Please read Psalm 38—

when dealing with our souls. While nobody likes to have spiritual discomfort, it can be highly beneficial.

The Lord has equipped every person with a conscience, which—when operating correctly—will give a person

a level of discomfort that alerts the soul that a problem needs fixing. There are also methods of chastening (disciplining) that God will use to draw us closer to Him. The more uncomfortable we are, the greater the tendency that we will seek out the Lord's gracious help.

In the 38th Psalm David was experiencing a high level of discomfort, even agony. He speaks of two main laments. The first is found in a physical discomfort. The second came from the outside as he found that his friends and loved ones were not loyal to him and even betrayed him.

The first ten verses list many physical problems. David diagnoses his maladies as problems in his relationship with God. As he describes his ailments, he gives the following reasons: Because of Your anger, Because of my sin (v. 3); Because of my foolishness (v. 5); the turmoil of my heart (v. 8). David's plea is that God would withdraw His anger, "For Your arrows pierce me deeply, and Your hand presses me down" (v. 2).

The Proper Solution

When our soul is dealing with guilt, our bodies can be deeply affected. When we have sin that is unresolved, certainly we are familiar with that uneasy feeling in the stomach, the inability to sleep and/or the loss of appetite. People will find many "solutions"—whether it is to numb themselves or to bury their hurt deep within themselves. In the long run, such solutions will not work.

David also was dealing with opposition from those whom he once trusted. This could very well be a reference to the time when his own son Absalom attempted to take everything away

from David (though the occasion of this writing is not specified).

While living on this Earth, we will encounter adversity. At times conflict may arise with close friends and family. There will certainly be persecution from those who are against Christ. Those who despise Jesus will treat His followers as they treat Jesus Himself.

This psalm speaks of causes of discomfort but also speaks of the proper cure. "For in You, O LORD, I hope, You will hear, O Lord my God" (v. 15). When our lives appear to be falling apart, the Lord calls us to hope in Him. We may bring our sins to our Savior, repent of them, and find hope in His forgiveness. When sin floods over us, and we feel the weight of our conscience, or if we find ourselves in situations where there seems to be no good way out, let us recognize that discomfort as a tool God is giving us to find hope in Him. We also may cry out, "Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, be not far from me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!" (v. 21-22)

At times the discomfort is of our own making. At times the Lord sends discomfort into our lives. Either way is an opportunity to cry out to our God and to find the answer in Christ crucified.

David labels this a psalm to bring to remembrance. The Lord calls us to remember that true comfort may be found only in Him.

Should Thy mercy send me Sorrow, toil, and woe,
Or should pain attend me On my path below,
Grant that I may never Fail Thy hand to see;
Grant that I may ever Cast my care on Thee.
(TLH #516:3)

—*Pastor Michael Schierenbeck*
(Markesan, Wis.)

The Discourses of Christ

Work of the Holy Spirit—John 16:5-15

Jesus Promises the Coming of the Spirit with Power

Earlier on the eve of His suffering and death, Jesus had spoken of the coming of “another Helper...even the Spirit of truth” (Jn. 14:16,17). In these verses Jesus returns to that promise of the Spirit’s coming and ties it more directly to the departure of His visible presence, which had so deeply saddened the disciples.

Jesus emphasizes that His departure is both necessary and to their advantage. He explains that the Spirit—that divine Paraclete who would be there to help them in their future lives as apostles—could not come unless Jesus first departed and went to His Father.

It is easy for the reader of these words to make a quick leap to Jesus’ ascension to glory when he thinks of Jesus departing. Clearly that was very much included in what Jesus was saying. However, it is more than Jesus’ physical, visible ascension that was necessary before the coming of the Holy Spirit. In going to the Father, Jesus first had to go to the cross.

Remember, these words were spoken during Jesus’ last precious hours with His disciples before His betrayal, just hours before He would suffer at the hands of sinful men. Jesus was thinking of going to that cross, bearing our sins, and finally going to the grave that He might destroy death’s power

with the glory of His resurrection.

These were the things necessary for the coming work of the Holy Spirit. These were all seen by Jesus as essential ingredients of His going to the Father.

Surely, the Holy Spirit had been a power present in the world before Jesus’ death. That is self-evident. The Spirit had caused the Old Testament Scriptures to be written by inspiration. He had brought all Old Testament believers to faith, just as surely as each of us was brought to faith by the powerful working of His grace.

The same gospel was used to quicken men’s hearts and lead them to peace and salvation. Preceding that gospel fulfillment was the marvelous gospel promise, as sure and certain as God’s own oath. The time had come for the incarnate Son to fulfill that promise and then return to His Father in heaven. For Jesus not to return to the Father—as the disciples earnestly desired—would have been a spiritual calamity for all people. The Holy Spirit would have no gospel with which to instill life in the hearts of men. It was not only a distinct advantage for the disciples that Jesus go to the Father, but it was to our advantage also!

In God’s plan of salvation, it was

time for the scope of the Spirit's work to be opened to encompass all the Earth. Even though Jesus had declared that the world would not receive Him or know Him (Jn. 14:17), the Spirit's work would encompass the globe and impact the entire world.

True Nature of the World

In these verses of this precious discourse, Jesus speaks of how the Spirit would "convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (Jn. 16:8). The Spirit would reveal the true nature of the world and its spiritual fallacies.

The world continues to mischaracterize most sins as innocent peccadillos that do not leave people guilty before the Lord. Supposedly, these "little indiscretions" do not need the cross of Christ. Those who think this couldn't be more wrong. With the cross of Christ, the Spirit exposes the condemn-

ing power of even "little" sins and thus the true extent of man's guilt in sin.

The world brags of its works of righteousness, but these are works flawed by sin and rooted in corrupt hearts. In fact, by Christ going to the Father through the cross, His righteousness is revealed as the only righteousness that can possibly avail before God. The unrighteousness of the world is exposed.

Finally, Jesus declares that the judgment of the world shall be exposed, "because the ruler of this world is judged." The devil has always promised victory and exaltation to those who follow his lies and fall for his deceptions. Again, the world believes it possesses an exemption from judgment, although men continue to pursue the sinful desires of their flesh in the pride of life.

On the cross Christ crushed the Serpent's head. The ruler of this world

"Children of Grace"



Pastor Daniel Fleischer (top left, currently serving Resurrection Lutheran Church, Corpus Christi, Tex.), is shown with seven male graduates of Grace Lutheran Christian Day School, Fridley, Minn., all of whom were confirmed by Pastor Fleischer during his ministry at Grace. This picture was taken at last summer's CLC Convention which was attended by these "Children of Grace" either as a minister, teacher, or delegate. Front: Marty Rosendahl, Rick Nelson, Pastor Joel Fleischer; Middle: Craig Ryan, Brian Radichel; Back: Teacher Jay Sydow, Teacher Nathan Wales.

is condemned. The devil's lies are exposed. Satan is left defeated. The judgment of the world goes with the judgment of its ruler. The judgment of this world is exposed. We know it, though the world may not acknowledge it. We know and see it because the Spirit has opened our eyes to see the glory that is in Christ Jesus.

As the Spirit of God was sent by the Savior to guide the disciples into all truth—even truths they were not yet ready to bear—so through inspiration of the Scriptures the Holy Spirit has revealed that truth to and for us, that

we might know the full glory that is Christ.

The Spirit takes the wondrous truth of our crucified and yet risen and ever-living Lord—who has gone to the Father as the victorious Christ!—and instills that truth in our hearts. We know the wonder of the cross. We know the life-giving power of the Jesus' resurrection. We know the glory that is His as He sits at the right hand of God the Father and rules all for our good and blessing.

—Pastor Theodore Barthels
Austin, Minnesota



— Perspectives —

#1: Why Bother In the First Place? (Jan. '07 issue)

#2: Some Background History (Feb. '07 issue)

#3: Toward Preserving an "Orthodox Character" (Mar. '07 issue)

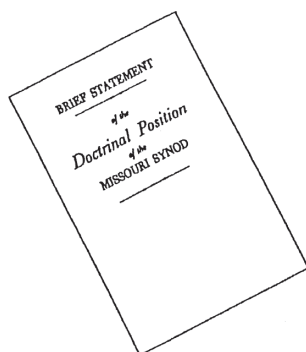
* #4: Why the LC-MS is Paralyzed

Perspective #4:

Why the LC-MS is Paralyzed

The *Brief Statement* of 1932, a strong and faithful confession of God's Word, was prepared by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS). It addresses articles of doctrine and faith that were endangered by the surfacing compromise and plain rejection of Biblical truth.

Many of the confessional documents of the church over the years and decades have arisen out of a necessity to set forth clearly where true Biblical Lutherans stand over against compro-



ming theologians and churches that claim the Lutheran name but play loosely with Biblical doctrine.

Unfortunately, many fine confessional documents have become nothing more than dust collectors in pastors'

offices and church libraries. To a great extent they have been forgotten or set aside as the church seeks to cope in the modern anti-Christian society.

As commitment to the faith wanes, churches find themselves with fewer and fewer worshipers in the pews. In an effort to rekindle enthusiasm, not a few of these same churches have felt the need to modernize their approach and their doctrine in order to keep, gain, and regain members. Consequently, sound doctrine drawn from Scripture has become irrelevant and even a burden to the accomplishment of their goal.

To whatever reason one ascribes the precipitous slide of the LC-MS from its formerly staunch doctrinal foundation, many of us whose roots were (in whole or in part) in the LC-MS are grieved. This concern is all the more aggravated when we see and hear the so-called “conservative” element within the body contributing to the demise through its inability or unwillingness to act.

For example, with our own ears we have heard “conservatives” excoriate the synod officials for their theological liberalism. We have heard them speak of their distaste for the political maneuvering of the synod officials. At the same time conservatives are already undertaking their own campaigns and polls and promotions of certain synodical candidates in anticipation of the next convention. We have heard “conservatives” describe the LC-MS as heterodox, a condition which many recognize as being of long standing. False doctrine and compromise of formerly held Biblical principles (for example, close communion and fellowship principles) did not occur yes-

terday.

Yet many of these same voices have bought into the counsel of the late respected leader, Kurt Marquart, who described the LC-MS as “awash in confusion and contradiction, even about such clear and basic issues as joint services with official representatives of paganism....”

Nevertheless, in August of 2003 in the same article he said, “the old girl is worth fighting for.” In other words, save the synod!

The *Brief Statement* was concerned about truth and, in that context, concerned about the synod also. In the face of false teaching, it says “...all Christians are required by God to discriminate between orthodox and heterodox church-bodies, Matt. 7:15, and to have church fellowship only with orthodox church-bodies, and in case they have strayed into heterodox church bodies, to leave them.” In full context the *Brief Statement* quotes all the appropriate Scripture passages addressing such circumstances.

It is interesting how a “conservative” LC-MS voice, *Affirm* (Vol. 30, No. 3, Dec. ‘06), speaks when it expresses disagreement with those who have left the synod or are contemplating leaving it. *Affirm* offers Marquardt’s thoughts as “good advice against those who not only have already left the Synod, but plan on doing so in the near future.” Note that *Affirm* does not speak of Marquart’s words as good advice (advice with which we disagree) to those leaving, but as good advice “against” those leaving. The use of the word “against” puts *Affirm* in direct conflict with the Word of God quoted by and confessed in the *Brief Statement*.

Therein lies part of the problem within the LC-MS and why it is paralyzed. In the interest of “saving the old girl” out of respect for “all the generations of devout souls who prayed and sacrificed for this Synod—and of those many who still do” (Marquart), *Affirm* is denying the very truth and doctrine set forth by the synod’s faithful forefathers who expressed themselves in the *Brief Statement*.

We agree with the following comment of Marquart: “The battle for the sacred truth of the Gospel must be fought with kindness and love.” However, kindness and love at expense of the truth is less than God-pleasing.

Compromise and procrastination in face of admitted facts involves, as the *Brief Statement* says, “the constant danger of losing the Word of God entirely, 2 Tim. 2:17-21.”

The faithful confessors of this dusty confession knew what Missouri “conservatives” today are apparently unwilling to confront in the interest of trying to save a synod and maintain a tradition.

What is the blessing of saving the synod if the faithful confession of Scripture—and “of devout souls who prayed and sacrificed for this Synod”—is diminished, if not lost?

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer
Corpus Christi, Tex.



Noting the 75th Anniversary of the “Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the MISSOURI SYNOD” (1932-2007)

**A Trumpet Which Gave—and Gives!—a Clear Sound
(See 1 Corinthians 14:8)**

Brief Statement Of Man and of Sin

Introductory Thoughts:

When God created man, He made man with the high distinction of being created in His image—in righteousness and true holiness. This image was lost through sin. Every child born on the Earth with the exception of the Lord Jesus Christ has been infected.

Sin itself, especially the fact that it is inherited from Adam through our parents, is a hard saying that the world

does not accept. But denial of fact does not change the fact. Since the fall, man is “utterly depraved by reason of sin into which Adam fell. He is spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God and doomed to eternal damnation, being incapable of redeeming himself by any means whatsoever” (CLC’s *Statement of Faith and Purpose*).

Evolutionists deny God’s creation of man and thus are clueless about the

origin of evil in the world. Much less can the unbeliever understand—if he even cares—what it means to be restored to the divine image through the power of the Holy Spirit working through the gospel.

Essential to the understanding and appreciation of the gospel of salvation is recognition of sin and its consequences, both in time and for eternity. That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is meaningless to anyone who believes that he is without sin, that sin is not serious, and/or will therefore not repent of his sins. Such an one is a heathen (Matthew 18:17).

One of the strengths of the *Brief Statement* is the clarity and forthrightness with which it speaks. Such clarity of expression concerning Scripture truth is a rare commodity in many theological statements today. This statement of faith knows nothing of “political correctness.”

One cannot read the *Brief Statement* without recognizing where the old LC-MS stood. As we have identified ourselves with this fine confession and subscribe to it, we stand with it when it speaks as follows concerning man and sin.

Brief Statement text [with comment]

Of Man and of Sin

6. We teach [and confess] that the first man was not brutelike [*Man is not like an animal, nor is he a creature without reason, incapable of making rational decisions. Unlike the animals man was created a spiritual being.*] **nor merely capable of intellectual development** [*He was created as an intellectual and intelligent being, in wisdom surpassed only by His Creator*

God.], **but that God created man in His own image** [*said of man only*], **Gen. 1:26,27; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10, that is, in true knowledge of God and in true righteousness and holiness and endowed with a truly scientific knowledge of nature, Gen. 2:19-23** [*With all the wisdom of man today, none has matched that possessed by Adam before the fall!*].

7. We furthermore teach [and confess] that sin came into the world [*sin is the transgression of God's law*] **by the fall of the first man, as described in Gen. 3** [*One cannot deny the facts of Genesis 3 and rightfully claim to believe the Bible.*]. **By this Fall not only he himself, but also all his natural offspring have lost the original knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and thus all men are sinners already by birth** [*called original, or inherited, sin*], **dead in sins** [*thus incapable of “making a decision for Christ”*], **inclined to all evil** [*every decision of natural man is against God*], **and subject to the wrath of God** [*The soul that sins, it shall die—the wages of sin*], **Rom. 5:12,18; Eph. 2:1-3. We teach also that men are unable** [*“not of yourselves”, Eph. 2:8*], **through any efforts of their own** [*by grace one is saved, through faith alone*] **or by the aid of “culture and science” to reconcile themselves to God and thus to conquer death and damnation** [*The sinner is reconciled unto God by the sacrifice of Christ. Man is powerless to reverse his condition. The penitent sinner thanks God that “Jesus lives! Death's reign is done” (TLH #201:1)*].

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer
Corpus Christi, Tex.

“Another Luther”?

In this issue’s “Perspective” article connected with the *Spokesman’s* 75th Anniversary series on the *Brief Statement* (p. 14ff), Pastor Daniel Fleischer refers to “the late respected leader, Kurt Marquart” of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as well as to some of Marquart’s comments quoted favorably by and in a “conservative” LC-MS publication, *Affirm*.

Prof. Marquart, long a professor (since 1975) at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, died (of Lou Gehrig’s Disease) on September 19, 2006.

In some sectors of the Lutheran church, Marquart was and is being promoted as “another Luther.” In fact, *Christian News* has been calling him “the International Luther”—“international,” we assume, inasmuch as he was born in Estonia, and after his 1959 graduation from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., served parishes in Texas and Queensland, Australia (until called to the Fort Wayne Seminary).

For that matter, the term “American Luther” had already been taken. Those familiar with Lutheran history may recall that Dr. C. F. W. Walther (1811-1887), one of Missouri’s founders, has often been referred to with that title.

It is to be granted that Walther and Marquart were influential leaders in “old” and “new” Missouri respectively. Both were writers of many articles and books which merit places on the shelves of orthodox, conservative, confessional Lutheran pastors. Every Lutheran pastor worth his salt takes Walther’s *Law and Gospel* off his shelf



Dr. C. F. W. Walther

for careful reading annually. This writer owns a few of Marquart’s books, such as *Anatomy of An Explosion* (an assessment from the conservative point of view of one of the first major crises in the “modern” Missouri Synod in the 1970’s); *Church Growth As Mission Paradigm* (a confessional Lutheran assessment of the Church Growth Movement); *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* (Vol. IX of Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics—a confessional treatment of the doctrine of church and ministry in the old Synodical Conference).

With all his good writings, Marquart, however, remained within the fellowship of modern, erroristic Missouri all his life. Would Luther—



Dr. Kurt Marquart

would Walther—have remained members of modern Missouri which, as can easily be documented, no longer accepts the *Brief Statement* of 1932? We think not.

Be that as it may, we wonder about the wisdom and/or need to dub one or another man as “another Luther.”

No doubt the church (and the world) could use any number of men and women who command world attention by a resolute confession of biblical doctrine (truth!) across the board—centering on the doctrine of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone without the works of the law. No doubt the church could use any number of people who, like Luther, are willing to stand up for the gospel of Jesus Christ before princes and kings, laymen and noblemen, even when life and limb are in

danger.

“...Our ancestors and forefathers did not have this great, noble, precious treasure—the true, pure understanding of the divine Word which we now, praise God, have plentifully; they did not live to see the time when the dear Word was again brought to light shortly before the Last Day. This inexpressible blessing has come to us out of the pure goodness and grace of God. This same God will also be and remain God and Creator after us, just as He has been before us. And He will gather and preserve a little flock for Himself until the end of the world....” (*What Luther Says*, Vol. III, #3786, p. 1187)

Lord, so help each of us to walk in Luther’s shoes.

Read again, carefully, Perspective #4 in this issue.

—The Editor



SMORGASBORD

From the Editor’s Desk

• PERSON OF THE YEAR!?! -

The good words below are from the Newsletter of Messiah Lutheran Church (CLC), Hales Corners, Wis. Michael Eichstadt is pastor.

“You”?

Have you heard? *TIME* magazine’s [2006] Person of the Year is “You.” The lead article explains how individuals—now more than ever before via the internet—are able to express themselves, interact with one another, and make a difference in the world.

All of that may be true, and there is certainly much that people can offer one another which is beneficial.

However, there is also a danger. We need to be careful that we do not get carried away on an ego trip and imagine that “you,” “I,” and “we” are in ultimate control and can shape our lives and destinies according to our own blueprints.

The ancient people of Babel had that mistaken idea thousands of years ago. They got together, looked at each other, and said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves” (Gen. 11:4). But the Lord God had a different plan: “Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not

understand each other” (Gen. 11:7).

Through all of history, God has made it clear that He is in ultimate control. That is why it is sometimes referred to as “His-story.” Rather than resenting this—and viewing God as interfering and overbearing—we can

take great comfort in His ruling power.

Left to our own devices and plans, what would happen? We would succeed only in digging ourselves deeper into the quicksand of sin. We would have no future except eternal death. But because of God’s wondrous plan

PRAYER FOR A SOLDIER IN IRAQ

(Adapted from a Lutheran pastor’s letter to his son)

Almighty and most merciful Father, You have revealed to us that until the end of the time there will be wars and rumors of wars and that You have ordained governments to protect its citizens by bearing the sword against those who would do us harm. Yet You also are the One who makes wars cease to the ends of the Earth; therefore, we humbly ask that You would speedily bring this present war to an end. Curb the wickedness which is fueling this war, so that lives of the innocent might be spared from death and injury.

More specifically, we pray for our (name of congregation) young people serving as defenders of our nation and its freedoms and security. Keep them ever in the true faith which trusts in Christ Jesus for salvation, no matter what they may be called upon to witness, experience, or do. Send Your holy angels at all times to watch over them, protecting them from all harm and danger.

Preserve them from seeing the horrors of war. If they do, keep them from despair or being warped with cynicism. When they become saddened, frustrated, disappointed, or lonely, lift them up with Your ever-abiding love and presence. Continue to instill in them a love for all people, since Christ Jesus shed His blood to save all. If they must injure or kill the enemy in the line of duty, grant them clear heads and ready hearts to fulfill what they have been trained to do. Let them never enjoy the acts of warfare nor let fear paralyze them in action, but give them courage under fire. We ask this not only for their safety, but for the safety of those who serve alongside them and for all their fellow citizens whom they have taken an oath to protect.

Always sharpen their conscience and steel their resolve to do what is right and proper in Your eyes, so that they will bring You honor in all their decisions and actions. Through their faithful and obedient service to You, may Your love in them be evident to all, with the result that Your Kingdom of grace may advance even under such troubling circumstances.

Bring them safely home in mind, body, and spirit. Grant to their families the comfort of knowing that You know their needs, You hear their prayers, and You will fulfill Your promises to uphold all who trust in You. In Your own way and time deliver us from all evil. We ask these things according to Your good and gracious will, trusting that in all things You work out everlasting blessings for Your children through the blood of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

of salvation worked out to perfection through Jesus' coming into the world at Christmas, we have peace with God and a heavenly home waiting for us.

In the meantime, as we enter 2007, we trust that the Lord has a gracious plan for each of our lives, a plan which is filled with blessings and opportunities to serve Him. "I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jer. 29:11).

Rather than looking at life as centering on ourselves, with the writer may we look up to our Lord and Savior and pray, "Lord, Thy will be done in my life and in all of history!" "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb....and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me...How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!...Search me, O God, and know my heart...and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:13ff).

• **PRAYER** - The accompanying "boxed prayer" recently appeared in the weekly church bulletin of Berea Lutheran Church, Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. The prayer was adapted by David Schierenbeck from a filed article he had on hand. A soldier from Berea congregation was an Iraqi war casualty last year. One family of the congregation we serve (Redeemer, Cheyenne,



**Army Specialist E4
Eric Wenner,
age 20, currently
serving in
Afghanistan**



**Corporal Janessa
(nee Wenner)
Edgett, age 25,
National Guard,
soon to Iraq**



**Captain Chris
Wenner, age 35,
National Guard,
soon to Iraq a
second time**



**Janessa & Chris, Camp Ripley,
Sept. 10, 2000, at Chris' commissioning.
The Wenner parents are Floyd & Carla
(nee Greve) who now reside in rural Burns,
Wyoming, and are members of Redeemer
Lutheran Church, Cheyenne.**

Wyo.) currently has a son serving in Afghanistan; another son and daughter of the same family are soon to be deployed as well. Any number of others among our fellowship similarly stand in need of such prayer. The God of grace, love, and mercy attend them all!



**On a warm spring day
in Cheyenne, Wyoming,
the Tour Choir from
Immanuel Lutheran
College, Eau Claire, Wis.
in front of their Chippewa
Trails bus. Prof. John Reim,
Director, is back row right.
Turn page for a more
formal picture!**

The Word From Immanuel

*Chapel Talks to the student body of Immanuel
Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin*

To our young readers - This is for you!

“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion, says the Lord of hosts.” (Zechariah 13:7)

A Sword of His Own

The faithful of Zechariah’s day were very concerned about compromise and complacency in the church. Dramatically the LORD calls a sword into action—not “slicing” the complacent and compromising but rather His own faithful Shepherd.

Note how the text continues: “...Against the Man who is My Companion, says the LORD of hosts.” Wow! A man who is the LORD I AM’s Companion, sharing with Him in everything He does!

We’ve had the privilege of seeing the fulfillment in the birth of Jesus Christ, true Man and true God. But do we wonder, “Why, LORD, don’t You raise Your sword against the wicked rather than against the Good Shepherd?” Many do so wonder. Listen to these quotes: “Christ’s atoning death is merely a grotesque creation of the medieval imagination.” “Such substitutionary suffering and death is irrelevant, distasteful, and vindictive violence that encourages further child abuse and the victimization of those who show sacrificial love.”

Yes, if you killed your son for your selfish interest, that would be horren-

dous child abuse. But if—in the face of threatening national destruction—your son volunteered for the mission that saves your nation at the cost of his life, that’s neither child abuse nor vindictive violence but sacrificing love. Your heart would ache in love for such a son, but it would also love him all the more for the heroic commitment of his loving sacrifice, and you would glorify his name.

Surely, those who mock Christ’s atoning death do not realize the grievous nature of our crimes. Every desire to seek our own will rather than the LORD’s is a treasonous attempt to cast the LORD off His throne. Every lack of zealous love for the LORD and His Word is rebellion against His providing love.

By nature our entire heart is corrupted with these attitudes. There is no cure. No just judge would pardon such a treasonous criminal who cannot be rehabilitated.

Those who mock Christ’s atoning death are unable to realize the punishment we deserve. “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the



EXCLAMATION POINT
 GOD BE PRAISED
 JESUS CAME TO SAVE
 HE DIED FOR US
 HE ROSE IN TRIUMPH
 HE RULES OVER ALL

Sacred Concert of ILC
 Tour Choir at Redeemer
 Lutheran Church,
 Cheyenne, Wyoming,
 March 12, 2007.

law, to do them” (Gal. 3:10). And that curse is separation from God for eternity in the anguish of hell. This is not an option God can overlook or that man can prevent with bold heroic action. God’s holy justice must eternally separate all that is sinful. The soul that sins but once must die.

But when His sword awoke to holy justice, the LORD turned its wrath on His own Companion: “He laid on [Christ] the iniquity of us all...He was stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted [for our transgressions]” (Is. 53:6,4).

So, those who mock Christ’s atoning death must surely be enemies of Christ. Yet the authors of the above-quoted sentences claim to be Christians (even teachers in supposedly conservative churches). What a sad demonstration that also today the preaching of Christ crucified is “to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:23).

So why would the LORD I AM raise His sword against His own Companion? There is only one answer. “God so loved...!” God’s love is so great that it is scandalous to man. God loves the wicked, the worthless, the wasted—He loves them so much that He laid the punishment of all our sins on His beloved Son, the only One who could save the nation of mankind. Christ voluntarily gave Himself to save

those who could not rehabilitate themselves.

The very night this sword was raised against Christ, the twelve disciples were so scandalized by His cross that they were scattered in the darkness of denial and despair.

When we presume that we are not that bad—that we have the right to live our own way, that we don’t need His sacrifice for us—we are rebelling against His love. By nature the cross of Christ remains a scandalous offence, but Jesus wants to open our hearts to rejoice anew in that cross as the precious price paid to deliver us from eternal bondage of hell so we might enter the glorious bliss of Christ’s eternal presence.

In the cross of Christ the wisdom and power of God sealed our salvation, for as true Man Jesus fully took our place under sin’s verdict of death and with His holy life-blood completely satisfied the divinely just punishment for the sins of all people.

Rejoicing in that “scandalous” love, the justly condemned thief heard the astounding promise (intended also for us): “Today, you will be with me in Paradise.” The thief’s cross became his pulpit proclaiming his prayer and praise: “LORD, remember me when you come into Your Kingdom.” No longer was he complacent or compro-

mising. In fact, Zechariah 13 says in that day all the complacent and compromising will be cut off.

Purified in Christ's cross, our hearts will flee every complacency and compromise. And the LORD so glorifies His Son's sacrifice that finally He will cut off all who mock His sacrifice with such complacency and compromise. So flee them now, lest that sword is roused against you. Arise and sing for joy to Him who died that we might live!

—Prof. John Ude

Announcements

Resignation

David Povolny has resigned from the pastoral ministry. He has also withdrawn from membership in the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

—Pastor John Schierenbeck, President
Church of the Lutheran Confession

Correction

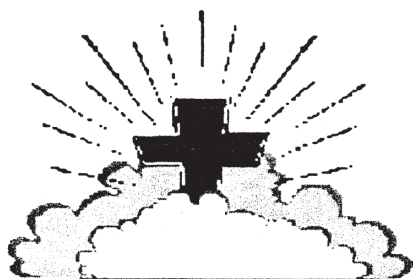
Re: February issue, p. 10, second column, five lines from the bottom. The sentence should read: "Jesus was declared to be no one less than the eternal Son of God..." We regret the unintentional omission of the words "no one." - Ed.

NOMINATIONS

The Board of Regents for Immanuel Lutheran College announces the following nominations to fill the professorship at Immanuel Lutheran College to be vacated by the retirement of Professor Ronald Roehl at the end of the 2006-07 school year:

Joel Gullerud
Justin Olmanson
Nathan Wales

The description of this position on the ILC Faculty as previously announced is as follows: "The man nominated should be able to teach Spanish I and II at the high school level. Secondly, he should have the ability to teach subjects in the area of Social Studies at both the



high school and college level. Those placing nominations are encouraged to include information regarding their nominee's educational background and teaching experience. They may also indicate how their nominee(s) might help our school in supervising extracurricular activities or serving in administrative positions."

All comments from members of CLC congregations regarding these candidates should be in the hands of the undersigned no later than Palm Sunday, April 1, 2007.

Rev. Ted Barthels
ILC Board of Regents
2200 16th St. SW
Austin, MN 55912

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