

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

We teach that the Holy Scriptures differ from all other books in the world in that they are the Word of God. They are the Word of God because the holy men of God who wrote the Scriptures wrote only that which the Holy Ghost communicated to them by inspiration...

they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth...

they are given by God to the Christian Church for the foundation of faith...

the sole rule and norm by which all teachers and doctrines must be examined and judged...

We reject the doctrine which under the name of science has gained wide popularity in the Church of our day that Holy Scripture is not in all its parts the Word of God...

We reject this erroneous doctrine as horrible and blasphemous, since it flatly contradicts Christ and His holy apostles, sets up men as judges over the Word of God, and thus overthrows the foundation of the Christian Church and its faith.

Portions of – **Of the Holy Scriptures**
THE BRIEF STATEMENT OF 1932



Looking Forward to a Glorious Future

New Year's is a time of optimism and hope. Even after a difficult year, a new year brings hope of a fresh start—a hope that things will be better. However, for many this is a blind hope, a wishful thinking.

For children of God it is much different. We have solid reason to look forward with joy and optimism, because our future is guaranteed glorious. Isaiah chapter 60 gives us promise of a glorious future.

The future is made sure by the past. Our chapter begins with a promise of the Savior: "Arise, shine; for your light has come! and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you." We just celebrated the coming of the Light. Jesus came and brought light into this world of spiritual darkness. By His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has secured a glorious future for His children.

The rest of the chapter describes that future in picturesque ways. Not only our future in heaven is glorious, but the prophet Isaiah describes the glory that we have with Jesus already in this world.

Our Savior promises to increase our wealth. However, don't think in terms of a pay raise or suddenly striking it rich. Jesus may or may not grant that. He says, "Instead of bronze I will bring gold, Instead of iron I will bring silver, Instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron" (v. 17). God's New Testament Church is promised to be much more glorious than the old city of Jerusalem. Whatever was made of bronze in the old city will now be made of gold; what was made of iron will now be made of silver, and so forth.

God's New Testament Church is not actually made of gold and silver. It is

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NEW YEAR'S HYMN

A year of life has glided by,
I trace its course with thoughtful eye;
For rich in blessings from above,
It shines with marks of heav'nly love.

From day to day by Him were giv'n
Each earthly good, each hope of heaven;
Nor did His hand correction spare,
But e'en His chast'nings proved His care.

And now a year before me stands,
The future hidden in its hands.
I know not what it may disclose;
But One who loves me sees and knows.

Upheld by Him, I will not fear
To meet the secrets of the year;
Its changes follow His command;
I know my times are in His hand.

My foes are strong, and I am weak,
But help divine I still may seek;
Look up, my heart, and fear no harm,
Almighty strength is in His arm.

For us His love hath wonders done,
For us He spared not His own Son;
O Christ, my unbelief remove!
Nor ever let me doubt that love.

And when my days and years are past,
And all life's training ends at last,
May I, accepted through His grace,
Behold for evermore His face.

A blessed new year to all! Are you looking for some variety of hymns? Here's one from the Dec. 21, 1896, issue of *The Lutheran Witness*. Author is unknown. Can be sung to melody of *The Lutheran Hymnal* #125. —*Pastor Em. Arthur Schulz*

Pastor Schulz has been e-mailing such fine hymns as this from The Lutheran Witness to our pastors regularly throughout the past year. They are treasures deserving to be unearthed! — Editor

made up of believers. This is a picture of the greater glory of God's Church because Christ the Lord is in the midst of it. Jesus shines in our hearts with His light of grace. Now all believers have Christ living and ruling in their hearts. Going into the future with the Lord and His Word, we are rich in Him.

The verse continues, "I will also make your officers peace, and your magistrates righteousness." In Old Testament Israel, evil kings and crooked judges oppressed the people, but in God's Kingdom believers are ruled by peace and righteousness because Christ Himself is King and Judge.

Jesus = Salvation

The next verse adds more to this

promise of our glorious future with the Lord: "Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders" (v. 18). This has never been true of any nation in this world and certainly not of the nation of Israel. That is why many people think this promise has not been fulfilled yet. In God's Kingdom, however, we are kept safe from the violence and destruction that may destroy the soul.

As the verse continues, this picture is made even more wonderful: "You shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise." We do not need walls of stone for protection. We have "salvation" for our walls of protection. The Hebrew word translated "salvation" here is *Jeshua* (Greek equivalent is *Jesus*). In other words, if this promise had been

given in Greek, it would be translated “You shall call your walls Jesus.”

Jesus is the wall of protection all around us (compare Zechariah 2:5). Knowing this, we can go into the new year with great confidence. Even if we die in the coming year, through Jesus we have eternal life.

Since Jesus is our Salvation, we know that this glorious future will go on forever. The last verses of Isaiah 60 flow into eternity: “The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended. Also your

people shall all be righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified” (vv. 19-21).

The time is coming when the sun and the moon will come to an end, but our glorious future with the Lord will not end. The Lord Himself promises to be our everlasting light which will never set.

Talk about a glorious future with the Lord—believers will bask in the light of God’s glory now and forever! Jesus our Lord is already shining upon us with the light of His grace. He enlightens us with His Word. He shines in our hearts with His love. Continue in the light of God’s Word and grace and you will surely have a glorious future with the Lord.

—Pastor David Reim



Epiphany is Missions—

“Behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door; and sat on it...the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (Matthew 28:2,5-6)

EASTER IN JANUARY?

“Hey, who left the door open! Were you born in a barn? Are you trying to heat the outdoors? Shut the door!” If I had a nickel for every time I’ve either heard those words spoken or spoken them myself, I’d be a rich man.

There are times when a door is left open for a reason. With the door shut I can’t see the contents of the fridge to choose a snack! Unless the microwave door is open, the smoke and terrible smell of burned popcorn can’t escape!

When you invite someone into your home, you must open the door.

The Gospel of Matthew tells us that the door of Christ’s tomb was left open. Who left the door open? Why was it left open?

Who left the door to Jesus’ tomb open? The simple answer is, it was an angel of the Lord who left the door open. He rolled back the stone from the door and then sat on it—as if saying to the guards, “No one is going to

shut this door again.”

Why was the door of Jesus’ tomb left open? Let’s rule out the obvious—the angel wasn’t sent to break Jesus out, for the tomb was already empty. When the women arrived at the tomb, the angel said as much: “He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.”

Often an open door is an invitation. Such is the case here. The open door of Jesus’ tomb is an invitation to all to enter—to look, to investigate. The angel said: “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

Inspired Witnesses!

We see the inside of the tomb through the divinely inspired accounts of those first eyewitnesses.

So what does the open door of Jesus’ tomb mean? Some today want you to believe this is just a story; some say it’s not important; for others the empty tomb is an empty message because it doesn’t fill stomachs on Earth, it doesn’t provide clothing, and it doesn’t satisfy the most basic of human desires.

But to Christian believers this open door, this empty tomb, means everything. It means that when all else is stripped away and we are left naked to face God at the Judgment, the words of a familiar hymn apply:

His oath, His covenant, and blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When every earthly prop gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.
(TLH #370:3)

Yes, but Easter in January? Do I have my seasons mixed up? Shouldn’t we be looking back on the past year with thanks? Shouldn’t we be looking forward to another year of grace? Shouldn’t we be encouraged to look for every opportunity to speak of the Savior to those we meet this year? Yes, all of these things!

But before we look ahead, let’s look back at the empty tomb. Let’s not forget that the One who holds the keys of the grave and death is the One who stands behind us and says: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15).

It’s been said that we should live our lives as though Jesus died for us yesterday, rose again from the dead for us today, and is coming back tomorrow. Good advice.

But now, today, we have work to do! Let’s tell about the cross and the empty tomb. Let’s look for open doors and speak of the door that was left open.

Yes, even in January!

—*Pastor Andrew Schaller*



A PERSONAL, YEAR-END AUDIT

With the close of each calendar year comes the inevitable audit of last year’s finances. Every organization needs a year-end review, and every household gets ready, with

forms and receipts, to settle accounts with Uncle Sam. By the time April 15 rolls around, nearly all of us have sent in that fat IRS envelope with the hope that the only thing we’ll receive back

is a possible refund check.

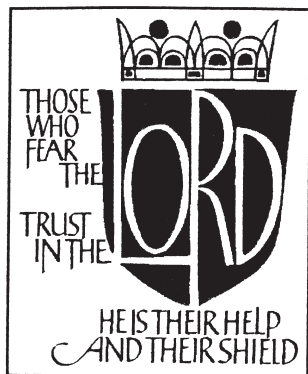
But what if a notice comes back that you will have to go through an AUDIT? Will you have the receipts and documentation you need? Did you really report all your income? Can you justify every deduction? Is there something you still owe, and will you be subject to penalties?

If the idea of having the IRS carefully comb through your finances for the year makes you uncomfortable, think for a moment about having God conduct an audit of your entire life. When those books are opened, what will He find there?

Unlike the IRS, which audits only a small percentage of U.S. citizens, the Lord promises to conduct a thorough review of the life of every human being when He comes again. “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight,” the book of Hebrews tells us. “Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:13).

Since that day will certainly come for everyone, it’s very important to compare our thoughts, words, and actions with the standards that God really expects. There isn’t room in this column to go through all of God’s ten commandments, so let’s look at the two that sum them all up (as Jesus did in Matthew 22:37ff): “Love God with all your heart” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

If you had truly loved God with all your heart in the course of the year, you would have paid daily, close attention to His Word, the Bible. You would have prayed regularly. You would have delighted only in what is good and right and would have always rejected every evil or impure thing. You would



have never failed in any of these things, but always sought God’s glory and interest first, never your own.

If you had loved your neighbor as yourself in the course of the year, you would have never repeated unflattering stories about others (even if they were true). You would never have had a cross word for anyone. You would have always been mindful of the well-being of others before yourself. You would have always volunteered to serve others instead of desiring to be served by them.

So far, my audit isn’t going so well—how about yours?

Plainly, we have outstanding debts with God. Plainly, since God does not merely suggest these qualities but demands them, we could not pay our own debts. Plainly, if the Lord held us to account for our sins, He would rightly foreclose on us forever.

Thank God we have a fail-safe solution in our Lord Jesus! On our own, our “books” would never satisfy God, but in Christ they have an entirely new look. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” we read in Romans 3, “and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

That means that when we place our trust in Jesus, our heavenly Father sees HIM when He opens OUR books. His life of obedience becomes our perfect record and His death becomes the payment for sins that we could never make. In Him, we are guaranteed to pass that great audit with flying colors!

As we enter a new year, here's a res-

olution that will help everyone: take a close look at your own "books" every day. Consider your debts to God, for they are many. Then place your trust in the Lord Jesus and go forward with confidence, because with Jesus you're looking good in God's book!

—Pastor Bruce Naumann

(From the pastor's column of a local newspaper.)



Studies in First Thessalonians—

"...(We) wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10).

Chapter 5: 12-22

Relationship Exhortations

How are things going for you?

Depending on the circumstances and conditions of life at the time, our answers to this question could vary from "not very good" to "pretty good" to "great." If we are asked about how our Christian walk is faring, our answers could also vary. Yet because of our sinful nature all of us would have to say, "There is always room for improvement."

The apostle Paul recognized this about his own faith life and said, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me" (Php. 3:12). Knowing that children of God share this sentiment and recognizing different areas of need for spiritual growth, at the close of our chapter Paul gave various exhortations from which we all can benefit.

This list of exhortations could be divided up into three groupings—exhortations dealing with 1) our relationship with our pastor; 2) our relationship with fellow Christians and others; and 3) our relationship with God.

...With Our Pastor

How would you characterize your relationship with your pastor? Is it good, bad, or indifferent? It would be very easy for a church member to criticize this or that feature of a pastor's ministry. After all, Paul describes ministers of the Word as fragile clay pots (2 Cor. 4:7). But if we are intent on picking apart our pastor's ministry, couldn't this have an adverse affect upon our hearing and receiving the Word of God which the pastor is faithfully bringing us in his preaching, teaching, and counseling? Wouldn't there also be an adverse effect upon

fellow members who lend a sympathetic ear to our complaints?

To guard against this pitfall, Paul urges us (vv. 12-13) to acknowledge with appreciation the diligent work the pastor is doing in our midst—to be conscious that he is the Lord’s representative to attend to our spiritual and eternal welfare, and in the spirit of Christian love to hold him in high regard because of his work in the kingdom of God.

...With Our Fellow Christians

Then the apostle bridges the thought between our relationship with the pastor to our relationship with fellow Christians (vv. 13-15). Paul exhorts us to live in peace and harmony with our brethren. There is certainly no room for bickering, squabbling, or disjointedness in the body of Christ. Think of the mess our physical body would be in if the various members were to work against one another instead of working together for the common good. The Lord Jesus has joined us together in His spiritual body for the sake of providing mutual love, help, and support.

Whenever any in the fellowship are disorderly, which can be most disruptive, we are called upon to lovingly admonish them. When a brother in Christ is fainthearted and discouraged due to some difficulty he is facing, bring a consoling and encouraging word. Where fellow members are weak, feeble, or sickly, hold out a helping hand. Since each of us can easily get on one another’s nerves, we need to practice patience by controlling our upset feelings, showing forbearance and longsuffering. Also, instead of letting our sinful flesh get the better of us by getting back at one who may have

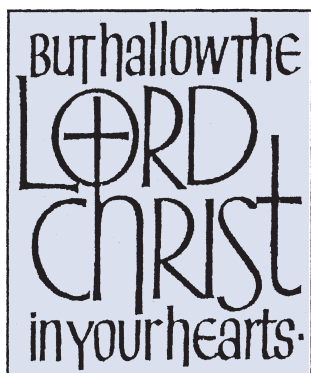
irritated us, a loving response would be to repay bad treatment with kindness. Finally, in everything said or done in the Christian fellowship, as well as out in the world, the Word of our Lord exhorts us to pursue what is good and beneficial for one another.

None of this could be accomplished without the love of God in Christ Jesus. Our Redeemer God is our never-ending source of love, who empowers us to live and walk in Christian love.

...With Our God

The next three exhortations (vv. 16-18), which deal with our relationship with God, could cause some to wonder how they could possibly be carried out. How can a person always be joyful, especially when so many things in the world can cause us to be sad and sorrowful? If we remember that God is governing our lives according to His gracious, providential will, we will find cause to be joyful in the most trying situations. Always keep in mind God’s word of promise, “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

To “pray without ceasing” does not



mean that we are to be in a prayerful posture twenty-four hours a day. It is the Spirit's work that we remain in contact with the Lord throughout the day and into the evening hours. The Lord wants us to speak to Him about the many and various concerns we or others need help with, and also to remember to acknowledge His blessings with words of praise and thanksgiving. "In everything give thanks" is understandable when we remember that God is faithful to bless us both in good times and bad.

The final exhortations (vv. 19-22) are intended to aid us in giving attention to our spiritual and eternal welfare. First, don't frustrate the work of the Holy Spirit and extinguish the spiritual fire He would keep burning brightly in

our hearts. This may happen if one does not make faithful use of God's Word and Sacrament or turns a deaf ear to the counsel of God's Word. Instead, the Lord would have us keep on listening to His Word, receive it with a ready spirit, and then utilize it in our daily lives. Use it to test whether the various things being said and done are of God or not. When we discover things that are good, hold onto them with a firm grip; when we learn of things that are evil, distance ourselves from them.

As Jesus said on many occasions, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" All these exhortations are intended to bless our relationships in the kingdom of God—with one another and with our Savior God.

—Pastor Mark Gullerud



SMORGASBORD

From the Editor's Desk

• **EAST AFRICA PASTORAL CONFERENCE.** (*Missionary David Koenig posted this report on e-mail to our pastors last November 15, 2006. Its contents are an encouragement to us CLC-statesiders as we see the Spirit of God at work in our overseas mission fields.*)

How pleasant and how fair for brethren to dwell together in unity!

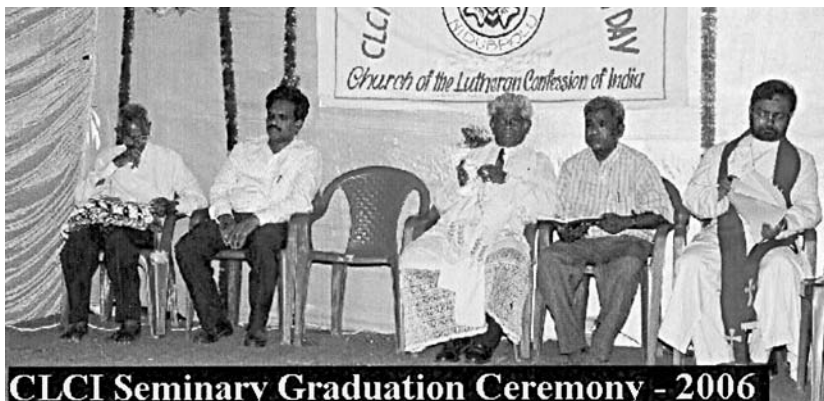
The Psalmist has it right when he points up how blessed unity is. Most of us arrived on October 23rd for the two-day conference to follow.

Fully twenty-one men attended this study of God's Word, for that is what it was. There was no disagreement on the Word, for the Word is clear. We met in the Kisii highlands of Kenya. Next year

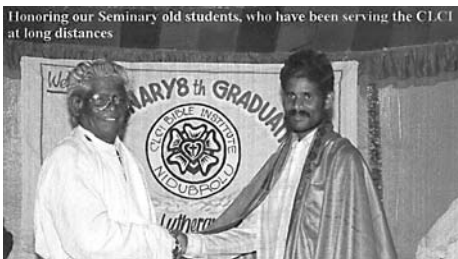
we will meet, God-willing, at Arusha in Tanzania. Pastor Enosh of Etago, Kenya chaired the meeting; he also acted as our chaplain, beginning each session with a devotion.

Pastor Fred of the CLCK Chotororo led us in an overview of the patriarch Abraham. He reminded us to live a life of complete faith in God, to go where He sends us by faith, to look forward to that "city whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10), to remember that our God is a God of second chances, and to rest assured that we are saved by faith, which is the gift of God by grace.

Charles Gikonyo, who heads the Nairobi area of the CLCK, led us in a study of the figurative language of Isaiah 5:1-6.



Honoring our Seminary old students, who have been serving the CLCI at long distances



Last June 15 the CLCI Bible Institute, Nidubrolu, India, graduated six candidates for ministry.
(Left) Rev. V. S. Benjamin, chairman of the CLCI, greets a graduate.

Pastor Jeremiah of the CLCEA Arusha, Tanzania, led a study of “Starting Mission Work.” He asked and answered several questions: What is church? What is mission work? What do we mean by a missionary? How hard is mission work? He also gave some cautions. Be aware of people coming from other denominations who come for poor reasons. Be careful of how you live, for your conduct must reinforce your preaching.

While the men from the LCEA could not be present, Pastor Angowi, the bishop of the LCEA, had sent an essay which Steve Kithisya read. In Pastor Angowi’s essay on “Faith and Ethical Decision,” it was pointed out: “1. Natural law is universal for God’s purpose of discipline in the world....2. Christ is the fulfillment of the law for those who believe in Him. Believing in Christ is involving God who over-

whelms our whole life and brings you into His kingdom and love and righteousness....3. Christians fulfill the law only by faith, and love by faith in Christ. God grants us forgiveness and salvation. We become God’s tool to convey His love to others. His faith looks to Christ and gets all that Christ has, and His love looks to the neighbors and gives them all that he has.”

Pastor Koenig delivered two essays: “The Ministry of Paul on His Three Journeys,” and “The ‘Three Year’ Ministry of our Lord.”

We hope next year to hear two essays that could not be delivered: “Baptism” by S. Kithisya, and “Leadership” by Ibrahim Kariuki.

The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace was evident as we fellowshiped together over God’s Word and in our many private conversations. We thank the CLC for funding this meeting.

• LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The letter reprinted below first appeared in the November 24, 2006 *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*, daily newspaper in the capital city of Wyoming, Cheyenne. The letter writer was Mrs. Barbara Ruegge, a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church (CLC) in that city.

A number of members of Redeemer congregation are active in Wyoming's "Right to Life" organization. Mrs. Ruegge is currently president of the "Laramie County" branch of the organization.

It was January 1973 when the Supreme Court passed down the notorious Roe V. Wade ruling which made abortion legal throughout every stage (!) of pregnancy. This ruling initiated a holocaust of baby-killing which Bible-believing, truth-confessing, counter-cultural (see accompanying article, p. 12) Christians are conscience-bound to counteract with their clear witness. A number of times Mrs. Ruegge has appeared on a local radio station talk show—together with her pastor on one occasion—in the promotion of a pro-life/anti-abortion stance.

Herewith Mrs. Ruegge's letter, which is an excellent example of her Christian witness:

PLAIN AND SIMPLE; ABORTION IS JUST WRONG

Legal or not, it is wrong to snuff out the life of an innocent, unborn baby. This little child, who cannot speak for himself, should be protected.

That little life is precious under any circumstance. It is not a part of anyone's body. It's a separate human being with separate rights. Sadly, it is viewed by the pro-abortion world as an inconve-

nience. Encouraging women and girls to have abortions is wrong!

Women don't deserve abortion. Abortion hurts women. Right after "choosing" to have an abortion, there may be a feeling of "relief," but then come the psychological, emotional, and often physical damage that last a lifetime. There's regret over the killing of their child. These women who are victims of abortion need help and counseling. If the pro-choice advocates care at all about these young women, they'll urge them to choose alternatives to abortion.

To even suggest that pro-lifers don't want to help women is narrow-minded. Look in the yellow pages of your phone book under "Abortion Alternatives." Here are listed just some of the entities that help young women who find themselves in unplanned pregnancies. Post-



See TVBS story, p. 23. Pastor Mark Bernthal, right, welcomes the TVBS flier group to Middleton, Wisconsin (top). Pastor Paul Tiefel and Prof. Joe Lau of Eau Claire are chaperones with the group (below).



abortion counseling is also available.

Those who claim to be “Pro Choice” have some explaining to do. “Choice” number one is abortion! Why are you so vehemently opposed to choice number two (Life)? Why don’t you ever mention the baby when discussing abortion? Why do you fight to prevent such things as parental notification, a woman’s right

to know, 24-hour waiting periods and any other pro-life legislation? Why don’t you want a ban on the gruesome procedure of partial-birth abortion? Why are you against adoption?

*In helping the woman make the right choice, we save the baby. Getting rid of the baby should never be a solution. Abortion is **wrong**.*



A PRO-LIFE STANCE—PART OF THE CHRISTIAN COUNTER CULTURE FROM WAY BACK!

“If Jesus had never lived...the world would be a very different place. Whatever beliefs you hold about him, there is no denying his impact. But how far and deep his influence actually extends may surprise you....” So begins a back-cover review of the contents of a book entitled *How Christianity Changed the World* (Alvin J. Schmidt, Zondervan, 2004). In turn, a Foreword comment about the book says: “No other religion, philosophy, teaching, nation, movement—whatever—has so changed the world for the better as Christianity has done....”

The book is an interesting read on Christianity’s influence upon the sociological aspects of world history, particularly in New Testament times. The author is a retired professor of sociology in a secular university, and a professed Christian.

Just a few chapter-titles show the direction of the book’s contents: “The Sanctification of Human Life,” “Christianity Elevates Sexual Morality,” “Women receive Freedom and Dignity,” “Christianity’s Imprint on Education,” “Slavery Abolished: A Christian Achievement.” Still other chapters treat

the influence of Christianity in such areas of human existence as charity, economic freedom, art, music, and literature.

In this writing we wish to underscore the compelling subject matter of the book’s second chapter, “The Sanctification of Human Life.” At the outset the chapter says, “‘When in Rome, do as the Romans do.’ So goes an old saying. When the early Christians arrived in Rome from Jerusalem and parts of Asia Minor, they did not do as the pagan Romans did. They defied the entire system of Rome’s morality...” (p. 48).

The writer proceeds to set forth the low view of human life in the pagan countries of ancient Greece and Rome. He asserts: “Infants were killed for various reasons. Those born deformed or physically frail were especially prone to being willfully killed, often by drowning. Some were killed more brutally [sacrificed to gods, or throats cut, etc.—ed.]...” (p. 49). The author proceeds to show how such practices of infanticide had the support (sad to say!) of philosophers such as Cicero and Seneca.

And how do you imagine the new Christian citizens in those societies reacted/responded to such practices?



“As with abortion...the early Christians called the Greco-Roman practice of infanticide murder. To them infants were creatures of God, redeemed by Christ. Moreover, they knew of Christ’s high regard for little children, for he once said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them’ (Matthew 19:14)...” (p. 50). It may be disturbing to hear, yet may there be a kernel of truth to the author’s suggestion that the Greco-Roman “low view of children” had a (negative) effect on Jesus’ disciples—indicated by their remarks one time that the Master should not be bothered with people bringing their children to Him?

Be that as it may, evidence abounds that the Christian church, and Christians individually, at every turn opposed infanticide, child abandonment (“throw-away children,” another widespread pagan practice!), and abortion (“the low view of human life among the Greco-Romans also showed itself in widespread abortion practices,” p. 55). “Long before the birth of Christ, faithful Jews, contrary to the pagan societies around them, held to the sanctity of human life, including life in the womb. Flavius Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, said that the biblical law (the Pentateuch) ‘forbids women from either to cause abortion or to make away with the fetus.’ He further stated that a woman who aborts her child ‘destroys a soul and

diminishes the race.’ First-century Christians, being predominantly former Jews, similarly valued human life in the womb” (p. 55f).

Thanks to the highest court in the land, legal abortions since 1973 have long ago reached into the multi-millions—God have mercy, but why should He?! Not surprisingly, abortion’s companion practice of euthanasia is here and there and more and more being promoted on the other end of life’s spectrum.

“As is well-known, abortion on demand has become widely accepted today in Western societies, and...liberal theology and secularism have greatly contributed to its acceptance. Even most mainline Protestant churches, most of them influenced by liberal theology, have come to accept abortion on demand and have thereby largely rejected Christianity’s long-standing adherence to the sanctity of human life, at least in regard to abortion...” (p. 59f). The author then gives a listing of a few church denominations (among them the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) which, he says, oppose abortion, thus continuing “to walk the path of their Christian ancestors, reaching back to the pristine church” (p. 60).

Though not mentioned, the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) could well be on the author’s list. Truly, unless we CLC Christians allow ourselves to be desensitized to it all, Christians among us will strive to counteract the “culture of death”! One way this can be done is by giving a clear Christian, Bible-based witness to the sanctity of human life (see the fine witness by the letter-writer in our SMORGASBORD column).

—Pastor Paul Fleischer

— Perspectives —

- * #1: Why Bother In the First Place?
- #2: Some Background History
- #3: Toward Preserving an “Orthodox Character”

Perspective #1: Why Bother In the First Place?

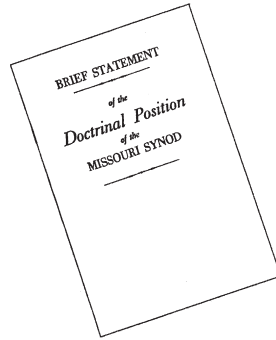
(#2 & #3 will follow the next two months)

As I sat down to write an inaugural article to introduce our readers to a new series in the *Spokesman*, I wondered (and thought the reader would too), “Why bother noting the 75th anniversary of a doctrinal statement of another Lutheran synod, which synod today wants very little if anything to do with that very statement?!?”

Well, for one reason, I thought, that’s why! Doctrinal creeds and confessions mean next to nothing unless those who pen them—and perhaps even adopted them—continue to stand by them, not just on paper, but in their church’s and church body’s ministry and practice.

And for another reason, even though evidence abounds that a large section of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) cares less and less for and about the contents of a document its forefathers adopted as a true and correct statement of nineteen basic Bible doctrines, we care!

And why should we or do we care? Because when the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) was organized in 1960, our founding fathers included the “Brief Statement of 1932” in the confessional article of the synod’s Constitution (Article III). They did this because they believed that the



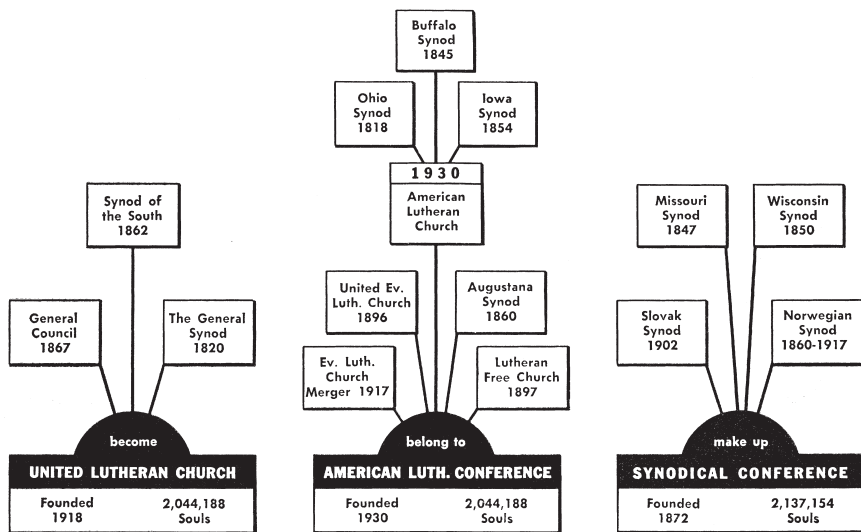
document gave a clear trumpet sound on the doctrines it addresses.

As years pass, we who belong to a “confessional” synod—meaning, we believe that doctrinal truth exists, and error must be recognized and dealt with in accord with Scripture—pray that our synod will continue to care, standing solidly on Scripture as did the “old Missourians.”

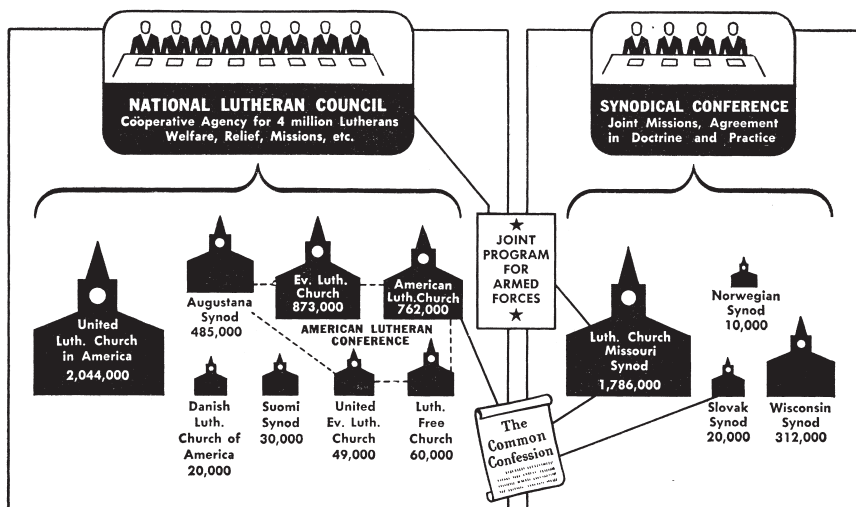
By “old Missourians” we mean those who were stalwarts of the old Synodical Conference founded in 1872 (comprised of the four synods, see graphic, p. 15). One of old Missouri’s theological leaders and also one of the five men who were commissioned by the synod to author the *Brief Statement* was Dr. Francis Pieper, whose three-volume *CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS* was used as a textbook in our seminary days (and it remains one of the dogmatics textbooks used in our Immanuel Lutheran Seminary today).

In our post-modern era when any distinction between truth and error is downplayed to the point of being

go to p. 16



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



This diagram shows the present status of the twelve main Lutheran synods. They have various geographical, language, and doctrinal backgrounds. Eight have come to co-operate in the National Lutheran Council. The more conservative synods belong to the Synodical Conference. The Missouri Synod has been co-operating with the National Lutheran Council in welfare and relief work (e.g. Lutheran Service Centers, Mission Relief) and has been negotiating with the American Lutheran Church with a view toward establishing fellowship (Common Confession).

Lutheran Bodies in the U.S.A.

Tract Number 1

continuing
"His
Word"

The tract opposite was the first of a 1954 "Continuing in His Word" series of eleven educational/instructive tracts printed by the Wisconsin Synod. The above "two pages" copied from the tract give a bird's eye view of various Lutheran synod alliances at the time. Intersynodical discussions were frequent but unsuccessful in bringing about church union (for example, the ALC would not accept Missouri's 1932 Brief Statement). The CLC was founded in 1960 as a result of false doctrine having arisen within the Synodical Conference. For more, see its "Perspective #1" as well as companion pieces in coming months.

ridiculed—and now seventy-five years after the *Brief Statement* was first accepted by his synod—listen to another clear sound of Dr. Pieper’s trumpet: “Agreement in words with disagreement in meaning is altogether contrary to the unity God calls for, and to seek such a ‘unity’ (‘we agree to disagree’) is immoral, a trifling with sacred, divine things, which is unseemly for Christians. The Christian Church can and should have patience with the erring and seek through instruction to remove the error. But never can or should the Church grant error equal right with the truth. If it does, it renounces the truth itself. It is the very nature of truth to antagonize error. Truth which no longer excludes error, but grants it domicile, is eo ipso resigning the truth....Unionism in principle

abolishes the difference between truth and error, so that only through a ‘happy inconsistency’ can the erring retain their hold on the essential truth. For this reason unionism is a grave threat to the Christian Church.” (Pieper, *CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS*, Vol. III, Concordia Publ. House, 1962, p. 426).

So, we are “bothering” to undertake this series of studies on the various *Brief Statement* articles. The crystal clear sounds of God’s Word of Truth need to be heard and appreciated anew by us who are CLC Lutheran confessors of Christ today. As the Savior prayed to His Father in behalf of His disciples then and now, so we pray: “Sanctify (us) by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

—Pastor Paul Fleischer



**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 the Holy Scriptures

The *Brief Statement* begins with the foundation, which must stand! Otherwise the Christian is beyond his depth in any religious disagreement with the atheist, agnostic, Buddhist, evolutionist, secular humanist, etc., etc. Why way out of his depth?

Because “the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light” (Luke 16:8b), according to Jesus.

In general, the non-Christian anthropologist or evolutionist has more horsepower than does the child

of God, the secular humanist has a stronger position in logic and rationality, and it is true that nuclear physics and micro-technology have received little assistance from Bible-believing children of God. We freely admit that “not many wise according to the flesh . . . are called” (1 Cor. 1:26).

So what? God still has it all over humans; He has better control over atomic energy and a tighter grip on microbiology, coupled with the deepest understanding of mankind’s position in the Universe. God is still God—in reality and in our hearts! We stand vis-à-vis with God, who is not an abstract principle or an impersonal force like gravity, but One who describes Himself as having a personal interest in His Universe and a heart of loving compassion toward humanity.

You see how that gets us to the Bible.

Everything we can know about God and His view of the world is dependent on what He has told us in the Bible. We have no other source of infallible information. We enfold the Bible in our hearts because here we come into direct contact with our Creator and Redeemer—almost face-to-face, and He with us. Our forefathers fought many a battle to preserve for us a God-pleasing reverence for the Bible, and the banner of the *Brief Statement* still flies over our theological ramparts.

Here’s the text (bold face) with brief comments along the way enclosed in brackets.

Of the Holy Scriptures

1. We teach [and confess] that the Holy Scriptures differ from all other books in the world [including the Quran and other “scriptures” used in

man-made religions] in [this way] that they are the Word of God [God’s authoritative word on every subject of importance to Him]. They are the Word of God because the holy men of God [personally chosen by God, each for his specific time and mankind’s need] who wrote the Scriptures [the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments] wrote only that which the Holy Ghost communicated to them by inspiration, 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21. [We want to read the cited passages for ourselves: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”] We teach [and confess] also that the verbal [word-for-word in the original text] inspiration of the Scriptures is not a so-called “theological deduction” [thus subject to the rules of logic, deductive analysis, etc.], but that it is taught by direct statements of the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:16 [quoted above] John 10:35 [“...and the Scripture cannot be broken”—literally, cannot be dissolved or annulled], Rom. 3:2 [“...to them were committed the oracles of God”], 1 Cor. 2:13 [“these things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches...”] Note the progression—from the thoughts being God’s thoughts to the words being God’s words.] Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions [for God does not misrepresent the facts or misspeak Himself], but they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters, John

10:35. [We totally trust God on any subject He brings before us.]

2. We furthermore teach regarding the Holy Scriptures that they are given by God to the Christian Church for the foundation of faith, Eph. 2:20 [“...the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets....” Therefore our use of His Word matches His purpose in giving us His Word.] Hence the Holy Scriptures are the sole source from which all doctrines proclaimed in the Christian Church must be taken [We teach what God’s Word teaches, nothing less!] and therefore, too, the sole rule and norm by which all teachers and doctrines must be examined and judged. [Isn’t this wonderful! It’s the Reformation principle through and through! Pulpit sermons and synodical resolutions must align with what God says; and each child of God is responsible and accountable.] With the Confessions of our Church we teach also that the rule of faith (*analogia fidei*) [which simply means that the Scriptures rule over our faith and our teachings] according to which the Holy Scriptures are to be understood are the clear passages of the Scriptures themselves which set forth the individual doctrines. [For example, what we teach about Baptism is found in the passages that speak of Baptism, not in passages that speak of ritual circumcision.] (Apology. Triglota, p. 441, Paragraph 60; [This is a reference to the Apology (Defense) of the Augsburg Confession, as printed in the Concordia Triglotta, page 441, which says, “Examples ought to be interpreted according to the rule, i.e., according to certain and clear passages of Scripture, not contrary to the rule, that

is, contrary to the Scriptures.”] Mueller, p. 284). The rule of faith is not the man-made so-called totality of Scripture (“*Ganzes der Schrift*”) [For example, the duty of children toward parents is found in specific verses of Scripture, and these specific verses are enough to carry the case; Scriptures on other subjects are not germane.]

[Finally, in any God-pleasing statement of faith, specific errors must be pointed out and rejected.] 3. We reject the doctrine which under the name of science has gained wide popularity in the Church of our day [external Christendom] that Holy Scripture is not in all its parts the Word of God, but in part the Word of God and in part the word of man [a mongrel mix of pure with impure] and hence does, or at least, might contain error. We reject this erroneous doctrine as horrible and blasphemous, since it flatly contradicts Christ and His holy apostles [Scriptural support would include John 8:31-31, Matt. 10:20, John 10:35, Luke 11:28], sets up men as judges over the Word of God, and thus overthrows the foundation of the Christian Church and its faith. [The foundations must stand, or Satan will have already gained his evil victory over us! Lord, have mercy!]

—Paul R. Koch



TVBS chaperones Gordon & Joyce Stratton, Eau Claire, Wis. with a flier group headed for Texas

—Editor's note: With the synod in the midst of a budgetary crunch, we find ourselves in agreement with the CLC member who forwarded this article to us, feeling its compelling message is timely and worthy of wider dissemination. The article is adapted from "Faithful Stewardship of Our Resources" by Pastor Douglas Libby, a member of the synod's Compensation Committee.

TIME - TALENTS - POSSESSIONS

To serve the Lord as the Bible directs requires a commitment which we will refer to as an investment. This is appropriate because investments are meant to result in yields. The greater the yield on the investment, the more people customarily want to invest. However, worldly affairs are fickle, and earthly fortunes are fleeting.

We have an investment Counselor Who encourages us to invest substantially in a Sure Thing. He encourages us to invest in the promotion of that which already has been purchased and secured for us. When compared with anything and everything else which may be possessed in this world, it is the One Thing Needful.

The soul-care work of the Church is a collective investment which brings eternal returns. We invest in this work so that others can share what we have—the certainty of salvation. The importance of this work, when properly understood, generates more excitement than any other investment. "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver" (Ps. 119:72). Our prayer is that each of us by the Spirit will heed the Lord's counsel to prioritize the investment of the firstfruits of our time, our talents, and our material possessions for His work.

TIME

Much work needs to be done and

many workers are needed to serve people with the Word of God. Christ's work is done by pastors, teachers, and lay people. Each has something to offer.

The more people willing to give of their time, the more people can be reached with the church's activities and programs.

Since worldly activities can make unnecessary demands on our time, encouragement is needed to remember Christ's work. Pastors and teachers are meant to help equip or prepare others for the work of the ministry (or service) in the body of Christ (see Ephesians 4:11-16).

In its work the Church is compared to a functioning human body. Just as all the members are needed by the body, so all in the body of Christ have parts to play. The body can survive without the use of fingers and toes, limbs, or even certain organs. However, the resulting adjustments and concessions reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of the



Phil Radichel, chairman of synod Bd. of Trustees, addresses Convention

body's performance.

So it often is in the Church. Depending on whether some or many members make themselves unavailable, adjustments and concessions will need to be made. The time available to help will vary from person to person, but all should plan time for the work of the Church.

TALENTS

To each of us are given certain gifts or talents. Ephesians 4 teaches that we have been given these gifts and abilities to carry on the Lord's work. Our time of grace here on this Earth is a comparatively short time. Whatever it is we do, our Lord intends that it should not be done at the expense of our involvement with His work. Our Lord wants each of us to take ownership in His work through investing help according to the gifts and abilities He has given—for this very purpose!

The human body is characterized by a dynamic and amazing balance between its systems and organs. So in the Church, we are many members but one body, and we are best able to accomplish our vital goals in the Church as "every member does its share," as the Lord intends and directs. One of the goals of the congregation in connection with "equipping the saints for the work of ministry" will be to help its members determine where each one's gifts can best be used.

MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

In our society most people are involved with some financial investments. There may be nothing wrong with making financial investments

intended to yield a monetary return on the investment. At the same time, though, Biblical stewardship principles speak clearly about not failing to generously invest financially in the work of the Lord.

The Lord says we are to contribute our firstfruits—not our leftovers—to support the most important work in the world. Firstfruit investments will be more than leftover investments. Why would investing more in this case be more appropriate? Because we are investing in the promotion of a Sure Thing—the gospel of Jesus Christ—and this is meant to generate excitement and enthusiasm! The gospel alone can save souls eternally. What is more meaningful and important!

Investment opportunities are often missed because people do not plan properly. Surely discipline is involved to set something aside for investment purposes. Many have looked back and lamented not having prioritized differently to take better advantage of what turned out to be a very good investment opportunity.

The Lord does not want this to happen with what He intends each of us to invest in His work. That is why we are directed to give of our firstfruits. "Honor the Lord with your possessions and with your firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine" (Prov. 3:9-10; see also 2 Cor. 9:6-8).

To summarize: As those called to faith in our Savior, the Lord directs us to support His work of soul-care generously with our time, our talents, and our material possessions. May the Lord, through His Spirit, grant each of us so to do!

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!

“...In years to come (should the Lord not return first) there will be many changes at ILC. There will be new buildings. And some of you who are students now may be back as professors. There may be many changes, but by trusting in His Word, the message will never change.”

The Gospel Never Changes!

If you were called upon to pick a verse that would identify what our school is all about (for a sign that would go at the entrance of the campus), what might that verse be? Some may pick John 3:16. How about the verse Prof. Sippert shared with us Friday: “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever” (2 Peter 3:18)?

How about: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8)? That verse would remind us: The Gospel Never Changes! 1. Change is all around us. 2. Our Savior is the same forever.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is a beautiful letter that has us focus on Jesus.

The original receivers of the letter were people who had suffered persecution, but they were in danger of suffering in a much greater way. They were in danger of turning away from Christ.

The letter urges those first readers not to abandon their faith in Christ for the “safety” of Judaism (which was legal in the Roman world, while Christianity had become outlawed).

Those Christians who were Jewish by birth may have been tempted to think they would protect themselves by rejecting Christ and reverting back to their old way. Yet to do so—to turn away from Christ—would mean giving up life itself!

Christianity is described several times in this letter as the better way—the one true religion as God has revealed Himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ who died for the sins of the whole world, so that those who believe on Him may have everlasting life. Throughout the letter the treasure we have in Christ is repeatedly brought out.

Change is all around us

Think about all the changes in your own life. For some of you this is your

first time away from home. Most here aren't that old, and you have already seen a lot of change, and it will continue.

Change can be a good thing. I am glad I don't have to go out back to an outhouse in the middle of the winter. I'm glad there are medicines that help control and cure disease.

Some changes aren't so good. My vision isn't as good as it used to be. I couldn't go run with the cross country team. It may be quite some time before you experience this yourselves, but you know that physically we all wear out.

Businesses, governments, and schools face changes all the time as well. In fact, dealing with change has become a real science. Those who work to promote and facilitate change are called "change agents"; they work to make change happen smoothly and to insure those who don't want change that it is a good thing—sometimes even when it isn't!

Unfortunately, that kind of "change agent" can get into some churches. Over the years Satan has successfully tempted some Christians to stop trusting God's Word and Spirit to grow His Church. Sometimes changing the way the gospel message is presented ends up changing the gospel itself.

As future leaders in the CLC, you will not be immune to temptations to follow the way of the "change agent." God calls us to be faithful to His Word; to continue proclaiming what He has done; to continue trusting Christ for our salvation. He will grow His Church His way.

Our Savior is the same forever

Jesus Christ is the gospel. He is the

good news. What He did for believers in the past, He did for us. What He did for us, He has done and will do for those who follow us.

On Calvary He died for the sins of the whole world. His name Jesus refers to what He came to do—to save His people from their sin. He is the Savior of your soul!

Whereas the world around us changes literally every second, our Savior is eternal. Every single person who has been a believer in Jesus' blood as payment for sin has trusted in the same Savior and His same saving work upon the cross.

There is nothing new about what Jesus did for you and for me. And yet this wonderful message could never get old, in the sense that one would ever tire of this hope we have in Him.

Each of us is reminded of our sinfulness daily. We constantly fall short of loving God with all our heart and loving our neighbor as ourselves. And how close we may be to the Pharisee who looks down upon the publican, thinking we may be special in God's eyes because of what we have done rather than because of who He is and what He has done for us.

If we were to abandon that wonderful good news proclaimed again and again through the centuries—even down to us!—we would be abandoning God in His grace toward us. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). No matter what the changes in our life, our need for a Savior never changes.

In years to come (should the Lord not return first) there will be many

changes at ILC. There will be new buildings, and some of you who are students now may be back as professors. There may be many changes, but by trusting in His Word, the message will never change, for the gospel never changes: “Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.”

—Ed Starkey

[Editor’s note: Mr. Starkey is a former Lutheran Brethren pastor (and semi-pro hockey player), who left the LB for doctrinal reasons and



Convention Delegate Dave Rust (Fridley, Minn.) with Ed Starkey (right)

desires to enter the CLC ministry. He has successfully completed the first stage of his colloquy. While he is awaiting the completion of the second stage, he is attending classes at Immanuel Lutheran Seminary. This is his second year in the seminary.]



Spotlight on the Traveling Vacation Bible School Program

Mission work at home

“If you cannot speak like angels, if you cannot preach like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus, you can say He died for all.” (TLH #496)

As Christians we are privileged to share the Good News of a Savior from sin. One mission opportunity close to home is the CLC’s Traveling Vacation Bible School (TVBS) program.

Not all CLC congregations have the resources to hold Vacation Bible School. The TVBS program matches volunteers with congregations which would otherwise have difficulty preparing and staffing Vacation Bible School.

The Lord has richly blessed the program since its inception in 1999. The greatest blessing is that the precious gospel of the Savior’s love and work for sinners was sown as seed all over the United States. Just last year alone, over 37,000 flyers containing the gospel message were distributed. Nine congregations were served and nearly

“The opportunity to serve the Lord is great, and never more so than when we look ahead to 2007. Recent budgetary shortfalls within the CLC have placed the future of this program in serious doubt...”

150 children were taught. Over 100 of these children were non-members!

One congregation writes: “Please send us a flyer and teaching team (next year)! It is truly our best outreach opportunity and a very unique one as far as the astounding numbers of non-members are concerned.” Another church writes, “TVBS is a great program which has touched many within our community.”

TVBS also blesses those involved by strengthening the bond of Christian love. Congregations, some quite far away from the Midwest, get visits by CLC brethren. “It has made us feel less

isolated,” says one pastor.

Young people have come to understand and appreciate the Savior’s command to preach the gospel. *“For me, TVBS was a great experience. You get to go around to other parts of the country with your friends and spread God’s word. You get to meet people from other congregations and make more friends in the CLC. It’s always exciting to hear that people actually responded to the fliers you delivered. Sometimes you feel like you did all that work for nothing, but then people start to respond, and you know that you really are doing some good. I had a lot of fun on TVBS this year, and I’m really excited to do it again next year!! I advise everyone to give it a try, because it is a lot of fun.”*

The opportunity to serve the Lord is great, and never more so than when we look ahead to 2007. Recent budgetary shortfalls within the CLC have placed the future of this program in serious doubt.

Please prayerfully consider ways you and your congregations can help support this program. Visit our website for more information on how you can

Send Change of Address to :

*Lutheran Spokesman
2750 North Oxford Street
Roseville, MN 55113*

help serve in this outreach opportunity: <http://www.ilcactivities.org/tvbs/tvb-sopening.htm> or contact Ross Roehl at 715-836-6635 or 715-831-8306.



TVBS Flier group in Austin, Minn.

From a letter sent out to all CLC congregations—

Regarding the TVBS program...

- The program has served 37, or over one-third, of our CLC congregations over the past eight years.
- Around 1,500 young souls have been brought to the feet of the LORD through the teaching of His Word—including over 1,000 non-member children.
- Over 100,000 miles have been traveled in those eight years.
- Over 950 volunteers have traveled to work along side hundreds of participants from the home congregations.
- Thus the precious, saving gospel message of Christ and Him crucified has been spread through teaching or hand delivering over 275,000 fliers.