

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



finished!

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A Bitter-Sweet Season

Advent: songs of promise and expectation!

Christmas: peeling of bells, rejoicing at promises fulfilled!

Easter: hallelujahs fill the sky, praises to our risen Lord!

Lent: funeral dirges?

The Lenten Season seems to be a time of the year when the worship of the Christian becomes more somber than usual. The hymns often take on a minor key, and our focus of topic shifts dramatically. We move from Christmas and Epiphany's Baby and Shepherds, angel choruses and Wise Men, to Lent's sin and suffering, agony, blood, betrayal and death.

These are the realities in the life of our Savior (as they are harsh realities in our lives as well).

Taking a good hard look at the life of our Savior, it is easy to see the disappointment and suffering He faced in this life—and not as easy to spot the joy and light-heartedness that we

might see in another's situation.

With Christ we understand, however, that the fate of all mankind was literally in His hands—while, at the same time, with His true human nature there was potential for disaster. If Jesus had not fulfilled every prophecy perfectly and kept every commandment completely, the curse over all sinners would remain; all hope would be lost.

The Scriptures remind us that Jesus was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. He faced not only the really huge temptations brought on by Satan (as the temptations in the wilderness, cf. Matt. 4) but He endured and overcame the day-to-day pettiness of life—struggles with self, time constraints, temptations of frustration, and even dealing with misguided and outrightly deceitful friends. Things like this to which we often fall prey, Christ conquered.

When we see Jesus approaching the Lenten season of His life, we may feel

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LENT

sympathy for Him. When considering the plight of the Christ, genuine pity and sorrow may creep into the breast of the Christian. But it is more than sadness and pity that needs to be felt—we need to deal with our culpability! We put Christ on the path to the cross. Our sins caused the sinless Son of God to have to become sin for us. His redeeming love brought Him down from His throne in humble obedience to His Father’s will to reclaim our rebellious hearts from Satan.

Is it any wonder then that the Lenten season, when we focus on sin and sorrow—our sin, His sorrow—is a “bitter” time?!

Smiling Through Tears

Yet it truly is a bitter-sweet season. We who have lost loved ones understand the bitter-sweet sensation. The heavy heart that says good-bye and the tears that flow in sorrow over a departed Christian are tempered by the knowledge that our brother or sister in Christ is even now enjoying the eternal rest prepared for us all.

Similarly, when sin drags us down and our failures loom before us, when guilt grips the heart because we have

caused the shame and suffering of our Savior, we must smile. We smile through our tears because we have been shown the great love of our Savior. This is the whole reason He came into this world—to save that which was lost, to save us!

Our failures and shortcomings, our ungodly actions and rebelliousness—all have been nailed to the cross with Christ, paid for in full by His precious blood!

On the one hand, we may wonder how unbelievers go about their merry way with no thought of the future destruction that awaits them. On the other hand, those who observe us may marvel at redeemed children of God going about with dour, humorless expressions and attitudes—as if forgiveness were not theirs and heaven doesn’t await them!

Listen carefully to our Lenten hymns this season. Can you hear songs of promise and expectation—pealing of bells, joy at promises fulfilled, hallelujahs filling the sky, praises to our risen Lord?!

Funeral Dirges? Let the dirges be for our conquered enemies—the devil, the world, our sinful flesh, and death itself, each of whom Christ has defeated for us!

—Teacher David W. Bernthal
Fond du Lac, Wis.



Sacrifice

“What are you giving up for Lent?”

I remember hearing that question often as a child growing up around children from Catholic homes. Each Lenten season those children were

expected to choose something that they would do without from Ash Wednesday until Easter.

So they would say that they planned to give up some favorite food

or activity. We Lutheran children used to make fun of the practice, and we were glad that no one was expecting us to give up anything we liked for that six-week period.

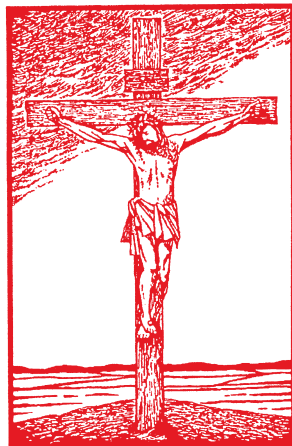
When I was a student at Immanuel Lutheran College, there was an occasion when some of us were making light of the custom of giving up something for Lent. We were surprised when one of our teachers chided us for our levity. We were told that, rightly understood, the custom is not a bad one.

It is very bad indeed if people are led to believe that their acts of sacrifice are works by which they earn God's favor. But it could be good for children and adults to sacrifice—willingly, cheerfully, humbly—something they enjoy as a way of reminding themselves of the infinitely greater sacrifice Jesus made for us all.

No doubt there are good reasons why the custom of giving up something for Lent has not been promoted among Lutherans. It is a custom easily misunderstood and misused, and even at its best it is a custom of limited value. There are far more meaningful and necessary sacrifices that believers are called to make for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Jesus does call us to sacrifice. He teaches those who would follow Him that discipleship involves the sacrifice of everything that gets in the way of following Him. He says, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10:37).

We ought to love our parents and our children, but we are not to hold them so high in our estimation that to



please them we are willing to go against the Word of our Savior or fail in our service to Him.

Even "Small" Sacrifices...

While following Jesus involves sacrifice, let's not think only—or even primarily—of big, heroic sacrifices.

Think instead of sacrifices required, for example, to attend a Sunday worship service and Bible class. For most it doesn't seem like very much: the relinquishing of a couple of hours of time, the expense of gasoline, the effort of getting dressed up and getting going a little earlier than usual on a Sunday morning.

Yet such sacrifices should not be belittled. They are necessary if we are to participate in public worship and to receive the blessings of Word and sacrament.

Even small sacrifices made for Christ are a denying of self (Matt. 16:24) and a crucifying of the flesh (Gal. 5:24). If one is unwilling to make small sacrifices for Christ, how will such a person be willing to make the greater sacrifices that are expected?

What is it that makes one willing to

sacrifice for Christ? It is Christ Himself and His sacrifice! It is His love for us, the love that moved Him to suffer the death of the cross to redeem us from sin and death. It is the salvation that He won for us by His sacrificial death.

When Christ our Savior is seen in the depths of His sufferings, we realize that no one else can compare to Him. When we think of the eternal life that we have through faith in Him, we realize that nothing else that we have or could have here on Earth can compare

with it.

Seeing Christ as He is and seeing our blessings in Him as they are, we have the same view as St. Paul when he said, "...Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him" . . . (Php. 3:8,9).

—*Pastor John Klatt*
Rapid City, S.Dak.



Focused

What is the most focused you've ever been?

Maybe it was the thesis you had to write for your Master's Degree? Maybe it was getting that last renovation on the house done? Maybe it was getting your three year-old potty-trained? Whatever the task at hand, it consumed a majority of your time and attention. It was your focus.

God is focused. We can go all the way back to the Garden of Eden to see what He was focused on. After Adam and Eve sinned against His only commandment and played the blame game, God promised to send a Savior. From the woman one descendant would come who would crush the head of the devil.

Throughout the Old Testament we see God's focus to accomplish this task of sending a Savior.

God chose Abraham and his descendants to bring forth this Savior. The Savior would come from the tribe of

Judah and be a descendant of King David. Everything God did with and for the Children of Israel, He did with this focus in mind—sending the Serpent-crusher as promised to Adam and Eve.

"When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4-5). The time had come—the Savior was born. He who was promised in the Garden of Eden was born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus had come to crush the head of the devil.

Jesus too...

Jesus too was focused. We read that even at the age of twelve He was focused on doing His Father's business. As He grew older, His focus did not change. Throughout the Gospel of John you can read how Jesus said that He was focused on doing the will of His Father.



Then we read, “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Lk. 9:51).

FOCUS! The time had come for Jesus to crush the head of the serpent. Jesus knew full well what awaited Him in Jerusalem. He told His disciples, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again” (Mk. 10:33-34).

Even though Jesus knew He would

have to suffer and then die, He remained focused. “He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.” He was here to do His Father’s will, and that meant destroying Him who had the power of death—that is, the devil (see Heb. 2:14).

To accomplish this Jesus would have to die. He did! He would then have to overcome death by rising from it. He did!

Remember that particular task you were focused on? How hard was it to accomplish that task? Writing a thesis was probably pretty hard. Getting your three-year-old to cooperate was probably pretty frustrating. Yet it only cost you time and energy.

God was and is focused. Jesus was and is focused. Focused on you and me! From eternity God called each of us to be His child. In time God sent His Son to reconcile us unto Himself. The focus of Jesus took Him to Jerusalem to suffer and die. All along, the Triune God was focused on you.

Praise be to God for His redeeming focus!

—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
Hecla, S.Dak.



How Deep the Father's Love for Us

(Numbers 3 & 4 of a series of six Lenten meditations [2006] by CLC pastors serving congregations in southern Minnesota)

No. 3 — The Father Placed Sin’s Curse Upon His Son for Us

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, by the words of Your Law, teach me to understand and know my sin. By seeing Jesus suffer and die on my behalf, teach me not to think of my sin lightly, but to understand its seriousness and repent. Dear Father, I come to you confessing my many sins. Forgive me. Help me to always believe and trust in the truth that You have given me Jesus’ righteousness in place of my*

sin. Thank You for Your deep love! Amen.

Behold the Man upon a cross
My sin upon His shoulders.
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers.



“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’)...” (Galatians 3:13).

Before a particular battle against the Amalekites, God instructed King Saul to utterly destroy the enemy, leaving neither person nor animal alive. Yet Saul and his men kept some animals and the king alive. Then Saul tried to downplay his blatant disobedience against God by telling Samuel, “they have...spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed” (1 Sam. 15:15).

Saul’s excuse did not work. He had contradicted the clear will of God. Samuel responded, “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice....Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king” (1 Sam. 15:22f).

There is a notion out in the world—our world—that seems to think that sin is serious only when it is a so-called “big” sin. “Big” is defined as a sin that is well-known, affects others, and has the greatest visible consequences.

This notion is false, for all sin is serious. All sin contradicts God’s will—yes, even the white lies and the things we think are little. All sin is condemned by God’s law. All sin rightly deserves condemnation and judgment in hell. The wages of any and all sin is death! (cf. Romans 6:23)

When we understand the true wages and curse of sin, then what wonder and awe can flood over us when we hear about the deep love the Father has shown to us. Our heavenly Father sent His Son to bear sin’s curse for us and in place of the curse God gives us Jesus’ righteousness!

God said through Isaiah: “Surely [Jesus] has borne our griefs. [He] has carried our sorrows...He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities...All we like sheep have gone astray...and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa. 53:4-5).

Thanks be to God for our substitute—Jesus! Amen.

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt (Mankato, Minn.)

No. 4 — The Father Had His Son Finish Salvation’s Work for Us

Prayer: *Dearest and most gracious Father, I praise You that You have sent Your Son as a willing sacrifice for sin and as the perfect atonement for all people. I thank You that You did not leave me in my deep distress but provided a perfect and complete rescue so that I now might come before Your mercy seat with*

complete confidence of Your grace and favor for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, my Savior. Amen.

It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life—
I know that it is finished.



“After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit” (John 19:28-30).

It looked like a done deal. Adam was cowering in the bushes with Eve, seeking to evade all contact with the LORD God. He had enjoyed such contact with God, but that was now a thing of the past. His response to God’s approach was telling: “I was afraid and hid” (cf. Gen. 3:10).

Adam’s response (to the probing accusation of the LORD)—“The woman You gave me caused the problem” (cf. Gen. 3:12)—was also telling. It surely looked like fellowship with God had been forfeited forever.

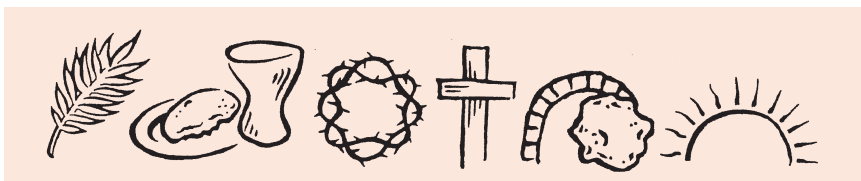
Even after God had promised to send someone who would defeat the Evil One, the whole matter looked bleak. The entire world was corrupt and destroyed by the Flood except for the tiniest remnant (cf. Gen. 6ff).

In the renewed world, the same pattern repeated: the world turned overwhelmingly away from God. Even among the carefully nurtured chosen nation of Israel, things looked bad—so bad that a prophet of God was convinced that he alone was left (cf. 1 Kings 19:1ff). He was mistaken and was actually part of a hidden minority. It did look as if the human race was beyond remedy and lost forever. It looked as if Satan, the Accuser, could say, “It’s over. It’s finished.”

When Christ was falsely convicted and slain by wicked hands, mocked and ridiculed, and hanged on a tree, His enemies thought they had won. It was finished. They would never be troubled by Jesus again!

But thanks be to God, how wrong they were! What was finished was the terror of conscience, the fear of death, and reign of Satan. What was completed was the work of salvation, the redemption of mankind, the payment for sin, the reconciliation with God. Christ had finished the gracious work He came to do. And we are safe with Him.

—Pastor Norman Greve (Eagle Lake, Minn.)



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: 23-28

The Last Word

There are several different ways in which we could end a letter. Depending upon the person to whom we're writing, we might close with “sincerely,” or “love,” or “in Christ.”

When we are saying goodbye to someone in person, our words will vary as well. We might say, “I love you,” or “God bless you.” If we were in an argument, we might be keen to get in the last word in a negative way. Perhaps we'd get in a parting shot.

Final words have a lasting effect.

Paul's closing words in his first letter to the Thessalonians were intended to have a positive, lasting effect. He communicated what he wanted for them and from them. Both of these desires are on a high spiritual plane and demonstrate a Christ-centered relationship for Christians in general, and the relationship between pastors and congregations in particular.

There are two things that Paul wishes for his fellow Christians at Thessalonica: 1) That God would sanctify them completely. 2) That they would be preserved blameless at Jesus' coming.

To be sanctified completely is to be totally set apart from sin. It is a status that we will not attain until heaven, but at the same time it is something that we strive for here on Earth. As Christians

we are in a constant struggle to do what is right and avoid what is wrong. We strive to please God; we also work to help our neighbors in that direction. These are God-pleasing actions. In fact, in this letter to the Thessalonians Paul directs them to do just that.

However, the power to be set apart from sin—whether in time or for eternity—is found in the Holy Spirit. Only He can overcome our sinful instincts. We do well to pray for our fellow Christians that they might be set apart from sin, and that God's will may be done in them.

In a similar vein, we ought to pray for each other that we might be preserved blameless until the Last Day. Many have come to grief in seeing friends and family become like seed not able to put down roots, or like a plant choked out by the thorns and thistles (see Matthew 13). Faith needs constant nurturing with the gospel. Pray for your fellow Christians that they remain involved with the means of grace and finish the race of faith set before them. “He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it” (1 Thess. 5:24).

Fellowship Aspects

Paul also asks for three things from the Thessalonians: 1) Pray for us; 2) Greet one another with a holy kiss; 3)

Read the letter to the brethren.

All three of these requests remind us of the positive aspects of fellowship. God brings people together as Christians that they might give strength to one another. Our relationship with our fellow Christians and our pastor should not be merely passive. There is activity in our Christian relationships.

Pray for your pastor. Pray that he would remain faithful to the Word. Pray that God would give him zeal to serve. Pray that he would remain uplifted and not grow despondent. Pray that God would give him strength and compassion. Pray that he would be a shepherd under the direction of Christ.

Pray in a similar way for the members of your congregation. A good exercise would be to go through your church directory name by name, making requests of your Lord for each person in the flock. If you don't know of particular needs, you can make general requests or view that as an opportunity to get to know your fellow Christians and their needs.

This fraternal love is the idea behind what is termed "a holy kiss" (v. 26). While we do not kiss each other in greeting (as was done years ago), the principle of friendliness still remains. In a society that is always in a hurry, we do well to take time for each other as Christians. God has brought us together to give strength to one another.

That strength will be granted through an involvement in God's Word. "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren" (v. 27). The bond from Christian to Christian is not based on race, or common interest, or anything else but the Word.

It is in that Word that we learn we are God's children—brothers and sisters in Christ. In God's Word alone we find the truth about the love of God and our status with God. The Lord still directs us to His Word today.

Some last words to think on? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (v. 28).

—Pastor Michael Schierenbeck
Markesan, Wis.



West Central District
Pastoral Conference
met at Prince of
Peace Lutheran
Church, Hecla, S.
Dak. last September.
A church member
even provided
weapons and
instruction for a
trap shoot break.



INTRODUCING the Books of the Prophets

Haggai

What a blessing that the Lord gives us this message through Haggai! How much we need to hear that God forgives our sins—including sins of apathy and selfishness—and gives us His guiding presence.

“Consider your ways!”

As I write this article, such words sound oh, so very familiar, what with New Year’s but a few short weeks past. People the nation over took the opportunity (perhaps long overdue) to consider their ways, perhaps making some much needed improvements to their lives.

As you read these words, they will also ring true with you. The Lord’s encouragement through Haggai—“Consider your ways!” (1:5,7)—is an intrinsic theme of the Lenten season. As we see the Lord of life suffering for our sins, we take stock of what we are by nature, without God, and consider how our sinful ways made it necessary for our Savior to go to Calvary in our stead. As we consider Haggai’s message, we will find the Lord leading us to apply these words of correction and salvation also to ourselves.

Nothing is revealed to us concerning Haggai apart from his name and when he lived. He was called by the Lord to serve as a prophet to His people who had returned from the Babylonian Captivity.

At first those who returned had vigorously begun the rebuilding of both

the city and the temple. But there was opposition, and the work slowed to a standstill (for more, see Ezra 4, Nehemiah 4). Soon fourteen years had passed without any work being done on the Temple.

So the Lord caused famine conditions to descend on the newly returned people at Jerusalem. Through Haggai the Lord told His people that the famine was due to their sluggishness at rebuilding His house. “‘Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?’ said the Lord. ‘Consider your ways! You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house’” (1:4,5,7,9).

No doubt the people had excuses for not completing the Temple. There was too much else to do—such as trying to deal with the results of the drought.

Rededication Brings Blessing!

“Consider your ways!” How many things do we have on our weekly schedules? How many projects do we have at

Outline of HAGGAI

- I. *Haggai Reproves the People* for neglecting the building of the Temple...(Ch. 1)
- II. *The Greater Glory of the Second Temple*, especially because of Christ's coming to it. (Ch. 2)

(Outline adapted from *Introduction to the Books of the Bible*, Drewes, Concordia Pub. House, St. Louis, Mo., 1965)

home that have been on the proverbial "back burner" for months on end?

How tempting it is to say, "You know, I just don't have time for devotion today; I have to get to work early." Or "There isn't time for church this weekend; I've got too much to do, and I get only a day or two off." Or "They are asking for people at church to help with a evangelism outreach project, but I can't get involved; there is a birthday party to go to tonight, and then I need to get to bed so I can get to the gym early in the morning."

How we need to hear the Lord's words through Haggai: "Consider your ways!" The Lord may not come to us and connect certain sins with particular results in our lives, but we do have the Lord saying: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Mt. 6:33).

"Consider your ways!" And as you do, by the grace of God, may your faith be strengthened to rededicate yourself to the Lord—for doing so always brings God's blessings!

Such was true among the Jews: "So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the high priest, and the spirit of all the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God" (1:14).

The Lord had come to them not only with law but also with the gospel: "I am with you, says the Lord." In this Word of God the Jews found the strength to get up and build. And the Lord saw what they did—as He had given them the strength to do—and He blessed them: "Consider now from this day forward—Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you" (2:18,19).

The Temple they built looked nothing like Solomon's temple, yet the Lord said, "Is this not in your eyes as nothing? Yet now be strong, all you people of the land, and work, for I am with you. My Spirit remains among you; do not fear! Once more I will shake heav-



Our Savior's, Jamestown, N. Dak., observed its 75th anniversary in 2006 (see February issue). Ann.

Committee members were: Alice Laber, Carol Hillstrom, Laurie Hamm, Curtis Wiest, Everett Murch, Pastor Eric Libby

en and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory. The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former. And in this place I will give you peace” (2:3-7,9).

The Lord Himself would suddenly come to His Temple! Regardless of the building the people built for His worship, God would be among them!

What a blessing that the Lord gives us this message through Haggai! How much we need to hear that God for-

gives our sins—including sins of apathy and selfishness—and gives us His guiding presence. He will bless us as we rededicate ourselves to putting Him and the things of His house first; He is with us whenever and wherever we gather around His Word.

Come, Desire of nations, come,
Fix in us Thy humble home;
Oh, to all Thyself impart,
Formed in each believing heart!...
(TLH #94:4)

—Pastor Paul Krause
Clarkston, Wash.



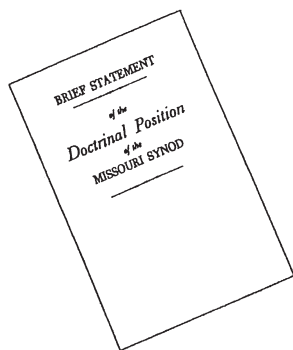
— Perspectives —

- #1: Why Bother In the First Place? (Jan. '07 issue)
- #2: Some Background History (Feb. '07 issue)
- * #3: Toward Preserving an “Orthodox Character”
- #4: Why the LC-MS is Paralyzed

Perspective #3: Toward Preserving an “Orthodox Character”

In our postmodern day, we still believe that words mean something, especially when we are talking about the “words” of God! We believe that the Bible is Holy Scripture, that is, the verbally inspired Word of God (“verbal inspiration”). Together with that, some of us within conservative Christendom still believe that there is need and place for creeds and confessions—statements of faith whose “words” deserve close scrutiny as to what is being said/confessed/believed!

In other words, it matters a great



deal to us exactly how something is said/written. Our holy desire is that a particular creed or confession accurately conveys what the Word of God teaches on a given subject—especially if and when that subject comes under discussion and debate.

That in turn being the case, it is common among us to “test the spirits whether they are of God...” (1 Jn. 4:1), as Holy Scripture directs. If something is said or written among us that may not be clear—whether in our pulpits, Bible Classes, classrooms, publications, conference and convention essays—it is only fitting and proper that in a spirit of Christian love and concern the matter be clarified in keeping with Scripture through brotherly discussion and debate.

What is being said here finds expression in the following paragraph of the *Brief Statement*:

The orthodox character of a church is established not by its mere name nor by its outward acceptance of, and subscription to, an orthodox creed, but by the doctrine which is actually taught in its pulpits, in its theological seminaries, and in its publications. On the other hand, a church does not forfeit its orthodox character through the casual intrusion of errors, provided these are combated and eventually removed by means of doctrinal discipline, Acts 20:30; 1 Tim. 1:3. (“Of the Church,” Brief Statement, par. 29).

The very name of our synod—Church of the Lutheran Confession—is intended to convey to ourselves in particular and to the world in general that ours is a confessional church. We strive to be that not only in name but also in practice. The synod’s not infrequent “controversies” can and should be seen as our striving to maintain an orthodox (truth-teaching) theological posture among ourselves first of all, but again also before a watching world. This does not mean that we critique one another for the sake of being critical. Rather, our hope and prayer is that,

whatever the discussion or debate, it be carried on out of love for preserving the gospel of Jesus Christ in its truth and purity. When that is kept in mind, God’s believing children will be “speaking the truth in love” even as they are “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3,15).

The sad fact is that all of us, though Christian believers, are sinful human beings, and in the face of doctrinal discussion (“controversy”), the sinful nature easily comes to the surface, displaying unchristian traits such as lovelessness, strident tones, prideful prejudices, and/or simple sin-blinded human reasoning.

However, the possibility of such sinful factors beclouding a well-intentioned doctrinal discussion or debate should not and dare not lead to the conclusion that our—or any—church body is better off by refusing to “test the spirits...”! If and when a refusal to address doctrinal issues wins the day, the result is what is being witnessed in countless church bodies in our day—practically anything goes lest a concerned brother be perceived as self-righteous, judgmental, or politically incorrect.

God help us by His Spirit that we never “forfeit (our) orthodox character” in the interest of preserving a false, merely outward peace. Such forfeiture would make us guilty of failing to live up to the Truth and to the very name of our church body—a name which means that we are a church committed to a biblically sound, truly Lutheran confession of God’s Word of truth!

RE: FACING PAGE:

A few months ago a synod member reminded us that 2006 was the tenth

From the Proceedings of the 22nd CLC Convention, June 17-21, 1996, at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin....

SANCTIFICATION

1. Sanctification is not something that the believer does, it is what the Holy Spirit does in the believer. From beginning to end, sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. The monergism of grace needs to be maintained in sanctification (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; *Concordia Triglotta* 895:37; 229:8).

2. The sanctified life of believers, including every work by which they serve and glorify God, is due to the Holy Spirit who has renewed them and continues to work in them by grace. It is in this sense that one may speak of the sanctified life as being a gift of grace. The life that is Spirit-lived is a fruit of being Spirit-filled (new man).

3. Because the Holy Spirit has sanctified them, believers are the doers of good works. Thus, these works are the manifestations of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:1,4; Ps. 110:3; *CT* 905:63; 807:6).

4. Good works are the fruit of faith working by the love generated by the Holy Spirit. The faith that the Spirit of God creates is simultaneously receiving the full grace in Christ Jesus and moving the Christian to lead the Spirit-filled life. Sin in the life of the Christian is not of the Spirit but of the old man, for which reason we need daily repentance (*CT* 941:9ff; Acts 16; Fourthly of Baptism; Rom. 6:4-6).

5. The good works of believers are in full accord with the immutable will of God revealed in the Law (Deut. 12:8, 28, 32; *CT* 967:17).

6. When we speak of progress in connection with sanctification, we do not mean that a person becomes holier in God's sight. It means that sanctification is not static, but that it is ongoing. The evidence of this is in the growth of faith, love, knowledge, etc.

THE THIRD USE OF THE LAW

1. The immutable will of God and the Law are identical in content - LOVE. However, the Law because of sin is coercive and condemnatory.

2. The Law in all its uses only applies to the Christian insofar as he is flesh or old man, because of sin (*CT* 805; 963).

3. For the Christian insofar as he is new man the Law does not apply in any of its uses (curb, mirror, rule or doctrine, demand and curse) (Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 3, p. 237).

4. The Law in all of its uses retains its full condemning force, even in the third use when it presents the fixed rule according to which the regenerate, because of their flesh, are to direct their lives (*CT* 805:1; 265:55).

5. The Law of God prescribes to believers good works, not solely for a didactic purpose and not solely for a condemning purpose. It shows and indicates that in this life good works are still imperfect and impure in them. "That his good works are imperfect and impure he recognizes from the Law. Rom. 7:7ff." (Isa. 64:6; *CT* 969:21; 209; 198)

6. The Law has no power to effect what it demands (Gal. 3:21). It is the Spirit's work through the Gospel "to work in us both to will and to do" (Phil. 2:13; *CT* 905:63).

WHEREAS this statement is correct on the basis of the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS no points of controversy were raised that were not considered by this statement; therefore be it

RESOLVED that this statement is a settlement of the matters in controversy and that it constitutes our rejection of all prior statements in conflict with the truths expressed in it.

anniversary of our synod Convention's resolution of the "third use" controversy; this comment was added: "We must not become complacent nor forget the blessings that the Lord gave us through this doctrinal statement...ten years ago."

In the spirit of our comments above on the importance of addressing and resolving in a brotherly manner doctrinal issues which arise among us, and as an example of how the Lord led our synod to a godly resolution of the stated controversy, we are (re)printing the

material on "Sanctification" and "The Third Use of the Law." This material is taken from the Proceedings of the 22nd CLC Convention, June 17-21, 1996, at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

As God led the synod to this and other godly settlements, so may He do in the future as together we strive to proclaim His saving word and gospel in and to a world of sinners.

—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 Creation

Introductory Thoughts:

The issue of origins has been the subject of increasing discussion within our society in view of the work of such organizations as *The Institute for Creation Research* and *Answers in Genesis*, as well as the growing debate within scientific circles over Intelligent Design.¹ That debate has been fueled within the external Christian church, as

¹ Intelligent Design is a scientific theory, which suggests that certain basic biological components within nature are simply too complex to be explained as arising by random chance (as suggested by evolution). Their very complexity suggests that they were designed by some intelligence.

more and more Christians—together with their respective denominations—have turned away from a literal interpretation of the Scriptural account of creation and embraced the tenets of theistic evolution.

It would appear that such Christians and Christian denominations are willing to deny the inspiration of Scripture and the truths revealed by Scripture regarding God's act of creation in order to secure the approval of the world. Such denials are very serious, however, for you cannot undermine one section of Scripture with the truths that it contains without undermining the whole of

Scripture and the truths contained throughout. You cannot deny the biblical teaching of creation without affecting negatively the teachings of the fall into sin, the origin of death, and the consequent need for our redemption through Jesus Christ.

The teaching of creation, therefore, is fundamental to our understanding of the present and our hope for the future! We of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, therefore, heartily endorse the confessional position expressed within The Brief Statement.

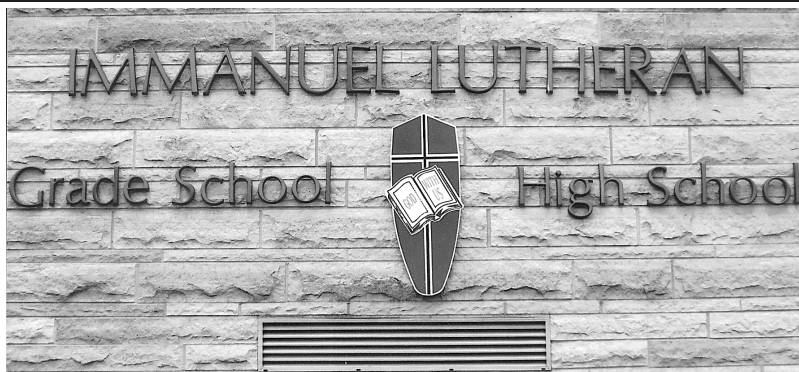
Brief Statement text [with comment]:

Of Creation

We teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space of time recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially Genesis 1 and 2, namely, by His almighty creative word, and in six days. *[Genesis 1-2 provide for us the inside story of creation. God alone was there, and He has chosen in very simple style to relate an account which otherwise would have been beyond our ability to imagine, much less to comprehend. Truly our God “the LORD is great and greatly to be*

praised!” (Psalm 96:4a) Using the power of His Word, Christ Himself called into being everything that exists—as revealed in several passages in the New Testament (cf. John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-18). This He did while establishing time—the twenty-four-hour day and seven-day week—which governs our lives within this world. Some would suggest that the days of Genesis 1 were long periods of time, but their arguments are not convincing. The context suggests normal days, for the use of the words “evening and morning” together with the enumeration of each day is routinely used elsewhere within Scripture with reference to normal days. Beyond this, the use of the creation week as a pattern for the six-day work-week established in Exodus 20 demands that the days of Genesis 1 be viewed as normal days.]

We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of Creation as taught in Scripture. *[Among those doctrines would be theistic evolution, which constitutes a compromise between materialistic evolution and biblical creation. It suggests that God originally created the matter which makes up our universe, but that this*



Immanuel Lutheran, Mankato, Minnesota, hosted the CLC Teachers' Conference last October (story, p. 21).

complex universe then developed without the further intervention of God by means of evolutionary processes and within a time-frame of millions of years. Theistic evolution thereby denies God's creative genius and limits His creative work.]

In our days God's creation is denied or limited by those who assert, ostensibly in deference to science, that the world came into existence through a process of evolution; that is, that it has, in immense periods of time, developed more or less out of itself. *[The teaching of evolution—which properly cannot even be called a scientific theory, for it cannot be tested, and which certainly is not scientific fact—is a philosophy of origins masquerading as science. Unfortunately, secular humanists (who champion evolution) hold sway in many areas and institutions of our country—including our public museums and parks, our public schools and universities. Evolution, it is wildly claimed, is the heart and core of science. Evolutionists suggest that without evolution advancement in science would stop! In reality, evolution has nothing to do with the practical working of real science. As those currently promoting the concept of intelligent design are revealing—evolution is, in reality, science's “emperor without clothes”!]*

Since no man was present when it pleased God to create the world, we must look for a reliable account of creation to God's own record, found

² *Answers in Genesis* is an excellent source for materials dealing with the ongoing debate between creation and evolution. Information and resources may be obtained through their website: www.AnswersinGenesis.org.

in God's own book, the Bible. *[One can almost hear Ken Ham, the President of Answers in Genesis,² ask: “Were you there?” The acceptance of biblical creation is ultimately a matter of faith (cf. Hebrews 11:3), as is the acceptance of any other theory regarding origins. “No man was present” and so we are dependent upon God's revelation—the Bible. We are blessed that God reveals the facts concerning creation, which establish His position of authority over creation, our position as His representatives within creation, and the nature of our relationship with our Creator God.]*

We accept God's own record with full confidence and confess with Luther's Catechism: “I believe that God has made me with all creatures.” *[The apostle Paul assures us that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We can accept God's account of creation with confidence. That account assures us that our Universe and we ourselves are not the result of mere cosmic accidents but rather are the carefully crafted product of an omnipotent God who has also revealed His grace and mercy to us in the person of Jesus Christ! Yes, God has indeed “made me with all creatures” even as He has “redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil”!]*

—Pastor Paul D. Nolting
Mankato, Minn.

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!

Do You Read Jesus?

*Lord Jesus, Word of God incarnate,
as once You came in the flesh, even so
now come to our hearts through Your
Word.*

Can there be any doubt that the chapel speakers want you to read the Bible? Over and over again we hear a speaker telling us to read the Bible.

Why do we keep reminding one another to study the Word of God? Well, I would like you to consider these words from the first chapter of John:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:1,14,17).

We refer to the Bible as the “Word of God.” In this passage we are told that the Word existed in the beginning and that the Word was with God and that the Word was God.

Then we are told that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and



that its glory was that of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth—and that we have received that grace. Finally, we are told that grace and truth came through Jesus.

There is only one conclusion we can come to: the Word is Jesus Christ! In the beginning was the Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God. Jesus became flesh and lived among us. Jesus was full of grace and truth.

So...if the Bible is called “the Word,” and Jesus is called “the Word,” does this mean that the Bible is Jesus? After all, if A equals B and B equals C, then A equals C; right?

In a sense, that is right. Without Jesus, there would be no Bible. Adam and Eve would have been executed and sent to hell, and that would have been the end of everything. They were

allowed to live because of Jesus. Noah was spared because of Jesus. Abraham was chosen because of Jesus. Israel was delivered from bondage in Egypt because of Jesus. David was chosen to be king because of Jesus. The prophets were sent because of Jesus. Judah returned from exile because of Jesus. The entire Old Testament is about Jesus.

As for the New Testament, the Gospels contain the life of Jesus. The book of Acts contains the spreading of the gospel of Jesus. The epistles contain the teachings of Jesus. The book of Revelation reveals the ultimate victory of Jesus over all His enemies—a victory which is given to us. The entire New Testament is about Jesus.

The entire Bible is the revelation of Jesus and of His impact on the world—past, present, and future. It begins with the reason for Jesus—that is, that man was created in the image of God but that he lost that image when he sinned. Therefore in the greatness of His love for man, God promised to send Jesus, His Son. The Bible continues with the story of how God prepared the world for His Son's coming. It shows how God sent His Son, how Jesus lived a lowly life and died a cruel death, how Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. The Bible reveals how the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus wiped out all our sins and replaced them with His righteousness, and how we are guaranteed an eternal place in heaven.

The Bible is not only about Jesus. It is from Jesus. Jesus is the Messenger of the covenant...grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. We know the love of God because of Jesus. Jesus revealed the truth about God. He revealed the grace of God and He bestows that grace upon us. It is for Jesus' sake that God is

gracious unto us and forgives us.

The Bible is from Jesus and about Jesus. Moreover, the Bible is the voice of Jesus. As we hear it and read it, Jesus is talking to us. He is talking not just to our ears nor just to our brain, but to our hearts.

This book is Jesus. Oh, I don't mean that this leather and paper and ink are some kind of transformation of the flesh of Jesus. However, the thoughts and words that issue forth from this book are alive with the power of the person and the work of Jesus. When we hear and learn the Bible, Jesus is present. He is coming to us and speaking to us and living in us and bestowing His grace upon us, strengthening us and preserving us.

Jesus is the Word of God in the flesh, full of grace and truth. Likewise the Bible is the Word of God. The two are inseparable. Without Jesus there would be no Bible in our lives. Without the Bible there would be no Jesus in our lives.

Now we are preparing to celebrate the Word becoming flesh. For us, it is not merely an historical account of the birth of someone who is no longer around. When we hear the Word, the birth becomes a living reality, and the incarnate Word is reborn in our hearts. The voice of Jesus speaks: "I was born for you; I lived for you; I died for you; I rose for you; and now I am interceding for you before My Father's throne. You are forgiven. I am preparing a place for you in heaven."

So, why do chapel speakers keep reminding you to read the Bible? Need you ask?

PRAYER: *O Word of God incarnate, help us to celebrate Your birth by listening to Your voice in our daily Bible readings. Amen.*

—Prof. John Pfeiffer

2006 CLC Teachers Conference



“Serve the Lord with gladness”
(Psalm 100:2).

Improve your serve! Chaplain Nathan Wales opened this year’s conference at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota with a devotion in which he reminded us that when we are looking to improve our service for the Lord, we study His Word and follow our best example, Jesus Christ.

Wednesday

Our conference presentations began on Wednesday, October 18, with Pastor Paul Nolting giving the keynote address based on this year’s theme: “Improving Your Serve.” He invited us to think about the call we have received from God, and how our serve can improve based on God’s love for us and the children we teach.

Professor Joe Lau presented a book review on *The O’Reilly Factor for Kids*. He concluded that the author had practical advice about smart living for children. However, much of it was based on this world’s morality.

Before and after lunch Mr. Daniel Loe, a Christian counselor of twenty years, spoke on the subject of depression. He offered many suggestions on what to watch for in our students and what steps to take if depression is found.

Amy Osborne presented “Teaching World Languages.” She gave many practical ideas and told of resources to use in teaching foreign languages in our classrooms.

Wednesday concluded with an ideas exchange. Many beneficial ideas were shared to help with the improvement of our serve.

A song service was held Wednesday evening at Immanuel Lutheran Church. The service theme was “Through the Church the Song Goes On.” We were spiritually uplifted by the Word given to us through Scripture readings and various choir pieces.

Thursday

We gathered together to begin our second day with another devotion given by Nathan Wales. Thursday’s



Conference
choir in
rehearsal

devotion was based on John 21:15-25, in which Peter is reminded by Jesus that his strength is from Christ alone. This reminder is meant for us also as we look for the strength to improve our serve. We were also spiritually strengthened through the Lord's Supper.

The papers continued on Thursday beginning with Ted Quade's paper on "Christ-like Attitudes." He led us through a study of James, a book which is full of words of encouragement for improving our serve through a Christ-centered attitude.

Kathleen Olmanson presented "All-Day Kindergarten." She discussed why Immanuel, Mankato's school board decided to switch to all-day Kindergarten and the benefits she has seen since the change.

Before lunch, the Okabena [Minn.] staff (Joel Gullerud and Erin Libby) presented a curriculum review of the *Everyday Math* series. After lunch, the teachers split into two groups for the Title Five Presentations. Lower grade teachers were given ideas for "Holiday Gift Ideas" (Ann Sprengeler), "Devotionals" (Anita Meyer), "Keeping Students Productive Outside of Class" (Heidi Nelson), "New(er) Christian Music" (Karla Olmanson), and "Winter Phy-Ed Ideas" (Lila Brown).

Upper grade teachers were presented with "Devotionals" (Ryan Libby), "Keeping Students Productive Outside of Class" (Dan Barthels), "Computer Classes" (Leif Olmanson), "New(er) Christian Music" (Sara Pfeiffer), and "Winter Phy-Ed Ideas" (Matt Thurow).

Friday

On Friday morning Nathan Wales concluded his devotions with a portion of John 13 as text. Here we have the example of Jesus washing His disciples' feet. As Jesus showed that He was on this Earth to serve, we too need to focus on our service to others through Christ's love.

Conference ended with two guest speakers. Mr. Herb Geiger, a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church and long-time educator, presented ideas on how to encourage spiritual activity in our students. Mr. Justin Olmanson, educator and member of Bethel Lutheran Church, Spring, Texas, shared information on how teachers can better understand and use different types of research.

We thank all the presenters, the staff at Mankato, host families, and all the members whose hospitality we enjoyed. We also thank God that He blessed us with another opportunity to gather together to receive spiritual and educational encouragement and

growth. We thank Him for all the opportunities He gives us to serve, and we pray that He continues to grant us strength as we look to improve our ser-

vice of spreading the precious gospel message of our Savior.

*Reporter: Teacher Erin Libby
Okabena, Minn.*



In Our CLC Classrooms—

Meet Amy Osborne

Amy Osborne (nee Rodas) has been serving as the Kindergarten-second grade teacher at Luther Memorial Christian Day School, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, for the past five years. She is a graduate of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire.

She married Christopher Osborne in September, 2005.

Amy particularly enjoys teaching kindergarten reading, and first and second grade Spanish.

In her spare time she enjoys watching professional football, coaching the grade school cheer squad, traveling, selling Mary Kay, and playing volleyball.

Amy considers Rochester, New



York, her hometown. She and her husband have a pet cat named Pablo.

Regarding the accompanying picture, Amy writes: “This picture was obviously taken at my wedding. The children around me are most of my students and cheerleaders from Luther Memorial.”

Dear Lord, to Your true servants give
The grace to You alone to live.
Set free from sin to serve You, Lord,
They go to share Your living Word,
The gospel message to proclaim
That all may know Your saving name.
(WS #780:1)



**Above: Ministry by Mail staff—Pastors
M. Eichstadt, W. Eichstadt, M. Schierenbeck,
P. Reim, M. Roehl**



**Top right: Synod's 50th Anniversary
Committee: Pastors D. Reim, F. Gannt,
C. Schaller**

**Right: Convention delegate Doran Slater
(Tacoma, Wash.) is served by Stephanie Altom
in the CLC bookhouse at ILC.**



Announcements

ILC REGENTS CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

(printed belatedly as information)

The Board of Regents for Immanuel Lutheran College invites “all pastors, professors, male teachers, and voting members of member congregations of the Church of the Lutheran Confession” (CLC Constitution) to nominate an individual or individuals to fill the vacancy created on the ILC faculty by the retirement of Professor Ron Roehl.

The man (men) nominated must be able to teach Spanish I and II at the high school level. Secondly, he should have the ability to teach subjects in the areas 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.

Please send your nominations, postmarked no later than March 1, 2007, to

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

AN INVITATION FROM THE ILC REGENTS

Professor Ronald Roehl will be retiring from the faculty of Immanuel Lutheran College at the end of the current school year. He has served at the high school and college levels of Immanuel for more than 40 years, and was active in the ILC classrooms when our CLC school was still at Mankato, Minnesota. Through the years Prof. Roehl has taught courses in science, mathematics, English, Social Studies, and history. He also served as Dean of Students, Athletic Director, and Registrar for many years. On the ball field and on the basketball floor, Coach Roehl was instrumental in the training and discipline of hundreds of grateful students.

As a token of our appreciation we would like to collect a monetary gift for this dedicated teacher of our children. CLC members are invited to contribute to this retirement “purse” that will be presented during graduation ceremonies on May 19, 2007. Please make checks payable to Immanuel Lutheran College, and stipulate: “For

Send Change of Address to :
Lutheran Spokesman
2750 North Oxford Street
Roseville, MN 55113

the Ron Roehl purse.” Send gifts to...

Jim Sydow
ILC Business Manager
501 Grover Road
Eau Claire, WI 54701

TOUR CHOIR CONCERT SCHEDULE

Immanuel Lutheran College Eau Claire, Wisconsin

(tentative—verify date and time with pastor)

- Mar. 10 (Sat.) Austin, Minn. (11:30 a.m.)
 Sioux Falls, S.Dak. (7:30 p.m.)
Mar. 11 (Sun.) Rapid City, S.Dak. (7:30 p.m.)
Mar. 12 (Mon.) Cheyenne, Wyo. (7:30 p.m.)
Mar. 13 (Tues.) Loveland, Colo. (7:30 p.m.)
Mar. 14 (Wed.) Lakewood, Colo. (7:30 p.m.)
Mar. 15 (Thur.) Valentine, Nebr. (7:30 p.m.)
Mar. 16 (Fri.) Watertown, S.Dak. (7:30 p.m.)
Mar. 17 (Sat.) Mankato, Minn. (7:30 p.m.)
Mar. 18 (Sun.) Inver Grove Hgts., Minn.
 (10:00 a.m.)

NOTE: Updated website address for the Traveling Vacation Bible School is: www.clctvbs.org

Cover: Matt Schaser