

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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It follows that the means which the Church and State employ to gain their ends are entirely different. The Church may not employ any other means than the preaching of the Word of God, John 18:11,36; John 36; 2 Cor. 10:4. The State, on the other hand, makes laws bearing on civil matters and is empowered to employ for their execution also the sword and other corporal punishments, Rom. 13:4.

ACCORDINGLY we condemn the policy of those who would have the power of the State employed in the interest of the Church and who thus turn the Church into a secular dominion; as also of those who, aiming to govern the State by the Word of God, seek to turn the State into a Church.

Of Church and State
THE BRIEF STATEMENT OF 1932



JANUARY 2008, VOL. 50 NO.7

CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS OF SPEAKING GOD'S WORD OF TRUTH

“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” (Matthew 2:2)

The Gift That Keeps On Giving!

Every year in my Freshman English class we read and discuss “The Gift of the Magi,” a famous short story by O. Henry.

For those unfamiliar with the plot, it involves a young married couple, Jim and Della, who sell their most prized possessions to buy gifts for each other at Christmastime. The irony, however, is that the gifts are of no practical use because they were meant to be accessories for the items that each had sold. O. Henry comments on these two near the end of the story, “But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest.”

In what way were they the wisest? If I were to guess, the point O. Henry is trying to make is that the gifts demonstrated the self-sacrificing nature of the love they had for each other. What more

could one want for Christmas than the knowledge that you are loved in this way?

The wise men from the East gave in this manner. They tirelessly followed a star over hundreds of miles to present their gifts to the king foretold of old.

What practical use could a toddler have for gold, frankincense, and myrrh? It was a selfless giving of their most prized possessions, a demonstration of their love for their Savior. Could there be a better kind of gift at Christmastime?

Yes, there could be! Let us not forget the most important gift of Christmas—the gift of Jesus Himself. God the Father gave His most prized possession—His only begotten Son—to show His love for sinful mankind.

This is the gift that keeps on giving. Once born, Jesus perfectly fulfilled the

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law for us, died on the cross in our place, rose again to assure us of our own victory over death and the devil, and ascended to the throne on high to intercede for us, even now!

I like to imagine that Jim and Della were Christians, and that their love was a reflection of Christ's self-sacrificing love for them.

How about us? Now that Christmas has come and gone, let us not forget to

keep giving! Christ's love for us compels us to give selflessly throughout the year. Although material gifts are often helpful, the most important gift we can give is the gospel message of sins forgiven.

In this regard, be like the shepherds. As is stated in Luke 2:17, "Now when they had seen Him [Jesus], they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child."

As we celebrate this Epiphany season, remember Jim and Della, the Magi from the East, and the shepherds—but above all, our God, whose perfect gift is alone worthy of celebration.

The eastern Magi, coming
 Their gifts of love to bring,
 Bear witness to Your glory
 And worship You, their King.
 To You the star is pointing
 And the prophetic Word;
 So joyously we hail You:
 Our Savior and our Lord. (WS2000, #718:2)

—Prof. Joseph Lau



More failed New Year's resolutions? Relax and have a truly...

Happy New Year In Christ!

Many people get depressed during the holiday season because of their own failures of the previous year to live up to their expectations or resolutions.

But relax and be happy—not as the world that thinks it can party away a year's worth of trouble in one night. No, relax and be happy because, although every one of us has fallen short every single day of every single year, that Baby named Jesus ("Savior") did not fall short, ever!

Where we failed to keep the Law, the Savior kept it—not just here and there, but everywhere, in every single point!

We see this in His circumcision eight days after His birth. "And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb" (Lk. 2:21). At eight days old Jesus, who was born under the Law, was already fulfilling the Law. As

commanded in Old Testament Law, Jesus' parents brought Him to receive the mark of the LORD's Covenant with Abraham. There Jesus shed His first drop of blood on account of our sin, as He set out to keep the Law perfectly in your place.

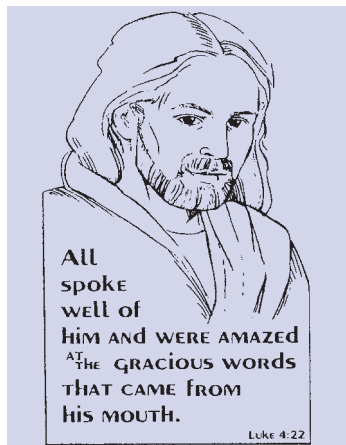
Looking at it another way, when eight days old, the Baby began to live up to the name given Him, "Jesus"—Savior! He was obedient to the Law in order to accomplish what we could not—what man has not been able to accomplish over thousands of years. But He did it—for you and for me!

That first blood shed was only the down payment. The full payment for sin would be made when Jesus lived up to the name Savior—that is, when at the cross He committed His soul into the hands of His heavenly Father, having committed every last drop of His blood to pay for sin.

God's Resolution—Kept!

The Old Covenant of the Law said, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Lev. 19:1). Jesus ushered in the New Covenant, the New Testament, by keeping the resolution of His heavenly Father. God had resolved to save sinful mankind. God kept His resolution through His Son!

What does that mean for us? Remember all of those failed resolutions? When you said, "This year I won't do that sin," remember how you failed and sinned anyway? Jesus—Savior—took that sin away. That sin and every other one of our sins has been forgiven by God and forgotten because of Jesus. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of recon-



ciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

This new year holds the same promise! Yes, you and I will again sin. But because of Jesus God forgives our sin; Jesus took it away, as it is written: "You, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:13f).

A new year is traditionally a time of hope and promise. What we could never accomplish—that is, the erasing of our sins with our good works—Jesus actually did for each of us, for "[Christ] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous [eager] for good works" (Titus 2:14).

The new year comes about a week after Christmas. The naming of the Baby Jesus as our Savior from sin (which occurred about one week after Christmas) was, in effect, a New Year for mankind; it was the ultimate in hope and promise, for in the name

Jesus we find promise of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. After all, He would be called “JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Every new year since God fulfilled

His Promise to save sinful mankind and every new year since God kept His resolution is a happy new year in Jesus Christ!

—*Pastor Joel Fleischer*
Marquette, Michigan



An Epiphany Devotion—

Men From The East—Again

It seems that men keep coming from the East. Sometimes they do so at God’s command, as when Abraham relocated from Uhr to Canaan. At the urging of a Jewish slave girl, Naaman came seeking blessing from the true God. He returned home healed in body and changed in heart, determined to offer sacrifice and praise only to the LORD. Much later Mongols and Huns, Goths and Vandals all thundered in from the East, to the consternation and deprivation of many. Yet this also happened with God’s permission and ruling prerogative among the people of the world.

By God’s gracious and special star-guiding—just as or even more accurate than modern GPS—certain wise men from the East come to the very spot in Bethlehem where the young Jesus was. As the shepherds on the nearby fields were told of the birth of God’s Son, so Gentiles many miles away were also given this divine news. That the Magi recognized the meaning of God’s special star they perhaps owed to a prophecy of Daniel (who, of course, had been in Babylon during the years of the Jewish captivity some 500 years before).

The Magi not only learned about

the birth of the Messiah from the divine Word, but that Word also compelled them to travel from the East to worship their Savior.

When the men from the East arrive in Jerusalem, thrilling (but also sad) scenes took place in the city. Many people were troubled, high-level meetings were convened, and instructions were given which were later countermanded by God Himself.

It’s Mission Season!

It almost sounds like a spy novel with the hidden aspects of an assignment plot—which, of course, it turned out to be. Yet through it all, the Magi found the Christ King and fell on their knees before Him. Neither were their hands empty, for they gave important and costly gifts which provided for the holy family in months that followed.

Once again men are coming from the East. They come more like Vandals



and Visigoths than wise men. They come not to worship the King, but with destruction in their hearts. In their hands they have not gifts but blood, for many are seeking to kill Christ by silencing His saving Word and warring against His kingdom.

What is a Christian to do? Get all troubled with worry? Hold some meetings? Devise strategies designed to protect Christ and His Kingdom? None of these. This is Epiphany and the Church's mission season. If we have not gone to the East preaching the gospel and showing forth the glory of Christ, surely we can testify to any easterners as they come to our own neighborhoods. Knowing that the heathen will rage against God's Anointed, nevertheless we can rest secure and confident, having our Lord's assurance that the very gates of hell will not pre-

vail against His Church. While God may laugh at the pitiful efforts to overthrow Him, He nevertheless loves them and is their Savior also.

It's Epiphany! It's mission time! By God's grace in Christ our own status has been changed from vandal to saint, from murderer to lover. We are the neighborhood stars to reveal Christ's glory with our own faith-life. We have the divine Word, so potent it cannot fail in God's saving purpose. And we also have our prayers, heard by God and commanded for our very enemies.

So let the government do what it has been ordained to do to protect us. Let every Christian do what we have been ordained to do—reveal Christ to the wicked so that many might be saved alive.

—*Pastor David Fuerstenau*
Ketchikan, Alaska



What If...?

“Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive.”—God speaking through Moses in Deuteronomy 32:39

“You will be like God, knowing good and evil.”—Satan tempting Eve in Genesis 3:5b

“Human babies are not born self-aware or capable of grasping their lives over time. They are not persons. Hence their lives would seem to be no more worthy of protection than the life of a fetus.”—Peter Singer, Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University¹

It was a horrendous command pronounced by Pharaoh—“Every son who is born you shall cast into the river” (Exodus 1:22b)—at least it has usually

been considered horrendous.

This January is the 35th anniversary of the infamous court case *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion in our country. Since 1973 over 50 million unborn children have been sacrificed to the idol of human choice.

That unthinkable number, however, is growing every day and would increase even faster if the ideas of men like Peter Singer are enacted into law. Professor Singer (identified as one of the world's 100 most influential people²) claims that traditional concepts of right and wrong based upon the Bible no longer apply. Consequently, issues of life and death lie completely in human hands—hands which through-



out history have practiced infanticide. God help us!

What if Moses' life had ended by his being tossed into the Nile River, rather than being lovingly placed there in a basket by his mother? Thankfully, that is a question we do not have to consider, for Moses' parents, Amram and Jochebed, believed in the LORD God of their fathers and cherished the newborn life He had granted them.

Even though the words of Deuteronomy 32:39 had not yet been written, these two believers felt conscience-bound to protect life rather than to allow its destruction. For three months they hid Moses and then, trusting in the providential care of God, placed him in the reeds near the river—perhaps knowing that Pharaoh's daughter would come to that spot to perform ritualistic washings, and perhaps hoping that she would view the baby as a gift from her river god and spare him.

The prayers of these two pious and courageous parents were answered.

¹ The opening quotation of Peter Singer's book, *Rethinking Life and Death*, as cited by Donald Demarco in his article *Peter Singer: Architect of a Culture of Death* as found on www.catholiceducation.org.

² Information found on-line at Peter Singer's personal website at Princeton University.

ALL LIFE COMES FROM OUR LORD PSALM 139:13-16

All life comes from our Lord;
'Tis He who gave me breath.
My days are all ordained by Him,
From birth until my death.

'Twas in my mother's womb
My infant frame was formed;
The essence of the Father's plan.
A miracle was born.

I praise Your holy Name
For making me Your own,
Redeemed to You by Christ my Lord;
Saved by His blood alone.

And when my days are spent,
As written in Your hand,
I trust Your great unfailing care
To keep me 'til the end.

When man decides to choose
The taking of a life—
The sick, the unborn, or the old—
He causes untold strife.

Lord, let it be Thy will
That man will yield to Thee
The time and place for life to end—
Praise You eternally!

—Mrs. Barbara Ruegge
Redeemer, Cheyenne, Wyo.

The princess adopted their son, allowing them to raise him until he was weaned. They were able to instill within his little mind the truths of the LORD God passed on by their fathers—truths which took root and grew in the heart of Moses, who became the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Later Moses led the children of Israel out of captivity and to the borders of the Promised Land. He would be God's instrument to bring His people the law, which in turn would lead them eventually to the foot of the cross.

What if the 50 million children aborted had been allowed to live? What

great blessings might these potential “Moseses” have contributed to our nation and our world?

We will never know! We can pray that the killing will stop; that the people of our nation will no longer be seduced by Satan’s lie or deceived into further evil by the sirens of academia.

We can raise our voices to proclaim the truths of God’s Word—His law

which condemns abortion and infanticide and reserves matters of life and death to His sovereign hand; and His gospel which brings forgiveness and peace to penitent sinners and strengthens those who humbly acknowledge the truth of His words!

—*Pastor Paul Nolting*
Mankato, Minnesota



From a Pastor’s Desk—

Christmas and Epiphany

The birth of Jesus is an important event in the lives of Christians, but it is interesting that very little is recorded in Scripture about the birth of Jesus and the first Christmas night. Matthew describes the birth of Jesus with the simple words: “Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS” (Matthew 1:24-25). Mark skips the birth of Jesus entirely, and John records only: “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” (John 1:14). All the details we have about Jesus’ birth are found in the Gospel of Luke.

Matthew does include some information concerning the early life of Jesus while in Bethlehem, which is not included in Luke. But these two accounts are not different views of the same event in Jesus’ life; instead, they are two entirely different and separate



Sample of a misleading manger scene

events.

Many people confuse and combine the events of Jesus’ birth recorded in Luke 2 with the account of the visit of the Magi found in Matthew 2. Most manger sets include Mary and Joseph, the Baby Jesus, an angel, the shepherds, and the wise men, as well as an assortment of animals. Christmas cards which picture the manger scene almost always include three wise men and a star above the stable. These incorrect displays of the first Christmas night can mislead people into combining these two accounts.

These events did not take place at the same time but may have been sep-

arated by as much as two years. These two events have long been celebrated separately—the first as Christmas, the second as Epiphany. As we celebrate Christmas, we would do well to continue making a clear distinction between these two events.

How can we be sure? There are a number of clear differences in these two accounts. In Luke we are told that Mary and Joseph placed the baby “in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn” (Lk. 2:7). In Matthew we are told that the wise men came “into the house” (Mt. 2:11) where they saw the young child. These two Gospel writers are not describing the same event or even the same night. The visit of the wise men occurred later than the events recorded by Luke, after Mary and Joseph had found a more permanent place to live.

In addition, we have the description of Jesus Himself. In Luke he is called a “baby” (Lk. 2:7,16—Greek: *brephos*), while in Matthew he is called a “young child” (Mt. 2:9,11,13,14—Greek: *paidion*). Matthew even gives us an idea of how much later this occurred with the description of the killing of all the baby boys in Bethlehem and the

surrounding area who were two years of age and younger. This estimate of the age of Jesus was based on the information the wise men gave to Herod concerning the date of the star’s original appearance (Mt. 2:7,16).

Someone might ask, “What’s the big deal? Why all the fuss about the wise men and the star?”

The fusing of these two accounts is a vivid example of careless treatment of the precious Word of God. It’s amazing how easily we can be misled—even when it is in connection with an account of Scripture we hear every year and should know very well. If we can be misled about something like a star over the manger on Christmas night—because that is the way it is shown on Christmas cards and displayed in manger scenes—how many other things are we “learning” incorrectly, due to other similar worldly influences?

Let all this serve as a reminder to us to do as the early Christians in Berea did, who “searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11)!

—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
Lawrenceville (Atlanta), Georgia



Michigan Youth Camp

Each year CLC congregations of lower Michigan host a camp for youth in grades 6-12. They meet at Pigeon Creek County Park just north of Holland, Mich. and about five miles from the Lake Michigan shore. The camp is to help students grow in the knowledge of their Lord Jesus and to meet and fellowship with others. —Pastor David Schaller, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sister Lakes, Mich.

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 Church and State**

Introductory Thoughts:

Why does the relationship between government and religion even appear as an article of faith and confession of an orthodox church? What does this have to do with spiritual life or godliness? Answer: Satan's virus of error attacks the health of this relationship also—and in the Lutheran Church, no less.

As our country gears up for another election year, propaganda is going out for the candidate who will help "return our nation to its Christian foundations"—which is as mistaken a notion as the idea that our founding fathers were Jesus' disciples.

Such fuzzy thinking gets stirred up in the political arena by well-intentioned citizens who forget that many of our ancestors fled Europe to escape religious persecution fostered in totalitarian states, where civil magistrates carried out church discipline and people were executed for heresy. Some foreign countries today replicate Muslim nations of olden days; they amalgamate church and government into a homogenized hybrid. The perceptive reader of the daily news understands that where religion energizes a

government, much inhumanity is done in the name of false gods. Lord, have mercy!

Brief Statement text [with comment]:

Of Church and State

34: Although both Church and State are ordinances of God [*Church means the Holy Christian Church, the body of Christ—which does not equate with any denomination; State means whatever governing authority exists at local, state, and federal levels. Ordinance is not like a "city ordinance" but rather God's grant/provision to make government responsible for societal stability.*], **yet they must not be commingled.** [*They ought not be homogenized into a conglomerate hybrid. And the reason they ought to remain separate is because...*] **Church and State have entirely different aims.** [*What are these divergent aims?*] **By the Church, God would save men, for which reason the Church is called the "mother" of believers, Gal. 4:26.** [*This is, of course, God's great and gracious salvation goal unto life eternal.*] **By the State, God would maintain external order among men, "that we**



may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty,” 1 Tim. 2:2. *[This is the lesser, earthly, yet valuable goal. In a simple analogy—with one hand God commits to us His gospel to save souls from the world, while with the other hand God directs the traffic flow of worldly endeavors so that redeemed souls may enjoy the scenery en-route to their heavenly destination. A further differentiation between these two entities is the mechanism by which each functions.] It follows that the means which Church and State employ to gain their ends are entirely different. [This difference in the means to attain their ends is as fundamental as the difference between soul and body.] The Church may not employ any other means than the preaching of the Word of God, John 18:11,36; 2 Cor. 10:4 [“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.” The qualifier “not carnal but mighty in God,” assures us that God’s spiritual endeavors on Earth are not geared to human factors, all of which are too weak to be of any use to God; contrariwise, the instruments/weapons that God uses are of His own creation and devising, strong enough by reason of His indwelling energy to topple Satan’s bastions into*

the dirt.] The State, on the other hand, makes laws bearing on civil matters and is empowered to employ for their execution—the sword and other corporal punishments, Rom. 13:4. [Jesus’ own words clarify this difference in substance, goal, and means: “My Kingdom is not of this world.” Yet many confessing Christians seem bent on proving Jesus to be misinformed or misguided about this.]

[Since there must be application to our own lives, let us proceed to the application—where does the orthodox Lutheran Church stand on this issue? The Lord’s people wish Church and State to remain distinctly separate, each functioning in its differing sphere, and each using different means to serve divergent goals. Those who seek to amalgamate the two in the name of Christianity mistake the nature of the Kingdom of God.] Accordingly, we condemn the policy of those who would have [those who desire, advocate, and lobby for] the power of the State [to be] employed “in the interest of the Church” and who thus turn the Church into a secular dominion; as also of those who, aiming to govern the State by the Word of God, seek to turn the State into a Church.

[We hold to our confessional and Scriptural stance over against this false notion because policies that amalgamate religion and state inflict indignities on both. The State gets contaminated, and the Church gets neutered. Freedom of religion must mean at least these two principles: religion free from State bias, and State free from religious bias.

We note with dismay the growing strength of mongrel “Christian poli-

tics” in this generation and deplore those who are nurturing such a mixed breed. We support the Lord’s own clarification behind the Scriptural principle here exhibited in the Brief Statement—and thereby we reject any/all commingling of God’s Kingdom with secular kingdoms. Let the State do its job of maintaining law and order for all its

citizens—including Muslim, Hindu, and atheist—so that the Church may do its job of reaching lost souls without hindrance from the State. We pray that the two may continue to co-exist as separate and distinct blessings of God, for doing so will serve our nation well.]

—Paul R. Koch
Eau Claire, Wisconsin



Volume 50 Revisits Earlier Volumes

Volume 10, Number 2 (July, 1967)

(Prof. Edmund Reim [1892-1969], on the faculty of our Immanuel Lutheran Seminary at the time, authored this article [we sat as a student at his feet]. “Reim Hall” at our Immanuel Lutheran College is dedicated to his memory. Bible verses in the original were from the King James Version; we have substituted the New KJV—ed.)

WHAT IS A THEOLOGIAN?

It may seem presumptuous to claim space in our *SPOKESMAN* or to use up the time of our readers for a simple question to which any dictionary can give a pat answer. Yet this word as well as its companion term, *theology*, is used so carelessly, even deceptively, in these times, that it may be worthwhile to take another good hard look at the word, and also the persons to whom it is being applied with such indiscriminate abandon.

The occasion for these reflections is an article in *TIME* magazine (May 19, 1967) on what it calls “New Views of Heaven and hell.” It speaks of “many theologians” who are now attempting to “re-define” heaven and hell. It goes on to say, “Most Christian theologians readily agree that eschatology—the doctrine of

death and the afterlife—owes more to superstition than to supernatural wisdom.” It quotes an imposing list of writers, three of whom are Catholic, four who are identified only as “Protestant,” one Lutheran, one Methodist, and one a Jewish rabbi. It adds two additional Protestants who declare that they do not know the answer to the problem, who



Prof. E. Reim served at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. from 1940-1957; the years 1959-1969 saw him active in establishing and teaching at

Immanuel Lutheran Seminary (Mankato, Minn. & Eau Claire, Wis.)

are willing to wait and see. On the other hand it mentions three Catholics, one Protestant, one Methodist, one Calvinist, and one Episcopalian, all of whom think there must be some form of afterlife but are rather indefinite in what they say about it. The strange thing is that two of these have already been quoted for the other side of the question. But a German Protestant Theologian—name of Dorothee (!) Soelle—caps the climax for vagueness by venturing the opinion that “emphasis on this world means an intensification of the death experience. The new theology says that life is definite, not indefinite, and that our chances are limited.”

Taking all these opinions together, they have a wide range, from downright blasphemy (that the doctrine of eternal perdition “makes a demon out of God”) to pitifully feeble attempts to make the concepts of heaven and hell acceptable to the modern mind.

We hold no brief either for or against any of these writers quoted. The quotations are too short to provide a basis for fair judgment. The context is not available. But we do feel that the time has come to speak out against this indiscriminate and superficial use of the terms applied to these writers. Just what is a “Theologian,” or for that matter a “Biblical Scholar”? Just what is “Theology”? What is the true meaning of these words? The dictionary does little more than merely to record the current use of these terms which men have invested with such ill-defined authority. Nor does the Bible offer any quick and ready answer. For neither of these terms—*theology* or *theologian*—is to be found in the Bible. They did not come into use with reference to the Christian

religion until quite some time after the days of the apostles. But the Bible does have something to say about the afterlife, and when it speaks on this or any other subject, it speaks with full authority. And though it does not use the term, it does tell us what goes into the making of a theologian, if he is to be at all worthy of the name.

In the first of his pastoral letters the Apostle Paul addresses young Timothy in a most solemn manner as a “man of God” (1 Tim. 6:11). This expression is used to the Thessalonians. “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another” (1 Thess. 4:9). Here the Greek original compresses the entire idea of being taught by God into one single, compact, and vigorous word, “God-taught.” This is what is needed above all for the making of a true theologian—that he be God-taught. And conversely, every one who is God-taught is by that very fact a theologian, a true man of God. For this, and this alone, is true Biblical scholarship.

Let this be the test we apply to the “theologians” who figure so prominently in the public press, and note how in spite of their public prestige they will fall from their false and shoddy pedestals, for the great majority of those quoted in the article referred to above base their opinions not on Scripture but on reason. They find it unthinkable that there should be such a thing as an eternal punishment, so they call it superstition. They think that the plain words of Scripture must be the language of mythology, so they proceed to demythologize the Word according to their own thought and reason—a most treacherous basis, indeed. And instead of let-

ting themselves be God-taught, they undertake to teach God what He should have said in the first place, and how He should have said it. This is the arrogance of the new theology!

As for those who read their pronouncements, awed by their professional status and prestige—taking each successive opinion as it is delivered as the last word, whether it be on the afterlife or on religious matters in general—let them remember that the privilege of speaking the last word belongs to God. And let us be assured that He has already spoken it and given it to men in His prophetic and apostolic revelation. For

the true test is still the same as when Isaiah, the prophet, referred his people to the Word of God, saying, “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20).

Let the test be made. And if it be but a child that ventures to challenge the opinion of some internationally known “Biblical Scholar,” if what was said against the rationalizing of that scholar was the simple truth of the Word of God, then it will be the child that is the true Man of God, rather than the other.



Studies in Second Thessalonians—

“...God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13).

Chapter 3: 6-18

Busy—Not Busybodies!

“If any will not work, neither should he eat” is a phrase that evokes images of industry and responsibility: a pioneer woman steering her sons away from the dinner table and toward the woodpile; a politician making a case for welfare reform.

Interestingly, Paul takes this stance with the church in Thessalonica in a brief letter whose contents also feature the certainty of the Lord’s coming and the end of the world as well as details about the rise of the Antichrist.

Why, if we expect the end of all things, and why, if we are to be alert to the rise of antichristian forces, must we concern ourselves with mundane things

like working to earn a living? Will not our Lord take care of that for us?

It was an issue in Thessalonica because some who elected to avoid being busy with honest labor became busybodies, thus disrupting the life of the church: “we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies” (v. 11).

Paul’s response was surprisingly stern: “we command you...withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly (NASB: “is unruly”, NIV: “is idle”) and not according to the tradition which he received from us.”

Paul and his associates had come to

Paul, who was schooled in Jewish doctrine and Biblelore, was also trained in tent-making and often employed himself in that trade while laboring to plant the Word of God in the hearts of others. He did this even though, as He reminds the Thessalonians, the gospel ministry itself is a legitimate vocation, and the preacher has every right to expect to be supported in his labors. In his missionary situation, Paul chose to forego that support from these new churches. Rather, he hoped that the missionaries' industry and unselfish labor would impress their observers and reassure all that they were not preaching the gospel for selfish gain (cf. 1 Tim. 6:5).

Think of people in our lives whose hard work has served as a mark of faith

When we see those whose labors are motivated by something more than monetary gain, it is inspiring. The Christian worker seeks to honor his or her Savior and sees every superior as someone to serve “as to Christ” (cf. Eph. 6.5). What blessings flow when all who worship Christ are thus ‘busy in the Lord.’

Thus the dictum: “If any will not (note: ‘not willing’ rather than ‘is unable to’) work, neither shall he eat.”



15

Our first responsibility is to provide for ourselves and our own family to the best of our ability. For those unwilling to bear their responsibility, a stern directive is given to the church: “withdraw” from their company and fellowship until they are “ashamed” of their laziness and repent.

All this should be carried out in a brotherly love rather than in bitter hostility.

Is this the solution for laziness in our society? We can only note that this is a solution prescribed within a Christian framework. The Lord, who Himself went steadfastly to the horror

and shame of the cross, is He who has redeemed and sanctified us for service in His kingdom. Let us joyously and thankfully eat the bread of our labors to His glory, praying that others come to value and see that glory as well.

Paul signs off in his own hand (the bulk of the letter was probably taken down by a secretary of sorts) as an assurance of its genuine origin. He and they, though separated by distance, are bound together under the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ until He comes.

—Pastor Peter Reim
Loveland, Colorado



First in a series—

“Savoring the Spirit-fruit” *Love*

So what do we see when we look at the people around us on any given day? How do we look at them? What do we think of them?

Perhaps we live in a metropolitan area, where on our walk to work from the bus stop we may see just about every skin color under the sun—people that we may be seeing but this once, never to see them again. Maybe we think of our classmates at the local university, particularly that young woman we met in a study group who had an abortion last month. Or there’s our spouse and that ‘disagreement’ the two of us had after supper last night; or that co-worker who brown-nosed the boss and got that promotion for which we have been in line.

There are friends, neighbors, asso-



ciates, and our family—people with whom we may be close or distant; people with whom we may be on good terms or bad. All of us have them in our lives.

And we may well find ourselves having different reactions. We may be indifferent toward that person in line ahead of us at the grocery store or frustrated with another person who is trying to make a return without a receipt.

Many times we find that our inter-

action with the people we meet varies depending on what day it is, on the flow of traffic that morning, or on our mood.

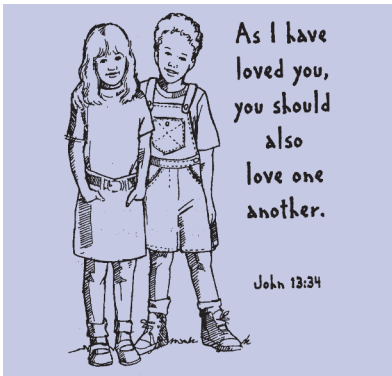
What the apostle Paul sets before us as the first of the fruits of the Spirit—that is, love—is a trait which will have a profound effect on all the situations mentioned above.

Branches on the Vine

We became children of God by faith. The Holy Spirit worked on our hearts through the Word of God. Now as His children—as branches grafted into the Vine—we begin to produce such a Spirit-fruit as love. “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 Jn. 4:19).

This love that shows in our lives, in what we do and say, is the very love God showered upon us. His love is one which sees us exactly as we are by nature—filthy, lost, and condemned sinners. There is nothing blind about this love of God for all mankind. He sees absolutely everything about each one of us!

But then, instead of turning away in revulsion, our loving God went forward with His plan to remedy our condition. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” (Jn. 3:16). “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still



sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

That is God’s unconditioned, sacrificial love toward us—and that is the kind of love which Paul says is a Spirit-fruit in our lives.

Remember all those people around us and all the ways that we have of interacting with them? Bearing the Spirit-fruit of love in our lives means turning a blind eye toward absolutely everything surface-deep about them—age, gender, race, height, friend, enemy, and so forth; and instead, seeing them simply as people that God has loved—people who need to see and hear of that love of God in His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

And why not from you or from me?

As branches on the Vine that is Jesus, God help each of us to produce abundantly the Spirit-fruit of love!

—Pastor Paul Krause
Clarkston, Washington



Grace Lutheran Church, Live Oak, Florida observed its 20th anniversary on November 11, 2007. Shown: Pastor Karl & Mrs. Judy Stewart, Chairman Jimmie Crain, Pastor (and guest speaker) John & Mrs. Sharon Schierenbeck.



MISSION WORK AND CONFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

We print this article with the realization that “mission work” is often a theme of the post-Christmas Epiphany season, a season when the Church celebrates the coming of Gentile Wise Men to worship the Christchild, the only Savior of ALL people. The perspectives the writer speaks of need to be heard and heeded in an increasingly non-confessional age.—The editor

What is mission work?

We shall first of all be so bold as to state what mission work is not. Mission work is not “growing the church,” as is the popular expression and goal today. It is not about growing but about planting the seed of the Word! Mission work in its purest form has nothing to do with statistics!

A false notion of what constitutes mission work has led to all manner of ills in the church. A faulty understanding of mission work tends to diminish confessional integrity. Further, it tends toward pride on the one hand or depression on the other (where failure is perceived).

Mission work is the proclamation, the planting, of the Word of God—in specific terms, the gospel. The great commission is “Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” (Mt. 28:19-20). That command of our Lord is consistent with what He said in Mark 13:10, “The gospel must

first be published among all nations.” In Matthew 24:14 our Lord said, “The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations...” The Son of Man, Who did not come into the world to condemn the world but to save it, said “... repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations...” (Lk. 24:47).

Mission work is teaching all things that God has given us in His Word. It includes preaching the law to uncover sin and make the sinner guilty before God. Yet it is the gospel—the message of Christ’s love manifest at the cross and sealed by the resurrection—through which the Spirit creates believers.

It is the gospel which makes wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15) and which is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). The gospel imparts certain hope and consolation to the troubled heart. Martin Luther said, “Throughout the Gospel, Christ does no more than draw us out of ourselves and into Himself; He spreads His wings and invites us to take shelter under Him” (*What Luther Says*, Vol. II, par. 1703, p. 561).

Let this suffice to define the gospel and our understanding of doing mission work: It is preaching the love of Christ!

To what end? The purpose is not to fill up church pews—though obviously

we pray that those who are won by the gospel will be led to identify with our church, joining us in worshipping the Lord and in our witness to the world.

God's kingdom—His gracious rule to save—enfolds all in whose hearts He dwells by faith. God's kingdom is spiritual and bears no denominational name. It is God's command that we preach the gospel—not that people will fill our church pews but that people whom we may never meet on Earth again may know the confident joy of salvation both now and on the great day of our Lord's return.

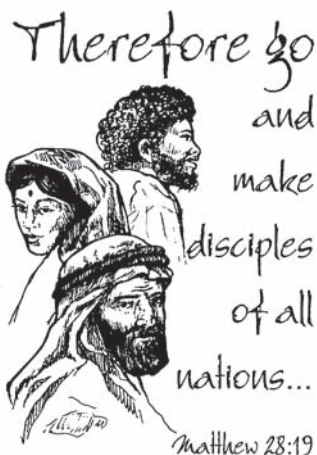
We do not measure mission work by statistics; we can't read the heart. "The Lord knows them that are His" (2 Tim. 2:19). Nor do we measure how many of those have been won by our mission work. While we must endure statistical reports, our responsibility is to preach the Word faithfully, whereupon the Spirit gives the increase (Acts 2:47).

A Confessional Church

The correct mission attitude is that of St. Paul who said, "Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Php. 1:18).

Individual mission work occurs when a Christ-believer shares the gospel at work and play and wherever the opportunity presents itself. The church as a body of believers in Christ engages in mission work through the mutual efforts of the constituent congregations that make up the fellowship.

The confessional Lutheran Church has always been devoted to mission work. Hence constituent congregations of a fellowship have pooled resources and efforts to proclaim the gospel "among all nations." In this corporate mission effort the church can easily



lose its way if it becomes goal-oriented and measures its work in terms of statistics.

We dare never lose sight of the fact that a truly mission-minded church is one that remains a confessional church. A confessional church is one that believes doctrine is important and that the apostolic doctrine—including the doctrine of church fellowship—dare never be sacrificed. It dare not deviate from the Scriptures, the divinely inspired Word of God. It dare never forget that "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." is part of the Commission our Lord gave to the Church.

In the practical aspect of mission work we will start with milk, not meat (1 Corinthians 3:2). Nevertheless, we are to dispense the pure milk of the Word, not milk watered down to make it palatable.

We believe that formerly confessional Lutheran churches have lost their confessional integrity, in part through mission efforts that lost sight (however unintentionally) of the fact that mission work is preaching Christ to the salvation of souls rather than

reaching out to “grow the church.”

If and when goals and statistics become an obsession, the temptation is to veil the doctrine or to dress it up to make certain teachings of Scripture less offensive to the hearers. Even methods and approaches themselves may contribute to the breakdown of confessional integrity—if the need is felt to adopt the methods and approaches of church and para-church organizations to whom the means of grace (the staple of true mission work!) is of little, if any, consequence.

Confessional integrity—in other words, faithfulness to Scripture in teaching and practice—is essential to mission work. Church growth programs as well as musical and liturgical dumbing down are not!

We of the Church of the Lutheran Confession have said, “If people are to know and believe in the Savior, they must learn of Him from the one place

where Jesus Christ is revealed. Hence our emphasis is on the teaching of the Word of God, the Bible” (*CLC Directory*, page 2). We believe that *what* a person is taught is as important as *that* he be taught.

If in the interest of mission work a church plays loosely with confessional integrity, it ultimately will serve neither those it seeks nor those sheep for whom it is responsible. To avoid that death trap it is essential that the Church—that we!—remember what the divine commission is all about, namely, declaring the grace of God in Christ to people sitting in spiritual darkness that they may be counted by the Lord among “those who believe to the saving of the soul” (Hebr. 10:39).

Effective and God-pleasing mission work goes hand-in-hand with confessional integrity.

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer
Corpus Christi, Texas



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!

“God’s Word to the Young Men on Campus”

“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work” (1 Timothy 3:1).

There is something missing on campus this September. I’m not referring to Professor Ron Roehl, although I am sure he is missed. I am referring

to seminary students.

We have three professors on campus who are prepared and willing and perhaps even eager to teach junior

seminary students, but there are none to teach. The classroom is empty. In October the seminary will open its doors again, but there will be only three students, and they are in their last year. So it seems that there will be two years in a row when there will be no seminary graduates at all.

As a former seminary teacher, I am saddened by this lack of students, and I think we should all be saddened. We rejoice at the great number of students enrolled and seeking to be enrolled at the seminaries and Bible schools of our sister church bodies in India and Africa, but we are saddened that there are so few seminary students here in the United States.

What can we do about this situation? First of all, we can take it to the Lord in prayer. James says in his letter: “You do not have because you do not ask.” I know I could do much more asking than I have in the past. Perhaps this is something that we ought to make a regular part of our regular prayers. We remember what our Lord Jesus Himself said: “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

What can we do besides praying? It seems to me we can do some thinking and meditating on the Bible verse I have chosen as the subject of this chapel talk. First Timothy 3:1: “This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.”

Let us not be thrown off by this word “bishop.” Nowadays this word generally refers to a high official in certain church bodies who has supervision over many pastors and congregations under him. Some Lutheran church bodies



have used this term to refer to someone who used to be called a synod president or district president. We do not have anyone called a bishop in the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

But in First Timothy 3:1 the word “bishop” simply refers to anyone who is in a position of spiritual leadership—for example, the pastor of a congregation. A pastor is a spiritual shepherd, a spiritual overseer, someone whose privileged responsibility it is to supply the Word of God to His people and guide them in their lives by the proper use of God’s law and God’s gospel.

So we could substitute the word “pastor” for the word “bishop,” and the meaning would be the same. The apostle Paul is talking about the position of a spiritual overseer, a pastor, a shepherd of other Christians for whom he is responsible.

So the apostle Paul is telling us that if we desire to become a pastor in Christ’s church, we are desiring a good thing. This is a worthy aspiration. This is something good to work for. If you disagree with this and think that the work of a pastor is not something to be desired, you are disagreeing with God. For the apostle Paul is a spokesman for the Lord Jesus Christ, and what he writes to Timothy is the Word of God.

Not only is Paul saying that the work of pastor is something to be

desired as a good thing, he is emphasizing what he is saying by calling it a faithful saying.

Is a faithful saying something that is important and should be emphasized? Well, here is another faithful saying in First Timothy: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Just think: Paul puts this word about desiring the position of pastor on the same level as the reason for Christ’s coming into the world. They are both faithful sayings.

So it seems to me that our young children before they go to school and while they are in grade school should be reminded of this verse from First Timothy. What do they want to be when they grow up? How about thinking about becoming a pastor in the church? God Himself says this is something good. And certainly here in this high school and college we should remind ourselves often of this verse.

We should encourage one another along these lines. Professors should encourage students to consider the pastoral ministry as their future line of work, because God says it is a good thing to aspire to this. Students should encourage one another to consider this occupation that God says is such a good thing.

Now, of course, there are some among you that I do not encourage to study to become pastors. I am not talking about the “C” or “D” students, some of whom by God’s special grace have managed to better themselves and have become faithful pastors. I am talking to all the girls in the audience today. I cannot encourage you to aspire to the pastoral ministry, because in this same letter, First Timothy, the apostle Paul says: “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man.”



(l-r) Dr. James Sydow, CLC Treasurer and synod Statistician; Pastor David Lau, Archivist; Glenn Oster, synod webmaster; Pastor Lau gave the accompanying chapel talk.

This also is the Word of God, something we cannot ignore even though many other church bodies are ignoring it.

But I am talking to all the boys. Here is something for you to think about. God says it is a good thing if you desire or strive to become a pastor. This means, of course, that you want to study God’s Word so that you will be able to teach others. It means you will be willing to learn the languages in which the Bible was written. It means you will want to grow in your personal faith in Christ and in the fruits of faith.

I suppose every class in high school and college has its leaders and has its share of especially gifted persons—persons who can grasp concepts and can learn languages and who are good communicators. Those who are especially gifted may think in terms of using their gifts in the fields of electronics or engineering or business or medicine. Perhaps that is where God wants them to be, because it is certainly possible to serve God in almost any occupation.

But I am saying to these specially gifted young men: Perhaps God has given you these gifts so that you can use them in the pastoral ministry.

And even if you don’t think you have special gifts, you can consider

using the gifts you do have in this work. Remember: There is no greater thing that anyone can do for others than to help them attain eternal life through faith in Christ. And this is what the work of a pastor is all about.

Wouldn't it be great and the answer to our prayers if seven or eight of our senior high school boys would enter

the pre-theological course next year? May we all ask God to send students to keep our seminary classroom full.

—*Prof. Em. David Lau, Guest Speaker*

Next month we plan to print a chapel talk by Prof. Lau in which he spoke especially to the young ladies.



Backpacking in British Columbia

“Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him all you stars of light! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created. Praise the LORD from the earth, mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars; creeping things and flying fowl; both young men and maidens; old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven” (selected verses from Psalm 148).

At the beginning of August, 2007, sixteen people from British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon had an amazing opportunity to witness the praise

that the mountains give to the LORD—and to join the mountains in lifting their voices to our great God!

One cannot help but feel the glory of the LORD when surrounded by the majesty of the mountains, the serenity of the wildflower meadows, the pristine beauty of the mountain lakes, the stateliness of the pines pointing to heaven, the crashing power of the waterfalls, and the babbling brooks gently singing their lullaby.

The thrill of having conquered the six-kilometer trail was only magnified by the breath-taking sight of the virtually untouched beauty of God's mountains. Even more amazing was the fellowship that we experienced during



Far left is Pastor Caleb Schaller, Redemption Lutheran Church, Lynnwood (Seattle), Wash. with some of the British Columbia backpackers.



Around the campfire

those four days—spending time with fellow Christians, building each other up in the faith, creating new bonds, and just goofing around together.

We stretched our creativity with a photo scavenger hunt, exercised our legs in a hike up to the wildflower meadows and sub-alpine lakes, froze our skin swimming in Spectrum Lake, spun around the lake in a raft and kayak, and fulfilled the ‘fisherman’ in all of us with an abundant catch of trout.

We were brought closer together and closer to God with the soul strengthening devotions and Bible studies conducted by Pastor Caleb Schaller. He directed our attention to our tents, reminding us that we are only tenting through this life, on the way to the mansions in heaven. The surrounding trees were also used to remind us of the most precious tree, the cross, on which all our hope is placed.

While together in the picturesque wildflower meadows, Pastor Schaller described how the wildflowers would fade, but the Word of the Lord—and our faith founded on that Word—would endure forever. We also had the privilege of studying the temptation of Jesus, the book of Jonah, and the choices of Herod, Pontius Pilate, and Jeremiah.

At the end of the week we parted, strengthened and filled anew with the Holy Spirit. We all have many stories and memories of another amazing back-packing trip in the mountains of British

Columbia. Join us next year for a truly unique and wonderful experience!

“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever” (Ps. 145:3,21).

—Miss Tamar Reim, reporter (and participant)

Announcements

Tenth Anniversary Observance

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lawrenceville (Atlanta), Georgia, will celebrate its tenth anniversary on Sunday, January 28, 2008. The celebration will begin with coffee and donuts at 7:30 a.m. At 10:00 we will continue with a presentation on the history of Zion; a special worship service will follow at 11:00 in which three previous pastors of Zion will participate. A lunch will also follow the service.

Fellow members of the CLC are invited to join us in thanking the LORD for His blessings over our history. For more information please contact Pastor Nathanael Mayhew at 770-962-9034; e-mail ndmayhewjuno.com.

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