

Lutheran Spokesman

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the water. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God called the light Day, and the darkness Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, "Let the water under the firmament be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathered waters Heavens. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree which bears fruit according to its kind." And it was so. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree which bears fruit according to its kind, be fruitful and multiply." And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light to the earth." And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light to the earth, and to divide the light from the darkness. And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the waters be fruitful and multiply, and bring forth every living creature that moves over the face of the water, and every winged bird according to its kind." And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters, and the birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth every living creature according to its kind: cattle according to its kind, and creeping things according to its kind, and the earth bring forth every living creature according to its kind." And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; the earth bring forth every living creature according to its kind, and the birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the seventh day.

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which He had created and made.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

And God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Genesis 1:1-2:1



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Celebrating Fifty Years of Speaking God's Word of Truth

Home Is Where the Heart Is

Can someone feel lonesome for a place where he or she has never been?

All through our lives on this Earth we seem to be longing for something. Young people and children long to go places or do things they are not yet allowed to go or do. Adults often yearn for a different position in life—whether in their job or location.

Even though we may often experience a fear of the unknown, we may just as often have a curiosity or a desire to see a mysterious or exciting place that we have only heard about.

Not by their own choice but because of their actions, our common ancestors Adam and Eve left the home created for them. Our first parents chose to rebel against their provider, God, and broke the relationship they enjoyed with Him in the garden. Now they no longer fit in and were exiled from Paradise, becoming refugees in a hostile land.

We can only imagine the longing

that tugged at their hearts—the desire to return to the former place where they enjoyed the company of their God. And if, as we may assume, Adam and Eve told their descendants about their time in the Garden, couldn't this also have produced a similar longing in the generations that followed?

What a blessing that God gave our Patriarch and Matriarch (as well as us!) the roadmap back to a reestablishment of the relationship intended by God. He would send the Seed of the woman, the Head-crusher (destroyer of the Serpent's power), into the world. He would be the One to bridge the gap that our sins had created. He would be the ladder, the stairway, the only Way to come to the Father in heaven.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did come and destroyed the works of the Satan; on our behalf He overcame the sinful world and our sinful flesh. He has established and opened a direct communication line to the eternal

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throne of God, where we may now come boldly with requests and petitions—as one might confidently approach an earthly father.

Earned By Jesus!

Jesus has earned for us a place in heaven—not only to be enjoyed for some future date and time, but it is ours now!

Have you ever found yourself longing for heaven? Why? Have you ever been there or had the opportunity to speak to a former resident? We may even find that unbelievers will refer to their departed loved ones as having “gone to a better place.” Throughout the Scriptures we are given glimpses of our life beyond this one. Even Old Testament believers such as Job, David, and Moses knew they would live again after this life.

While living among His disciples, Jesus focused their attention on the Kingdom of God—that is, on His ongoing ruling in the hearts of believers.

Being a member of the Kingdom of God (through the gracious working of the Spirit’s gospel in Word and Sacrament) is the way to the Heavenly Kingdom. Jesus told His followers, “In My Father’s house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (Jn. 14:2-4).

We see in these words our Savior-God’s sincere desire for us to live with Him in His kingdom. This offers great comfort during the trials and tribulations of this world. All that is allowed to happen in this lifetime is meant to keep us attached to our Savior and safely on the path to heaven. There our souls will be reunited with our glorified bodies; we will be able to stand in God’s presence through Christ’s merit. Our corruptible will have put on His incorruption and our mortal will have put on His immortality.

What will our heavenly Paradise be like? Will there be food to eat or crops to raise? Will we have air to breathe? Jobs to be done? Will we be writing songs of praise as well as singing them?

From John’s vision in Revelation we see that the New Jerusalem is described as a city with streets paved with gold and foundations of precious gems. We don’t need to endlessly debate what will or won’t be our lot in heaven, but instead focus on what won’t be there—sin and all of its effects! “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (21:4).

And there we will know the truth of His promise, “In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11).

How can we not yearn for such a home? What a blessing we can enjoy even now!

—Teacher David Bernthal
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

“BEARING THE CROSS”

Which of us has ever enjoyed being labeled “different” or “weird”?

Throughout our lives, especially in the awkward teenage years, our desire to fit in and be seen as “normal” can lead to many foolish choices. Our desire to fit in can affect the way we talk, the clothes we wear, the teams we support, and even how we spend our spare time.

We are often willing to go to great lengths simply to avoid the appearance of being different.

During Jesus’ ministry many people remarked how different He was. First of all, He did not fall in line with the legalistic, loveless teachings of the clergy. When Jesus spoke, listeners recognized something different about Him—and they were astonished at His teaching, for “He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mk. 1:22).

But it was not just how He taught the people, but what He taught them, that was different. Jesus and the message of the gospel is different. It is different from the man-made religions of this world, all of which teach salvation by works: MAN has to do something to save himself!

By contrast, Jesus taught salvation from the fires of hell as God’s gift through faith in His Son. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16).

The sinful pride of man hates this message. Man hates to hear that he is a lost and condemned creature, without any merit or worthiness in him. He

hates to hear that he cannot make it to heaven on his own. When Jesus walked on the Earth, the unbelieving world hated Him so much that they nailed Him to a cross to silence Him.

The Gospel is “Different”

On our part, we have different convictions about Jesus, about what He has done, and about His message. By the work of the Holy Spirit we rejoice to hear that since we could not save ourselves, Jesus came to save us! We rejoice to hear that Jesus died to remove our sins from God’s sight forever! We rejoice to hear that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead means that God has declared us “not guilty”! We rejoice at this different message!

But let’s remember that the unbelieving world still hates this different message. The gospel does not “fit” with what sinful man wants to hear.

And when we speak up for the truth of the gospel, we must realize that we will be seen as different and treated as different. In the hours leading up to His betrayal and arrest, Jesus said to His disciples, “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (Jn. 15:19).

As much as we might desire to be seen as “normal,” we must keep in mind that as followers of Jesus Christ we are different. We have been called out of the darkness of unbelief and into the light of life. We have been brought from condemnation and into the Kingdom of God’s Son. In Christ we are different, and so we can expect

hatred from the world.

It is not easy to be seen as different. It is not easy to be hated. This is the cross which every follower of Christ must bear. “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Mk. 8:34).

Such a cross can seem heavy at times. But the weight of our cross cannot begin to compare with the weight of the cross which Jesus had to bear as He carried all our sins. Further, as

heavy as bearing the cross for Jesus may seem now, it cannot begin to compare with the eternal joy and glory that awaits us in Him. St. Paul says, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).

May God grant us the strength to take up our cross and follow our Savior! Amen.

—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
Hecla, South Dakota



A Father's Day Devotion—

A Father...

A father's joy erupts instinctively when he first sees the newborn gift from God. A father's joy matures as he watches his child grow and develop God-given gifts. “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth” (Ps. 127:3-4).

Our heavenly Father's joy is in sinners being sanctified from the world and made His children to serve Him with their gifts.

A father's desire is to fulfill his God-given role and train up his child in the way he should go so that when he is old he will not depart from it (cf. Proverbs 22:6). A father's constant desire is that his child will learn about his Savior and love Him and always be counted among the Shepherd's lambs. “Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4 NIV).

Our heavenly Father's desire is that

all people would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (cf. 2 Timothy 2:4).

A father's discipline includes teaching, admonishing, correcting, and chastising. Even though chastisement can be unpleasant, a father knows that this is important to his child's well-being—physically and spiritually. “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly” (Prov. 13:24).

Our heavenly Father disciplines through the instruction of His Word and through chastisement. “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD...for whom the LORD loves He chastens....Now no chastening seems joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Heb. 12:5ff).

A father's wisdom begins with humility that makes the study of God's wisdom the center of his life. A wise father spends time with his children so



that he knows them and can apply true wisdom to their particular needs. “Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding...the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Prov. 1:13, 9:10).

A father’s sacrifice is as broad and as deep as his child’s need.

Our heavenly Father sacrificed His only begotten Son to fulfill our need and redeem us from our sin. “God who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32)

A father’s protection is his child’s confidence that when his daddy’s strong arms are holding him nothing else matters, because “I am safe here.”

Our heavenly Father is “our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1).

A father’s love for his Savior and for his children motivates his desire, his sacrifice, and everything that is part of being a faithful father. So great is a father’s love that it instills a love in return. Even before words can be spoken, a child’s love for daddy is evident simply by his reaction to his father’s love.

“Behold what manner of love our heavenly Father has bestowed on us that we should be called the children of God” (1 Jn. 3:1). “We love Him

Prayer of a Christian Father:

Dear heavenly Father, since You have placed upon me the name and the office of Your honor and desire that I be called and honored as father, grant me grace and bless me that I may rule and support my dear wife, children, and servants in a godly and Christian manner. Grant me wisdom and strength to lead and to raise them well, and give them a good heart and will to follow Your teaching and to be obedient. Amen.

— Martin Luther

(What Luther Says, CPH, Vol. III, #3534)

because He first loved us” (1 Jn. 4:19). “This is love for God: to obey His commandments” (1 Jn. 5:3 NIV).

The image of an earthly father provides a two-way illustration in Scripture. On the one hand, God calls Himself our Father, thereby using the picture of an earthly father to help us understand our relationship to Him. On the other hand, God’s perfect fatherly love is the standard and example for all earthly fathers.

It is indeed a blessed circle when the love of our heavenly Father fills and moves earthly fathers to so love and lead their children, who in turn learn about their heavenly Father through the witness of their earthly fathers.

Faithful human fathers are blessings from our heavenly Father. On Father’s Day, every Christian son and daughter rightly gives abundant thanks for God’s gift. At the same time, each father humbly prays for God’s blessing and guidance, strength and wisdom to serve the souls so graciously placed in his earthly care and keeping.

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt
Mankato, Minnesota

“PRESERVE ME FROM MY ENEMIES”

David wrote this psalm as a young man being relentlessly pursued by King Saul, who fully intended to kill him.

The note at the head of the psalm, (a part of the inspired Hebrew text) reveals that this psalm was written by David after he had been hiding in a cave which Saul had entered alone. David could easily have taken Saul's life, yet David refused to kill the Lord's anointed. David refused to take matters into his own hands, for he rather trusted in the Lord to preserve him from his enemies.

Knowing that the Lord had also anointed him to be king, in prayer David took his peril to the Lord who performed all things for him (v. 2). David was confident that the LORD's purposes for him would be fulfilled.

David's trust was not without a sure foundation. He was confident that the Lord would “send forth His mercy and His truth” (v. 3), and this was no small thing to David. He confessed of his God, “Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, And Your truth unto the clouds” (v. 10).

In other words, the goodness and truth of God fills all the Earth, all that is around us. David knew the greatness of his God, and by faith David comprehended that greatness in the saving love of God.

David did not underestimate the fierceness or the danger of the enemies that were against him. He saw them as being as ferocious as lions, with teeth that were “spears and arrows”—spears and arrows aimed in his direction.

Yes, the enemies were making

THE PSALMS THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER BOOK

—Please read Psalm 57—

every attempt to trap David that they might kill him. Saul even used kind words of reconciliation to bring David back to his court. It was a strain that weighed heavily upon him, but David also recognized that God could and, in fact, had turned David's enemies' traps against them and so had delivered David from the hands of his enemies.

David did not kill Saul. God delivered him, and it was God who was glorified before all the world. David grew in steadfast faith because of this deliverance by his God.

A Hostile World

This psalm is excellent for our meditation as we face a world hostile to our faith. We have enemies out there, but at times we are slow to recognize them. As Saul did with David, an enemy may speak kind-sounding words to entice us to come closer to him.

Let there be no doubt that the world is a dangerous spiritual enemy. The devil means to kill the faith within our hearts. Together these are vicious enemies that lay snares to trip us up in our faith.

The devil can also attack us with words of temptation or accusation that are as sharp and deadly as the spears and arrows David identified as coming from his enemies.

We dare not rely upon our strength or cunning to defeat the enemies that assault us. We are overmatched and our own pride will trip us up.

Rather, rely upon God. Remember that He works all for the benefit and eternal blessing of His children. He has a purpose for us and our lives that He will fulfill.

The certainty of our hope begins where David's began—we know God's mercy and truth revealed most gloriously in the death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son, our Lord Jesus

Christ. As we rely upon the faithfulness of our God, we shall see how He is glorified in all the Earth. The Lord our God will strengthen us that we might be steadfast unto our end.

As the attacks pass—and they most certainly shall—we will praise the Lord our God and glorify His name before the people. His mercy and His truth reach to the heavens, and our God is exalted as He preserves us from our enemies!

—*Pastor Theodore Barthels*
Austin, Minnesota



Studies in First Timothy—

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

Chapter 1:12-17

Glory to God for His Superabundant Grace!

Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see. (WS 2000, #777:1)

These words of the treasured hymn written by John Newton beautifully convey the sentiment expressed by the apostle Paul in the opening chapter of this epistle. With thankfulness to the Lord, Paul was utterly amazed by the superabundant grace that Jesus Christ had showed him.

The same amazing grace that was poured out upon Paul serves as a wonderful example of the Lord's gracious dealings in our lives as Christian servants in His kingdom.

Who would ever have thought that

a first-rate Jewish Pharisee like Saul—who led the way in persecuting the Christian Church—would become a Christian named Paul and be appointed by Jesus to be an apostle, would lead the way in spreading the gospel of Christ, and would serve as an inspired writer of the New Testament Scriptures?

When this first came about, it took some convincing of the early Christians. The only explanation was the amazing grace of God—even God's undeserved love and kindness.

After all, consider the bare facts and the harsh realities. The Jew from Tarsus of Cilicia named Saul had been a

Pharisee of Pharisees. He had lived such an outwardly impeccable religious life that he didn't see any need for a Savior like Jesus of Nazareth, whom he regarded as a fraud and charlatan. And thinking he was performing a great service to God, Saul took the lead in speaking out against Jesus, rounding up Christians for imprisonment and execution.

“Chief” Of Sinners!

Looking back upon those dark days of ‘religious infamy,’ the apostle Paul was utterly amazed at God’s abundant grace which was so longsuffering and merciful toward him (cf. Acts 9:5) who had violently oppressed Christ’s Church.

Yes, all had been done in the ignorance of blind unbelief, yet this wasn’t a good excuse that would free Paul of his guilt.

When God opened his eyes to see and his heart to believe, Paul rejoiced over the wondrous truth that Jesus had come into the world to save sinners, including himself. In referring to himself as “chief” of sinners, Paul was thinking not only of his wretched past but also of his present sinfulness.

But then we might ask how Paul, who became a spiritual giant in the Christian Church, could say this about himself? He could say this because he knew what went on in his sin-corrupted heart; therefore he was aware of

more sin in himself than anyone else. Thus he was amazed at God’s grace which saved such a wretch as he.

Another question that could easily enter our minds about God’s dealings with Paul is: “How could the Lord Jesus choose a man like Saul, who had been a leading enemy and persecutor of the Christian Church, to be a leading apostle in the Church and a Bible writer?”

Once again, it was all purely by God’s grace. Even when Paul writes to Timothy that Jesus put him into the ministry because He counted him faithful, Paul wasn’t taking any personal credit. It was due entirely to the Lord’s mercy that Paul was found to be trustworthy and faithful (cf. 1 Cor. 7:25).

Since the Lord Jesus did all this for Paul in the superabundance of His grace, we know and are assured that the infinite saving grace of God covers all our sins, shortcomings, and dark misdeeds. And we rejoice in the wonderful fact that on account of His grace the Lord not only regards us as His dear children and makes us heirs of heaven, but He also deigns to use us as messengers of His saving grace to the world of unbelievers.

All honor, glory, and praise to God for His superabundant grace in Christ Jesus!

—*Pastor Mark Gullerud*
Eau Claire, Wisconsin



Seems there were some lighter moments at the CC Meeting (p. 22f)

The Discourses of Christ

Fear of God—Luke 12:1-7

“IS THIS SCARY—OR WHAT?!”

Have you ever broken out in a cold sweat because of something the pastor said in a sermon?

That’s good once in a while—so that when he preaches the gospel and offers the Sacrament, you experience great relief over sins forgiven. That protects you from hypocrisy, which Jesus warns of here.

We don’t have to worry about the old Pharisees any more; they are long gone. We now have to be warned about some new ones: Lutheran Pharisees—whose leaven is very near.

Some of them learn how to pretend a sense of sin and its relief (such sense is expected among fellow-Lutherans, isn’t it?), and there will be a pretense of self-righteousness. These good people often turn into spiritual bullies, always talking about how other people should act (one classic outward profession of Pharisees of all time—leaven bloats and it gloats!)

And if we had to approach such folks with regard to these things, even gently, they would get upset. That’s good! Can we take the flak that follows? Jesus did. But then we just might be able to help some of them. Jesus was.

The scary thing is that we already have this problem really bad—in our own sinful flesh, 24/7. We may have gone through the outward motions

before, acting the part of a Christian, criticizing others.

Yes, are we not living proof that there needs to be as much evangelism done inside the congregation as well as outside of it?!

Conscience messes up all Pharisees. How do they react when made to feel ashamed and guilty? The sinful flesh rebels, even if God initiates it. God is offended at such pretense; His punishment is deserved. So a perverted conscience does hard work to protect us, to create arguments against God behind which we can hide, to fend off His wrath and quiet down this fear of God.

For Our Consolation!

The old Pharisees did this for years. Lutheran Pharisees today do the same. Our flesh says we can be our own saviors and develop our own brand of religion. So we “get active in doing good things,” which then supposedly “outweigh the wrong.”

Of course, if things go on like that, all fear of God is soon lost, as well as fear of His judgment on sin. But this does not change the fact that God still has power to cast unbelieving hypocrites into hell.

As is all Scripture, these verses are for our consolation. We are precious to God, for Jesus has purchased us. Note Jesus’ two warm words here: “My

friends” (just like at the Lord’s Supper in John 15). Look how He underscores His concern: He cares for all the birds and knows the exact number of hairs on our head. Very impressive!

But more than that, there is this: here is the One Who for us is going to the cross to be condemned with all our damnable sins—the One who baptized us, who speaks His words to us as He gives us His body and blood, who creates faith in us and sustains us through life and death.

Many people are afraid of God. But as we read His Word, we learn how to allay those fears. We learn dozens of Bible portions to calm our hearts during storms of guilt and condemnation. Then God over-rides our pretentious

“me”-theology with His theology of the cross. Hallelujah!

He will not leave us on our own. We follow God’s wisdom (a fear of God actually becoming a healthy thing in us!). By it we learn what damage hypocrisy and pretense can do to us in time and in eternity—but from which we are rescued!

As the old “converted hypocrite” David says: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 110:10).

So we flee to the cross of this Friend of sinners. We do this—each one of us—especially the one whose conscience condemns him or her as “chief of sinners.”

—Pastor Em. Warren Fanning
Sun City, Arizona



Sixth in a series—

“Savoring the Spirit-fruit” *Goodness*

“But the fruit of the Spirit is...goodness...” (Galatians 5:22).

In the 13th verse of Galatians 5 St. Paul declares, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty (freedom); only use not liberty (freedom) for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”

What Paul says to the Galatians addresses all who have been called by the Spirit from slavery under sin and the burdensome slavery imposed by the law. By the application of the baptismal gospel [“According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior...”—



Titus 3:5-6] we were freed from slavishness to the law to walk with a new heart and mind “in newness of life.” Though our flesh daily betrays us, yet the gospel of forgiveness in Christ confirms to us the love of God in Christ, daily filling us with genuine desire, resolve, and strength to serve the Lord.

The fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) can and frequently are aped by the

ungodly and wicked so that the fruits of the Spirit in the Christian's life may not appear to differ much from the heathen's love, joy, goodness, etc." The heathen may ask of the child of God, "What makes you think that you have a corner on love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness...?"

Further, by the common perception of today's generally accepted bland Christianity, the essence of Christianity has been lost. This distortion emphasizes what Christians do, rather than the redemptive love of Christ Jesus, our Savior. Since "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebr. 11:6), and since faith cannot exist where Christ is not preached, the world's exhortation to goodness—literally, "uprightness of heart and life"—is based on the humanist creed of "You can do it." It is not of the Spirit but a product of the persuasive and emotional rhetoric of golden-throated orators.

By reason of our flesh we need the exhortation of the Holy Spirit in this verse so that we will engage in serious introspection that leads to recognition of our sin and weakness—and innate inability!—and thereafter to joy and comfort in Christ in whom alone we live and move and have our being.

Paul names uprightness of heart and life as one of the fruits of the Spirit. "Goodness signifies the good,

kind intention which wants to do, and does, what is good" (*The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, J.P. Koehler, NPH 1957, p. 152).

Instruments of the Spirit

The apostle does not speak of goodness as a goal of the Christian life, but as a manifestation of the Christian life together with the other fruits of which he speaks in this verse. He says, "The fruit of the Spirit 'is'...goodness." Fruits of the Spirit in the life of the child of God glorify the Lord Christ and not the bearer. Instead of thanking God for the ability to bear fruit, the Christ-believer thanks Him for grafting him into Jesus, the Vine (John 15), to produce God's fruit in his life.

Uprightiness of heart and life is a natural concomitant of love, the first of the fruits mentioned by Paul in v. 22. As Christ is our Light (Ephesians 5:8), a life of goodness is a product of our walk in the light. It is a life more concerned with the welfare of others than self—in love we serve one another. It is a life that does not boast of its walk in light because it is too engaged in spontaneity of living the life to which we are called—to the glory of God and not of man.

The "uprightness of heart and life" born of a life in Christ separates the life of the Christ-believer from self-



**More often
the scene at
the April
CC meeting
involved
serious
discussion**

serving imitations used as bartering chips with God. The believer in Christ does not barter with God but rejoices in the privilege to serve the Lord with uprightness of heart and life.

Fruits of the Spirit in our lives confirm that “His love is perfected in us.” “Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit” (1 Jn. 4:13). As we continue steadfast in the gospel, our

confidence will never turn to doubt, or our fruit to thorns.

What distinguishes the fruits of the Christ-believer from the counterfeit imitations of the world is the believer’s connection to Christ (John 15). To God alone be the glory, Who by His Spirit causes fruit to abound in the lives of His children.

—*Pastor Daniel Fleischer*
Corpus Christi, Texas



Re: our mission to reach out with the gospel—

The Open Door **(Second of Two)**

In John 4:7-42 we have an exciting drama where our Lord gives us an example of the open door. A soul hung in the balance. It is an incident out of every day life. A similar incident could easily be repeated in your life right now. We approach this section to learn how our great Lord did it. What follows is a study outline.

(vv. 7-8) It all began with the need for a drink of water. Did our Lord need a drink? As you read it, does it seem like a real thing? Yes. There was a real need in the woman. And our Lord used His real need for a drink of water to approach this woman.

Thus in our on-going life, the opportunities arise. Our Lord could and would use such. He asked in order to lead into the water of life. The Lord has told us He will make us fishers of men. We do not stand on the seashore and hold the net and whistle for the fish to scurry on shore and jump into our net. We launch out into the deep and cast the net. Were we to stand on the

shore and hold the net, a few flying fish might land in our net. Therefore we go to where the fish swim and frolic in order to catch them.

(vv. 9-19) She wasn’t searching for truth, though the Lord was searching for the sinner. There is no blatant evidence in the narrative that she was hungering and thirsting after righteousness, nor do most today. The Lord does not hesitate to deal with sinners—those we could never expect to become pillars in the Church.

Here is a great Teacher with an ordinary woman. Here is the full Jew with a half-breed Samaritan. Here is the upright and holy Man with a repetitious sinner. Because our thinking is not clear, so dreadfully often we miss the opportunity (open door) that the Lord never missed. Our thinking is befuddled by sin.

Each of us develops our physical skills as we grow. We learned to turn over, then to crawl, then to walk, and finally to run. So also we develop our

witnessing skills. We dare not use the excuse that the door is closed. We listen to our Lord to learn how to develop the skill of turning from earthly to heavenly things in our talk, from the mundane to the glorious, and from the admittedly petty to the life-changing.

The Devil Would Distract!

(vv. 19-26) It is not a matter of coming to the temple, synagogue, or church, but of coming to Him. Here is the Lord and His Word and the hearer brought to faith. This situation can be repeated many times in our daily lives.

To grasp the concept of the 'open door,' we need to fight against limiting our most holy faith. Our faith-living is not just for the set apart, holy, special times. Is there a waking moment that you are not Christ's? We need to put down the devil's attempts to distract us. One there is for whom I am living. In Him I live and move and have my being. I strive to make speaking of Him as natural as breathing.

(vv. 27-30) One would not have expected this! The disciples marveled not that the woman believed, but that Jesus talked to her! They had yet much to learn about the open door of witnessing opportunity. She who was not looking for the Christ was sought out and found by Him and won by the Word. She was so excited that she hurried back to town, leaving her water jar!

(vv. 31-42) The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Word. The city was breached not by a vast military host bearing battering rams and siege equipment, but by a single woman entering the gate with the Good News in her heart and on her lips. Even more results were forthcoming from the city.

We are born to multiply, born of water and the Word to propagate the saving faith. If the concept of the open door is clear, we will seek to duplicate what our Lord did at Jacob's Well and to replicate the apostle in thought and act. "For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ..." (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

*THE GREAT BANQUET IS SET AND THE DOOR IS OPEN...*Read Lk. 14:15-24. There still is room! There still is time! "Go out quickly to the streets and lanes" and bring them in. "Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that..." His house may be filled. The door to the great banquet hall is open to them.

Before you also is a wide door, the wide door of opportunity to herald Him and His atoning sacrifice.

As Paul prayed, "that God may open to us a door for the Word..." (Col. 4:3), so let us pray. God answered Paul's prayer for such an opportunity in his Roman imprisonment. "I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brethren have been made confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment, and are much more bold to speak the Word of God without fear" (Php. 1:12-14).

May it be so with us also.

—Missionary Koenig (in his Dec. '07 Newsletter)

History As God's Story

The overarching title for the new series in our *Spokesman* is: *All History is God's Story*.

On the face of it, such a title could be considered rather bland. It might tweak atheists (God-deniers) and anti-theists (active God-haters) who “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (cf. Romans 1:18). Yet the title would brook little or no debate for “religious” people in our day (cf. Acts 17:22).

On our part that title is intended as a distinctly Christian and sweepingly confessional statement.

It's intended to say that there is a Supreme Being who has been, is, and ever shall be behind the creation of and continuing existence of man himself as well as of the various groups and families of peoples and nations on the planet (cf. Acts 17:28*).

It's intended to say that from the beginning (see the accompanying initial article in this series) and at any other time along the historical timeline, neither individuals nor nations have been left to fend for themselves or to determine their own destiny. They live and die, rise and fall, operate and interact alone under, by, or because of the grace of God on the one hand or the manifestations of God's righteous judgment on the other (cf. Psalm 31:15, Acts 17:26).

It is intended to say, in other words, that mankind never has been, is not, and never shall be the only actor on the stage of world history, but rather that God has been, is, and ever shall be in charge of what's going on here on Earth and everywhere in His universe!

Denying this, men and nations remain without excuse and under judgment for their spiritual blindness and ignorance (cf. Romans 1:20ff).

It's intended to pin down the fact that the God and Lord of history is a personal Being, not an impersonal force or nameless one of a hundred names, however sin-blinded mankind might choose to describe or identify Him. It is implying that God has made Himself known in no uncertain terms—that is, in and through His creation first of all (cf. Psalm 19, Acts 14:17); and then further revealed Himself, His holy will and ways, in and through His sacred Word of absolute Truth, the Holy Scriptures (cf. Romans 15:4, 2 Timothy 3:15ff).

It's intended to convey that, as the Scriptures reveal, God has spoken to us by His Son, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word made flesh (cf. John 1:11ff, Hebrews 1:1ff), and that the gospel of Christ is alone the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes (cf. Romans 1:1-4,16).

Since all history is HIS-Story from beginning to end, from first to last, from eternity to eternity, we look forward to a series of Bible study devotionals from our staff writers who hold without apology to a Biblical/Christian worldview.

Using 70 Old Testament—and later on, 70 New Testament—Bible stories contained in the classic *Advanced Bible History* (1936, Conc. Pub. House, St. Louis, MO), our series begins with a look at holy snapshots from Genesis, the “Book of Beginnings.”

What *Advanced Bible History* had to say in its Introduction is worth repeating, for the good words apply today as then:

"...For many centuries the Old Testament was the only part of Scripture that God's people on earth had and in which they could find eternal life through faith in the promised Savior and from which they could obtain all the instruction and guidance necessary for a true child of God.

"This part of Holy Scripture is an account of the revelations, works, miracles, guidance, mercies, promises, prophecies, and general dealings of God with mankind during the period of

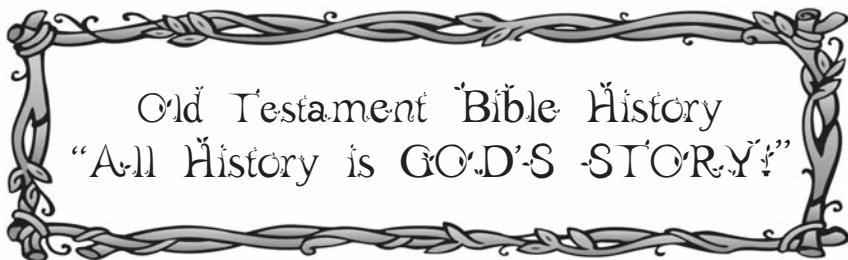
waiting and longing for the Savior's coming into the flesh, which found its climax, ending, and fulfillment in the New Testament.

"With this conception, then, approach the study of the Old Testament. Do not think of it alone as something meant for people of long ago, but as the holy Word of God to you for your instruction unto eternal life."

Both those who write and those who read will be blessed.

(*Note: Where Scripture references are cited, many others might be added.)

Soli Deo Gloria! ("To God Alone the Glory!")
—Editor



No. 1 in Series: Genesis 1 & 2

In the beginning.

Today for our Bible study we are taking a trip back in time and back in space—the all the way back to Creation—and back to God, who existed before He created this Universe. The Bible text is short and simple: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

This is the first message we have from God, as the Holy Spirit gives us access to God's mind and heart. And here we have the only valid account of the beginning of everything that exists. We bow our hearts before this Word of God, as we bow to God Himself.

What's so important about this first

verse of the Bible?

First of all, this is God's answer to every fable ever invented about "the lost world" or "pre-historic" times, a subject that has fascinated the human imagination throughout the ages.

In the beginning God created what did not exist beforehand. We may as

well face it that our brains, so attuned and acclimated to time and place, cannot envision non-time and non-place, the nothingness before God created our time/space continuum. But God wants us to know the truth expressed in five English words (only three in Hebrew): IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED.

If these words were deleted from the divine record, erased from the book of truth—what then would you have left about the origin of time and space and matter and energy, the start-up of everything? Well, if you erase the beginning, then there was no beginning, and then there was no divine work of creation, and ultimately there is no God!

That's what the unbeliever, the atheist, and the evolutionist figure is a better explanation than acknowledging a God who is Creator and Preserver, the Grand Architect of the universe, who is still alive and healthy.

Sinners may wish God were dead and that the universe arose by itself billions of years ago from a handful of matter that chose to explode in a Big Bang to generate the galaxies and solar systems—so that their consciences would quit bugging them about their accountability to God, their Creator and Judge!

The modernist, the atheist, and the evolutionist say, "I just can't believe in a God I cannot see. I don't believe that the entire universe was created by anything intelligent at all. The universe is just too BIG for God to create it; science is still solving its riddles and unlocking its secrets. The universe certainly happened by itself, the product of random forces and accidental evolution."

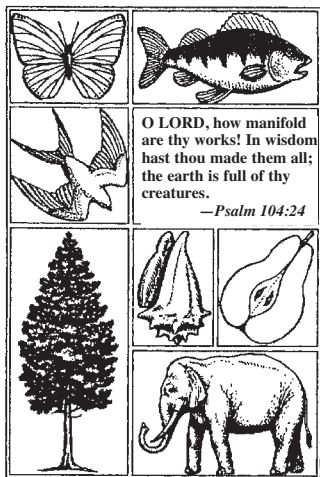
"...God wants us to take this first verse of Genesis to our hearts, to keep it there and to treasure it so that we will come back to it over and over and say, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow! Praise God that He created this universe for His glory and for my blessing!'"

God's Handiwork

"Well, then," I respond, "Evolution is your religion, and you worship at the altar of random chance. Amazed as you are at the balance and complexity and vastness of the universe, why can't you acknowledge the Bible truth that "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament (space) shows His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1)? Since it is common sense that "every house is built by someone," you should be able to grant that "He who built all things is God" (Heb. 3:4)

Now, we freely admit that God has not given us much detail (on the atomic level) about each day's work of creation, but we are content with what He did and how He did it. It is enough to understand that the Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, is my heavenly Father, and He has done it all for me until I get reunited with Him in heaven. That's my worldview, because it is the Bible's worldview, and it is certainly God's worldview.

When we confess, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," we mean to say that there is no other god, not Allah or any other idol, and this one true God is the Father of the dear children who belong



to God's family because He has adopted them by way of faith and through the Son of God, whom the Father sent to save souls from Satan.

No doubt we want to know where Jesus stands in regard to Creation. Where was He at the beginning? The Holy Spirit has a wonderful answer, telling us through the Apostle John that Jesus was at the center of it right from the beginning. The Father did not create the heavens and the earth without His Son's help and support.

So John's Gospel begins with the same three words "In the beginning," and then goes on with the remarkable note that Jesus was there in the form that the Holy Spirit describes as the WORD, an expression used by many folks of John's day when they got philosophical about the mystery of how God could share in the human condition. It's a puzzlement to us, too, how God can become human, and we admit that we cannot get our brains to figure out how the Infinite can become finite. But God had no such problem and did it, anyway!

The Holy Spirit's wording through John assures us that "In the beginning

was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him (that personage of God called the WORD), and without Him was not any thing made that got made/created."

Down in verse 14 Jesus' picture becomes even more clear: "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."

Yes, dear friends, Jesus has been working for you and me ever since He and His Father and their Spirit (the Holy Trinity) created the universe! Jesus was made flesh to redeem the fallen race of mankind, and Jesus now back at home in heaven asserts, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, who was and is and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8).

That's our Jesus, first and last, forever the Creator, Redeemer, and ruling Lord of our lives. Christians are not worshiping a false god, but the Creator of heaven and earth!

God wants us to take this first verse of Genesis to our hearts, to keep it there and to treasure it so that we will come back to it over and over and say, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow! Praise God that He created this universe for His glory and for my blessing!"

May He be enthroned in your heart where He belongs and where He can preside over your personal universe, where your sun rises and sets on all you are and all that you do! To Him be glory and dominion, now and forever. AMEN!

—Paul R. Koch
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Expelled!

On April 18th a documentary was released in theaters nationwide—*Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*. This documentary has received a good amount of publicity among Christians because it documents the case against evolution and its automatic acceptance in the world today.

Because of the nature of this film and its message, we are providing a brief review of its content from a Christian perspective for those who may be interested in seeing the movie or who wonder about its value.

This documentary will meet expectations if the viewer enters the theater with a clear understanding of its purpose and of the Intelligent Design movement:

1) The movie's purpose is *not* to support, defend, or teach the biblical truth of creation.

2) The purpose of the movie is to show how freedom in science is being trampled, to reveal the effects of following evolution, and to set forth the possibility of some sort of intelligent design behind the formation of the universe.

3) "Intelligent Design" is a scientific approach that is not Christian. Intelligent Design acknowledges design but does not ascribe that to the one true God of Scripture and therefore does not glorify Him. If the scientific world suddenly agreed to Intelligent Design, it would still not mean that the Bible was being believed, that God was being glorified, or that Christ was being worshipped.

Loss of Freedom in Science

The documentary interviews several scientists who lost their jobs because they taught or wrote about the possibility of intelligent design in the universe. In each case the freedom to explore scientific options was curtailed because these individuals did not follow the majority view.

Objections to Intelligent Design

The Darwinists (evolutionists) who are interviewed for this film (and certainly most others) equate Intelligent Design with religion. Any discussion of Intelligent Design brings their scorn and ridicule as is evidenced throughout this movie. Intelligent Design is derided as "boring" and "stupid stuff," while those who believe in a god of any sort are described as "not sane," "stupid," or at the very least "ignorant." One Darwinist describes religion as being like "knitting"—a pastime to amuse people.

Improbability of Evolution

Since it takes a minimum of 250 proteins for the simplest of cells to survive, this documentary uses a dramatic graphic portrayal to show the statistical impossibility of evolutionary development. Interviews with prominent evolutionists become humorous for the sheer silliness of what they propose without any real evidence. The film also describes the marvels of God's creation (though it does not acknowledge it as such) in the DNA of each and every cell.

Media's role

A reporter who dared to report on the idea of Intelligent Design and lost her job provides insight from a media perspective. A compelling case is made to show that the media support the scientific establishment, that is, evolution and Darwinism. The news-media are so closed to anything outside of “what we’re supposed to believe” that when new discoveries are put forth, those discoveries are either not reported or are brushed aside with the standard evolutionist line of dismissal.

Effects of Evolution

Several evolutionists are interviewed. Each one is arrogant, an atheist, speaks mockingly of anything religious (not to mention Christianity), and each one freely acknowledges that the theory of evolution is what led them to their atheistic beliefs. They view this as “enlightenment,” but sad to say, it is the road to damnation.

Worldview

The conclusion is drawn by the movie that the debate concerning the origins of the universe is really a *lack* of debate because the idea of Intelligent Design is squelched. At the heart of this debate, or lack thereof, lies a difference in worldview:

- 1) Darwinist worldview—a worldview that makes science the answer to everything and makes the evidence fit whatever one has pre-determined it should say.
- 2) Intelligent Design worldview—a worldview that follows the evidence wherever it leads, even to the point of debunking previously held notions. It lets the evidence speak for itself.
- 3) Christian worldview—a worldview not portrayed in the movie, but one that lets God speak from His Word, carries on its experiments and studies with that understanding, and then marvels as all of creation gives testimony to its Creator.

The Wall

The documentary draws an ongoing parallel between the current scientific atmosphere and that of Nazi Germany and its aftermath. Like the wall that separated East and West Germany to keep Communism “safe” from western influence, so a wall is set up to silence anything that opposes Darwinism to keep it “safe.” The movie draws attention to the evolutionary thinking that contributed to Hitler’s actions, the founding of Planned Parenthood, and still contributes to abortion and euthanasia.

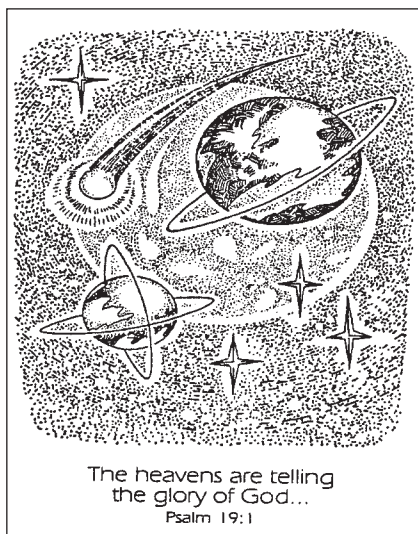
Final Call

The movie ends with a call to stand up for freedom in science. It seeks to inspire individuals who love freedom to stand up and be heard. The movie is convincing in its cause—and if there is reason to “stand up” for the love of freedom and science, we have much more reason to stand up when we have the truth to share and the true God to glorify. The movie ends on a humorously entertaining note for all those who are familiar with Ben Stein’s previous work.

Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed is informative. It provides a valuable collection of interviews and insights into the way in which Darwinism has kidnapped science, and it provides evidence for all the resultant effects. The sobering message of the film is a reminder to us all to guard our hearts and those of our children. The message of Darwinism is pervasive and not simply in the classroom or the scientific journal—it is all-encompassing because of its wide acceptance and assumed truth.

*The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.
Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals knowledge.
There is no speech nor language
Where their voice is not heard.
Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.*

*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting
the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;
The statutes of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring
forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
(Psalm 19:1-4,7-10)*



—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt
Immanuel Home Messenger
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minn.



2006 Synod Convention Communion Service, Immanuel Lutheran College auditorium

Our assistant editor, who resides in Eau Claire, was asked whether he might audit a meeting of the synod's Coordinating Council and submit a report for the sake of our readers. He consented. Thank you, Prof. Koch, for this report.

Coordinating Council April 2-3, 2008

It seems to this observer that the tail is still wagging the dog.

Oh, it all goes smoothly enough—this assembly called the Coordinating Council, composed of around a dozen men, meeting at Immanuel Lutheran College twice each year. It goes smoothly because these are friendly and considerate fellows, fathers and grandfathers used to explaining things like the family budget. “You can’t spend money you don’t have!” one hears as a reminder that the tail should not be wagging the dog.

That’s frustrating. Even when all family members are devoted to one another’s welfare and would like to loosen up on self-imposed restrictions, they find that they just daren’t do so. When income is caught in a tight bind, it governs and limits the activities of the body. The tail is still wagging the dog.

To illustrate: the Board of Missions reports on the health of our stateside fledgling congregations that receive

our financial support. Each of these ten small congregations is struggling under the constraints of its own resources—and we, their brethren in larger congregations, give them our helping hand as we can. It’s barely enough to keep them functioning, and the threat now looms that CLC financial constraints could force some “mission” pastors to enter the job-market for a paycheck. The tail is wagging the dog.

Among our far-flung brethren in Africa and India the story is the same, as many a gospel-motivated venture to carry the Savior to hungry hearts is held back by the tail of tight finances.

Then the Board of Regents of Immanuel Lutheran College reports how things are going. We listen closely, knowing that the future well-being of our church family is closely tied to the way we raise our young people through their high school and college years. Finances have a tight grip on



President Schierenbeck makes his point, while Secretary Eichstadt, Moderator Nolting, and Prof. Pfeiffer listen.



Taking notes: Pastor Jim Sandeen, Dr. Jim Sydow, Pastor Mike Roehl, Mr. Phil Radichel



In front of Ingram Hall:
(l-r) James Sandeen, Larry Hansen, Phil Radichel, Paul Nolting, Daniel Fleischer, Gayle Stelter, Wayne Eichstadt, Dave Aymond, Ted Barthels, Ross Roehl, John Pfeiffer, Mark Bernthal, John Schierenbeck, Bruce Naumann

campus not only to sustain the status quo, but for growth and advancement—of students, faculty, and staff.

Corners have been cut so many times that no corners are left; faculty posts vacated by retirees Roehl and Sydow cannot be filled due to the constraint of tight finances. The tail is still wagging the dog.

Then the Board of Trustees has its turn, and number-crunching is the name of its game. But the end result is still the same—you can't spend what you don't have.

One disagreeable alternative is to go to the bank and continue our ministries on borrowed money. Nobody really wants to do that.

In the view of this observer, the tail of financial constraints keeps the body subdued to a mere wiggle. And the deduction seems equally valid that when the financial tail is freed (thus freeing the body), then the body will be enabled to go forward on its happy calling. (It's only a limping analogy, but you get the point.)

While God is upholding us in His hands, you and I are holding the financial tail of the CLC in ours. The tail is still wagging the dog, and the gentlemen serving on our Coordinating Council seem resigned to that dismal reality. I am not! Are you?

—Paul R. Koch, Reporter (and photos)



CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION (CLC) TWENTY-EIGHTH CONVENTION

June 16-20, 2008
Immanuel Lutheran College
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

"May We Be Found Faithful Stewards of the Mysteries of God..." Colossians 1:24-29

1. "...in making the Word of God fully known" (Col. 1:24-26) —Pastor James Albrecht
2. "...in proclaiming the glorious richness of Christ to the unbelieving world" (Col. 1:27-28)
—Pastor David Schaller
3. "...in laboring to share what God has given to us" (Col. 1:29)
—Mr. Steven Leinberger

Communion Service Speaker: Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
Communion Service Liturgist: Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
Memorial Service Speaker: Prof. Em. Paul R. Koch
Chaplain: Pastor Paul Naumann
Organ Coordinator: Lane Fischer
Convention Reporter: Professor Joseph Lau



Announcements

West-Central Delegate Conference
Trinity Lutheran Church
Watertown, South Dakota
May 27-29

(Printed belatedly as information)

Agenda:

- History of Lutheranism in America up to 1870 (not assigned)
- What is the role of the tithe in New Testament stewardship?—Pastor James Sandeen)
- Cremation Revisited—"Is 'ashes to ashes' the same as 'dust to dust?'"
—Mr. Jonathan Sandeen
- Foreign Missionary, What does it take to go?—Pastor John Klatt
- Bridging the Generation Gap in the Congregation—Teacher Ryan Hammett
- Discussion of Convention *Prospectus*
Chaplain—Pastor Frank Gantt
Conference Service Speaker—Pastor Mark Gurath

CORRECTIONS: The word "not" is missing from the last sentence of the first paragraph in the boxed article on the *Brief Statement* about "Open Questions" on page 15 of our May 2008 issue. The sentence should read: "To try to answer what Scripture does not answer would involve adding to Scripture." The original writing included the word which was inadvertently omitted in the editing process.

In the middle of the second column, p. 20, the 1 Timothy 4:8 passage should read: "...godliness has value for all things..."

We regret the errors. — Editor

Send Change of Address to :

Lutheran Spokesman
2750 North Oxford Street
Roseville, MN 55113



Singing the praises of the Lord at the 2006 Convention