

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



We will tell the next generation the  
praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,  
His power, and the wonders He has done.

*Psalm 78:4*

# Christ's Education And Ours

Mark Twain once opined that “soap and education are not as sudden as a massacre, but they are more deadly in the long run.” The world chuckled, but not Solomon. “A wise man will hear and increase learning. . . . But fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1:5,7).

Our Lord Jesus was no fool, nor was He born with mature wisdom. Luke records that “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (2:52). Almost the same words were used to describe the child Samuel. Hence Christ’s education was no sham, and examining His can teach us about ours. Having been ‘found in fashion as a man,’ Jesus needed an education which embraced the whole of His human life.

## Physical Development

Christ’s education involved physical development: He increased in stature.

There have been those who have viewed the sinful human body with contempt, even assuming God is more pleased with bodies that are frail and ignored. Some might yet down-play physical education. Nowhere does Scripture describe Jesus as being puny, as contemptuous of His body, or as a morbid ascetic. He may not have pumped iron as a teenager, but He surely did use His developing physical strength and health to the glory of God. Having been made fearfully and wonderfully, Christians especially (who are also ‘the temple of the Holy Ghost’) need to be trained to serve God and men with bodies that are strong, healthy, and active.

While Jesus was always divine, His humanity was real—with human limitations. He had to acquire wisdom and information by the learning process. So He did. There have been those who have belittled the human mind, arguing

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that since the mind is sinful—and since God Himself speaks disparagingly of human reason—why cultivate the mind? Salvation is by faith, and reason is the enemy of faith; therefore, education is bad and ignorance is bliss (was Mark Twain riding in this boat?).

### **In Favor With Men**

But Jesus dignified our minds by growing in wisdom. Apart from our immortal souls, our mental capabilities may be God's greatest gift to us, for with the application of reason to the laws of nature, man can subdue the earth; with renewed minds, sinners can begin to comprehend the things of God. Sound Christian learning always proceeds from the fear of God. Willing ignorance is contempt of God.

Can we not say Christ's education also included a social aspect? He did increase in favor with man. Indeed, God has created us as social beings, and Christians especially are to have an impact on others—none of us living only to ourselves. A complete Christian education includes social development.

Even as a boy Jesus was attaining the social skills which we all need in order to cultivate God-pleasing relationships. Our Lord was not a popularity seeker, but He learned to be all things to all men. There is a certain social grace in interacting with people so as to not break the frail reed and snuff out the smoking wick. Jesus learned those graces, and no doubt was the most polite, helpful, considerate, respectful youngster Nazareth had ever seen. No wonder He found favor with men.

So our Christian education must include a constructive set of social val-

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*The education of the soul has been called the soul of education. Man's greatest needs are spiritual. . . .*

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ues and graces. (Ours is not a social gospel; but neither should our social skills, or lack of them, be a hindrance to our proclamation of the gospel.)

### **In Favor With God**

Jesus also increased in favor with God. More and more the Father was pleased with the loving, obedient conduct of His Son, which culminated with His sin-sacrificing death on the cross. This was the eternal, saving plan. Even as a boy, Jesus' all pervading purpose in life was to do the business of His Father. While Jesus probably attended some sort of elementary school, there is no hint that He later sat at the feet of some learned rabbi. No, the pages of Holy Scripture were His tutor. No wonder God was pleased.

The education of the soul has been called the soul of education. Man's greatest needs are spiritual. We need to know our sin and how to be free from it. We need to know the grace of God to fully bask in it. We need to be taught the will of God to do it.

And Christians of every age need to keep on 'growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' This is education for time and eternity. This is education with true meaning and purpose. Only Christian education does justice to the character of God. All else is only an appeal to, and an exercise in, human pride.

—Pastor David Fuerstenau

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).*

## Possessing Lasting Wealth

Over the last twelve to eighteen months the fortunes of many Americans have changed dramatically. People have put much stock in the new economy, in the “high tech stocks.” Many Christians also ended up with a great deal of temporal wealth invested in these through company pension plans, or private investments, or retirement accounts.

How blessed we are to possess the confidence that our fortunes have not diminished. The words of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount are so important, so reassuring to us, for not only do they give a heavenly direction to our lives, but they also give us the confidence of faith along the way.

Consider what the richest of men would say of his wealth. I don’t mean Bill Gates. This man was far richer than Bill Gates, for not only did this man possess the wealth of this world, but also the inspired wisdom of the Holy Spirit. King Solomon said, “Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death” (Prov. 11:4).

The end-all, cure-all view of temporal wealth which this world holds is shown to be false even in its own experience, but the wisdom of Solomon states it clearly. There is a day of judgment, a day of wrath that is coming upon the earth, and in that day all the gold and silver in the world will not deliver from the spiritual dilemma that

will face all people. It is righteousness that delivers from death. The only profitable righteousness that we can possess is that which Christ has purchased for us with “His holy, precious blood and His innocent sufferings and death.”

### ‘Scattering’ God’s Blessings

As we comprehend that righteousness through faith, our estimation of the value of temporal wealth is permanently altered. By the guidance of the Spirit in our hearts and lives, temporal wealth stops being the purpose for our actions and behavior, but it rather becomes a means by which we can serve our Savior. In this it actually attains a greater value for us than the world will ever know. Again the wisdom of Solomon speaks to us. “There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty” (Prov. 11:24).

As we have opportunity to serve our Lord and reveal His love by “scattering” the temporal blessings with which He has showered us, we are not deprived, but enriched with His continued grace. We experience “increase” according to the grace of God. This “increase” may not be greater temporal wealth, but it may be in joy and peace. It may be in a richer appreciation of the joy that awaits us in heaven. After all, this is the treasure to which our Lord has directed us and which is assured us

by Jesus' resurrection, as Peter writes, "according to His abundant mercy (He) has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

Solomon has rightly warned, "He

who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like foliage" (Prov. 11:28). What the righteous know through faith in Christ is that this flourishing encompasses the spiritual and eternal. What the righteous know is that our greatest treasure, our true lasting wealth, is found in heaven with the Lord.

—Pastor Theodore Barthels



FROM A PASTOR'S DESK—

## Football And Faith

If spring is the time when a young man's fancies turn to . . . , then fall is the season when watching the great American pastime of football takes over the spare time of many armchair quarterbacks. In tough times and in good, Americans have found escape and enjoyment in sports—playing, listening, and teaching.

And while athletic participation at all levels has certain health benefits ("bodily exercise [does] profit a little"—1 Timothy 4:8), not so easily seen are the benefits of being a spectator, even a fan(atic). Yet many immensely enjoy the game and the competition as well as the community loyalty and pride engendered by their team. Viking and Packer fans (a signif-

icant portion of our Midwest readers?) regularly exchange jovial barbs over the rise and fall of each other's football fortunes.

Perhaps by now you're wondering if this article belongs in *Sports Illustrated* rather than the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

### Keeping Perspective

What is important is keeping everything in perspective. Football or any other sport is just a game and, if professional, a business. Run by wealthy owners, played by often greedy players who are too often poor role models, sports success is far from the ultimate. Winning or losing are not all that important in the grand scheme of

**SEEK FIRST  
HIS KINGDOM**



things. Winning or losing will not affect the things most important in my life. In heaven it won't matter that my beloved Vikings have never won a Super Bowl.

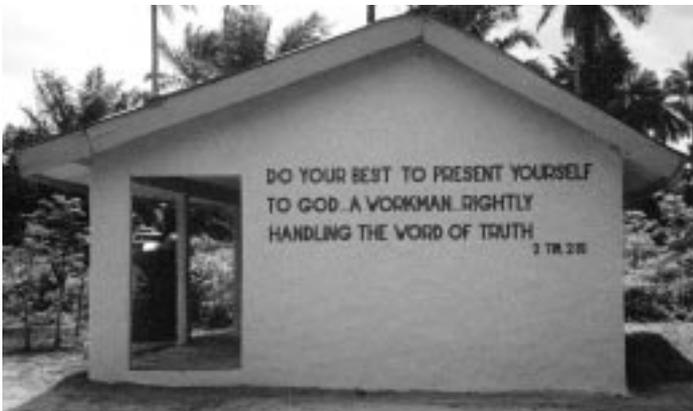
Having said that, we still recognize that even Christians can enjoy the diversions that sports and a whole host of other recreational, cultural, and entertainment activities offer, so long as they are not sinful. We were created by God to receive and enjoy with thanksgiving all of His marvelous gifts and blessings to His wonderful world (1 Timothy 4:3-4)—and that covers a wide range of interests, hobbies, and activities.

### A Danger

Perhaps the one danger in all these things is that they begin to subtly displace the “One Thing Needful” either in our hearts or in our time-prioritizing. Pastors would love to see the devotion and enthusiasm for the local heroes matched by a similar enthusiasm for the Lord's work. Has it happened that church activities begin to take a back

seat to these other activities? In order to accommodate other schedules, have pastors and churches had to reschedule church classes and meetings? What kind of message is being sent to our children, families, and congregation when youth sports programs take precedence over Sunday worship and Sunday School? Despite our sincere words and good intentions to put the Lord first, do our actions support them? Do our excuses begin to sound like those who declined the invitation to the Great Supper?

Worldliness has subtly crept into our Lord's Day schedule. As New Testament Christians we are not advocating reinstatement of Old Testament Sabbath laws. We understand the resurrection reasons for the early New Testament choice of Sunday as the day of worship. Only a couple of generations back, “blue laws” were common in some states which forbade businesses from opening on Sunday—leaving it a day for church and family. Only a generation ago Sunday mornings were off-limits for business and sports activ-



The newly dedicated student housing at Efa, Nigeria, built with CLC money and Nigerian labor. The Bible passage reads: Do your best to present yourself to God a workman rightly handling the Word of Truth. 2 Tim. 2:15

ities. Now, however, for many, Sunday seems no different than any other day of the week.

As we now resume our fall routine of church activities, let all of us reevaluate and reaffirm our spiritual priorities. Our calling is to let nothing interfere with our relationship with our God or our presence in His house for Word and worship. For it is only through faithful use of God's Word that our faith is fed and fortified—an activity

which will benefit our spiritual health eternally.

As someone once said, "Football is a wonderful diversion, but it makes a mighty poor religion." Or to finish the Spirit's comparative summary of the benefits of each: "For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).

—Pastor David Schierenbeck



## LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

"That We Might Have Hope" (Rom. 15:4)

*First Kings, Chapter Seventeen*

### *Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath*

Through the prophet Elijah the Lord let King Ahab know that a drought was coming. This drought, brought on by Ahab's harlotry with false gods, caused hardship for the believer as well as the unbeliever. The Lord provided for His prophet by the use of a small brook and food miraculously brought by ravens. When the Lord brought these sources to a close, he directed Elijah with these words, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

Elijah was now to head to a heathen city—a city outside the clutches of the Kingdom of Israel, but not those of the drought. As Elijah approached the city, he met this widow who as yet knew nothing of God's command to provide for the prophet. As events transpired,

Elijah would provide her with the command and the opportunity to give; the Lord would provide the gift.

The widow was hard at work at a lamentable task. She was gathering up sticks for a cooking fire, a duty she no doubt had done countless times. The difference this time was that she expected it to be her last time. She had only enough flour and oil to provide her son and herself a last meal—and then starvation loomed. At this moment Elijah asked her for a little water in a cup. (I can think of many things that I might have said to Elijah in that situation, and yet the woman complied.) And then to add another burden to her generosity, he called to her, "Please bring a morsel of bread in your hand."

Elijah had provided the widow with

the command— “bring me a morsel of bread.” He also provided the opportunity to give—he was in need of food. On her part, the widow needed to find the source of the gift. And she did what we so often are tempted to do—look to our resources rather than God’s. She told Elijah that she had only enough for a last meal for her son and herself “that we may eat it, and die.”

Sound familiar? In our day and age we rarely run into the opportunity to actually provide a meal to a starving man. However, the Lord does provide us with the command to give and the opportunity to give. How do we react? Let’s consider some examples.

### **Your Resources And God’s**

The church needs more offerings; do we say or think, “Do they really expect me to give more? I’m strapped as it is with all my bills and financial concerns.” One who reacts in that way is looking at his own weak resources and is forgetting that God in His wealth of resources says, “And try me now in this . . . If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:10).

The church, Christian Day School, synod, or our family need more of our time; do we say or think, “With deadlines and commitments, how can I do any more? I only have so many hours in a day, and besides, there are an awful lot of others who aren’t doing their share.” These are our temporal resources; God’s eternal resources say, “My times are in Your hand” (Ps. 31:15).

Our talents have been called for; do we say or think, “But you know, we have so many other gifted people in the

congregation. They would be better suited for the job than I am with my poor abilities.” If we say or think that way, we are looking at our paltry resources; look rather to God’s powerful resources, which say, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Is it not I, the Lord?” (Ex. 4:11)

We are all called upon to share the gospel; do we think or say, “You know, I understand that people need to hear about Jesus as their Savior. But the pastor has been trained to do that kind of thing.” We shouldn’t consider our own meager resources; rather, hear God’s mighty resources which say, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained . . . which none of the rulers of this age knew . . . But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:7-10).

How did that widow have the courage to provide for God’s prophet? She listened and obeyed God’s Word. She looked to His resources. “And Elijah said to her, Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, . . . For thus says the Lord God of Israel: The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.”

God has commanded us to give of our time, talents, and treasures. He gives us opportunities to use them for His service and for the service of our fellow man. Let us remember that He is the Source of all good and perfect gifts: the forgiveness of sins, our deliverance from Satan, the world, and death—as well as our material blessings.

And these resources which God has placed at our disposal are inex-

haustible! Praise be to our merciful and gracious God!

“Freely you have received, freely give” (Mt. 10:8).

—Teacher David Bernthal



## Parables Of The Master Matthew 21:28-32

### The two sons with attitude problems

In this parable Jesus addresses one problem, and one problem only; it’s attitude. The chief priests and the elders of the people (v.23)—probably all of them Pharisees (v.45)—had a warped attitude toward themselves, God, John, Jesus, the tax collectors and harlots, and the Kingdom of God. The parable is short, and the point not all that complicated, though explaining its human and theological aspects takes longer.

People who repent of their sin-selfishness, regretting that they have pushed God away, and who believe the “righteousness” message of the Word, are entering the kingdom of God. Then their lives will comply, and they cheerfully give priority to God’s interests. In a word, it’s conversion.

Not everyone understands it; some don’t like the way God does it.

Therefore the parable, in which Jesus sets up a common enough situation pared down to the essentials. Two sons received assignment to do a day’s work for their father. No doubt the vineyard would survive without their day-labor, but the point is that this constituted a small test of each boy’s dedication to his father’s—and his own—interest in the family enterprise. Dad

was entitled to their cooperation.

After all, what sort of boys had he raised? What do you think? Of which son do you approve, and of which do you disapprove?

The first son clearly had an attitude problem; his negative knee-jerk reaction was not good, and he made no bones about it. We aren’t told his reasons for rejecting Dad’s request, but his response was a typical enough reflection of human nature; we seek to avoid work; we decline helping our parents; we get preoccupied with our entertainments and pleasures. Our sin-fueled personality doesn’t want to be accountable to anyone, even to God.

And this is, after all, a story-version of the sinner’s attitude toward God. Jesus was constantly confronted with folks who had the same attitude. Or worse.

In the first son’s example of the perverseness of human nature, he at least struggled with his attitude problem; after Dad had turned away from him in disappointment, the lad “afterward regretted it, and went.” As it turned out, he was not really as hard-hearted as he had sounded; his snappish retort did not honestly reflect how he really felt about Dad and Dad’s call on his time

and energies. Prompted by inner regret over his bad behavior and powered by love for his father, he made a turn-about, and off he went to the job, no time wasted. That was admirable, and we love him for it.

Next: the second son, faced with the same test, came up with a nice answer. But we can disregard what his mouth said, for his heart was not in it. This fellow knew how to play the game of deception. He could give the right answer; he could even put on his work clothes, pick up the pruning shears, and toy with the pole-trimmer. But it was all facade. He intended to get back to his hobbies as soon as Dad was out of sight.

It's easy to figure out what made him tick, for we have done the same on occasion—playing the angles in order to escape the work detail.

### **“But What Do You Think? . . .”**

Nothing is told us about the two sons having received the same nurturing care from the father; nothing about how they grew up—both favored; nothing about the father filled with admiration and pride for both. All that is taken for granted; the issue at stake is one of response, and—beneath the slick or choppy surface—the deep current of attitude.

“But what do you think? Which of the two did the will of his father?”

The right answer is easy, and “the moral majority” (chief priests, church council, and Pharisees) knew the right answer. The first son's tough exterior actually camouflaged a soft heart. The second son, however, was a fraud; he camouflaged the soul of a hypocrite. Who can honor or admire him?

And that's the point, Jesus says, about the two kinds of sinners.

Some, like the “tax collectors and harlots,” were tough on the outside, self-indulgent, and wayward. But when Baptizer John's message got through to them (with a lot of finger-pointing and blunt language), they believed what John told them about themselves and about God. They repented, sorrowing inwardly that they had treated God's will so shabbily. They had second thoughts that brought them back to their Father's home and to the family enterprise.

On the other hand, folks like the Jewish religious self-righteous frauds had memorized the correct religious responses, but their hearts were not softened by what John had to say about matters such as their own wickedness and God's choice of Jesus as Messiah.

Did the Savior's intense story-time cut to the quick of their souls? The answer is revealed at the close of the chapter, where after another parable even more blunt than this one they caught on (v.45) that Jesus was pointing the finger at them; yet even then they continued steadfastly hell-bent to say NO to God—thus snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.

What does this mean to you, dear reader? Which of the two sons do you resemble? Do you love God enough to come back home to Him even after you have asserted your independence to His face; do you have a soft heart beneath your tough exterior? Or—are you the child that says “yes” but means “no,” with the soul of a hypocrite and your life a hoax?

If the truth be told, we resemble each son to a degree: we have some qualities of each in our spiritual DNA

and arteries; but which is the real me when the chips are down? Who starts out his God-given “day” in disobedience to God, but afterward regrets it and comes around to “enter the king

dom of God”? Contrariwise, who starts out his day with smiling compliance but means not a word of it?

Do you see where you fit in this parable? You be the judge.

—Paul R. Koch



## THE WORSHIP SERVICE

“Oh come, let us worship and bow down;  
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.”

Psalm 95:6

*Ninth in a Series—*

## Instructions from God's Word (continued)

### The Gospel

Sometimes the Scripture readings are preceded by a few words of explanation. This is done to prepare the hearers for what they are about to hear in the lessons read.

As with the other readings, the gospel selection is chosen with the primary thought of the service in mind. This is governed by the sermon text. The reading is chosen from one of the four Gospels, relaying to us something from the words or life of the Lord Jesus, our Savior.

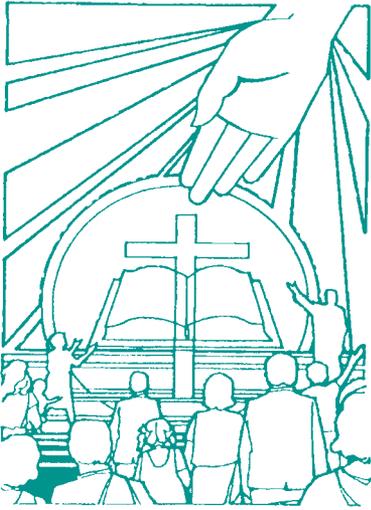
The congregation welcomes the words of their Savior by responding, “*Glory be to Thee, O Lord!*” After the Gospel lesson is read, the hearers express their gratitude for the words of their Savior by singing, “*Praise be to Thee, O Christ!*”

How thankful we ought to be each time we read the Word of God or hear it read. As our Savior proclaims, “These are written that you may

believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (Jn. 20:31). And having been “born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1 Pet. 1:23), we continue to treasure His Word, search it, hear it, and learn it. For “blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep (guard, protect) it” (Lk. 11:28). It is the one thing that is reliable in the midst of the shifting sand of this world of sin. That is because “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . .” and since this is so, it “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

### The Apostles' Creed

The word *creed* is from the Latin *credo* which means “I believe.” The Apostles' Creed cannot be traced directly to the apostles. Therefore it



might be preferable to refer to it as the Apostolic Creed. Historically this creed appears on the scene somewhere between A. D. 70-120. It likely grew out of the need for a simple confession of the Christian faith in the Triune God—three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) but one God. It seems that this confession was used in particular in connection with Baptism in keeping with Matthew 28:19: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

The oldest recorded form of this creed reads as follows: “I believe in God the Father Almighty and in Jesus Christ His only-begotten Son, our Lord, who was born of the Holy Ghost and Mary the Virgin, was crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried, on the third day rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth on the right hand of the Father, from whence He cometh to judge the quick and the dead; and in the Holy Spirit, holy Church, remission of sins, resurrection of the flesh, and everlasting life.”

We must remember that neither the Apostolic Creed nor any of the other creeds of Christianity are found in the Bible. The creeds are confessions or statements of faith which express biblical truth; they were written by believers but are not inspired by God as are the Scriptures.

## The Sermon

According to the regular order of worship, the congregation is to receive instruction through the word of the apostles, then from the words of Christ Himself, and finally from the called minister (servant) of Christ, the pastor (shepherd).

First of all, the pastor addresses the hearers with a biblical greeting. It is common to hear, “Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” These words are from Colossians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, and 2 Thessalonians 1:2. Customarily, then follows the reading of the text; the text forms the basis of the sermon and governs the central theme of the entire service.

How are the sermon texts chosen? Different methods may be used. The most common method in our circles is to follow a pericope of texts. A *pericope* is a list of Bible readings chosen for each Sunday and festival of the church year. These may be used as a guide in choosing the Scripture readings for the day and/or sermon texts.

Pericopes date back to Old Testament times when the Law and the Prophets were divided into segments for readings in the synagogues. Early Christians made similar divisions of the Bible texts for use in worship services as early as the first century. This was done for the sake of good order—

to insure a complete instruction of the people and to prevent the pastor from centering upon one particularly favorite teaching week after week.

Other methods of choosing texts may be used as seems beneficial to the congregation. However, regardless of the procedure used, it needs to be borne in mind that the whole counsel of God should be set before His people for their spiritual edification and growth. Therefore, every sermon must declare law and gospel. God's law needs to be preached, showing the

wretchedness of our sins and the condemnation deserved because of them. God's gospel must be preached in all of its glory, showing us our Savior and our deliverance from sin, Satan, and death. Besides that, pastors must strive to present sermons in a clear and coherent fashion, centering upon particular theological truths and relating the Word of God to daily life.

How beautiful are their feet  
Who stand on Zion's hill;  
Who bring salvation on their tongues  
And words of peace reveal! (487:1, TLH)

—Pastor L. Dale Redlin



## THE LORD'S PRAYER—A Series

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil; For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

### 6th Petition "And lead us not into temptation"

When we read the Bible, we frequently run into the word "temptation." The root word in the original means to "try" or "test." Temptation is a trying, a proving, or a testing. The word "temptation" may refer either to an act of testing or to an enticement to evil.

When it is said that the devil tempts us, the sense is that it is a temptation to sin. Scripture tells us that Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Matthew 4). The obvious intent of the devil was to try to make Jesus sin. Satan failed! The devil, and world, and our own sinful flesh are daily and strenuously seeking to tempt us to evil.

These unholy three come with all kinds of allurements to lead us away from the Lord and away from His Word. They present their allurements (temptations) in fine-sounding words to which they add deceitful promises; they offer them in tempting fashion (fool's gold) to ensnare us, always with the intent to bring us into spiritual ruin. Their intent is to deceive us and seduce us "into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice." Soberness and vigilance are called for in order to be alert to—and in order to fight—the evil foe (1 Peter 5:8,9).

In the 6th petition of the Lord's

## THE SIXTH PETITION

And lead us not into temptation.

*What does this mean?* God indeed tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and through we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and obtain the victory.

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S *Small Catechism*  
(Concordia Publ. House, 1943)

### The Sixth Petition

“And lead us not into temptation.”

*What does this mean?*

God indeed tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that He would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our flesh do not deceive us or lead us into misbelief, hopelessness, or any other shameful or sinful acts; and, although we are tempted by them, we ask that we win in the end and keep the victory.

—MARTIN LUTHER'S *SMALL CATECHISM*  
(Sydow edition, 1988)

*A comparison of two currently used versions*

Prayer we pray, “Lead us not into temptation.” Obviously we are addressing the Lord. But does the Lord tempt us to sin, for which reason we ask Him not to? No way! Scripture says, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed” (James 1:13,14). It is one of the contradictions of life that after we have prayed the Lord to keep us from temptation, we often turn right around and seek it out or walk where it is.

When it is said that God tempts us, it is always a “test” for our good. God tempted (tested) Abraham by telling him to offer his only son Isaac. As

Abraham was about to do so, the Lord stopped him, saying, “Now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (Genesis 22:12). By this test Abraham’s faith was shown to be more than mere words. Temptations or the tests that God sends us are meant to be “faith-strengtheners,” serving the same purpose as the weights we lift to build up muscle tone, lest we become flabby.

Tests come to God’s children in many different forms. Maybe they come through sickness or even death of a loved one. They may come through loss of a job or difficulty in finding one. They may come through storm and devastation that takes away what we have. Poverty is a test of faith, but so also may be a glut of riches.

Persecutions and ridicule for the faith are tests—Satan means them for our harm, but God means them for our good (Genesis 50:20).

Tests serve a good purpose when they remind us of the fleeting nature of life so that we re-focus on eternal things. When we begin to feel quite independent of God, He may send us a test to remind us that without Him we are nothing. His tests serve to bring us back to the Word when we have become indifferent to it. Tests create within the child of God a yearning for heaven where there is no more testing. Neither is there any more sorrow, tears, or death (Revelation 7).

When we pray “Lead us not into temptation,” we are praying that the Lord would guard and keep us so that temptation to evil may not overcome us. We are praying Him for the wisdom

to understand the difference between the temptation to evil which is of the devil, and the test from God which is for our benefit. We further pray that the Lord would give us the strength to prevail when He tests us, so “that we may finally overcome and obtain the victory.”

God who commands us to pray and has promised to hear all who pray in the name of Jesus, gives us promise that He will not send any temptation that we cannot bear, but will Himself help us to endure it (1 Corinthians 10:13). As we look into His Word and stand fast in His Word, we have the armor that shields us against Satan’s fiery darts. But above all we have the assurance that He, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who was tempted like unto us in every way, yet without sin, “will stablish you and keep you from evil” (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer



## SMORGASBORD

### • “PRESIDENT’S STATEMENT”

Many of our readers are aware of the fact that the CLC General Pastoral Conference was held at our Eau Claire, Wisconsin school over the course of three days last June (12th-14th). Occupying most of the time, study, and discussion at this particular conference was the matter of organizations with religious elements (in general) and The American Legion (in particular).

Already in 1996 the Synod Convention had directed the pastors to take a careful, in-depth look at the scriptural principles involved; the 2000 Convention repeated the directive that a statement on The American Legion be brought to the 2002 Convention. Preparation of such a statement was the

goal of the pastors at their June gathering in Eau Claire.

It will not surprise to hear that study and discussion of the topic at hand was thorough and intense. That is not unusual whenever and wherever orthodox Lutheran Christians assemble, in the fear of God, to rightly divide the Word of Truth in their study and application of the sacred doctrines of Holy Scripture.

In an opening “President’s Statement” Synod President, Pastor Daniel Fleischer, gave his fellow pastors some helpful guidance by way of personal comments and observations. In the opinion of this writer/pastor—an opinion we know was shared by many—the Statement succeeded in

**EXCERPT:** *SELECTED SERMONS of E. Schaller* (See book review in issue of May 2001)

**Sermon text: 1 John 2:12-17**

“ . . . Here the deadly poison is offered. The world's advantages for living, its riches, its wisdom, its righteousness, its honors are put before us, not to use, but to accept in exchange for our souls. We are tempted to put them into the service of sin. Here is the opportunity for lust. Every sinful desire finds a fulfillment in the things of this world. Everything, though God created it, can be used to feed the eyes and the flesh and the pride of sumptuous, rich living. In short, the earth has been converted into a luxurious place wherein one can live far from God, close to hell. And why does this attract children of God? Because the child of God has his former flesh yet in him. This is attracted as if by a magnet to give itself to the use and enjoyment of 'the pride of life.' It would become a prisoner again, and destroy utterly the whole glory of the new man, in whom God's love lives.

“And to what end? 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof.' Does it not remind the older ones among us of an old-time circus parade? We hear the blaring of trumpets in the distance as the procession approaches. We hear the shouting and acclaim of the people. At last the parade passes before us, with its tinsel and gaudy trappings, and we think: 'How glamorous, how utterly delightful is a circus.' But already it is passing by, soon vanishes in the distance, and all is quiet except the stirring of the dust. The street is empty, littered with cast-off paper, and the sun is burning down with a real heat. What have we left? So does the 'world pass away.' It is like a handful of sand; the tighter we clutch it, the faster it dribbles through our fingers, and we are left with soiled hands, but nothing else. Indeed, 'Fleeting is the worldling's pleasure, All its vaunted pomp and show; Solid joys and lasting treasures Only Zion's children know.'

“What is this over against having our names written in heaven? Let the old and the young among us note it well. The fathers must not take pride in their past experience, saying; 'O, there is no danger to us any more. We are too old to be snared by the music of the world.' Think of David, who was an elderly man when his eyes deceived him, and he fell. Think of Peter. Think of the miser who died so suddenly in his riches. Nor let the young become secure in the grace that is theirs, and think that they, more than others, will escape the allurements of the world. Instead of over-confidence, let us develop a passion for the love of God, the sweetness of values that are eternal. 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' Let us claim these blessings rather than forfeit them. 'He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.' This is our Lord's confidential assurance for you and me in these last days of sore distress. Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and treasure it. Amen.” (pp. 83-84)

setting an evangelical tone for the subsequent study and discussion.

Due to space constraints, we cannot share all of the “President’s Statement” here. With permission we are sharing the beginning portion only—but a portion which will soon show why the comments were so appreciated by the pastors in conference.

*Dear Brethren:*

*Today we are addressing something that troubles what some may call our “beloved Synod.” That is a common expression in at least one Lutheran Synod, an expression thankfully we have not heard among us, at least that I recall. Let us hope that we will not adopt that expression. Of course, everyone speaks as he will. I personally cringe when I hear the synod described as an object of affection.*

*That is not to say that we are not mindful of what the Lord has done in creating a fellowship among us and preserving it for over forty years. We appreciate that within the CLC we have experienced mutual strengthening, encouragement, and admonition. We appreciate that the CLC is a unique and close family. We appreciate the fact that within this fellowship we have been called and privileged to proclaim the gospel in our own country and in countries of which we would never have dreamed when the CLC came into existence. Furthermore, doors continue to be shown to us, and some of them are opening even as we are gathering this week. We do not devalue or think lightly of God’s creation. And the CLC is a creation of the Father by the Spirit. But our synod is not our “beloved Synod.” That expression lends itself to subjectiveness in doctrinal discussion that is not healthy.*

*The object of our affection is our God Who described Himself to Israel so often before admonishing them or reminding them that it was He who had set them in the “good land” in which they settled. The Lord has set us also in a good land. With that He had certain expectations. In the milieu of religions, in the midst of this post-Christian era—in which even Lutheranism itself has become an identification that one often is tempted to give up because of all that is said and done in its name—the Lord has created a fellowship among us in which the Word of God is received as the inspired Word without qualification, and the primary focus of our ministry is proclamation of sin and grace. Everyone here today will acknowledge without hesitation that we exist as a church as a result of grace, pure and simple—and alone. If we consider our history and all the challenges that have confronted us in forty years, we could lay our continuing existence to nothing else! Except for the grace of God, we have not measured up. Yet God is patient. The Lord does not give up easily. He does not want our light to go out!*

*The CLC does not exist purely for the sake of having a clean fellowship. It does not even exist to proclaim the doctrine of fellowship into the world. The commission of our Lord said nothing about fellowship. It said to preach the gospel to every creature. The Lord said to teach all nations, “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Repentance and remission of sins is to be preached into all the world. We change the emphasis of the commission if we proceed from the idea that in process of protecting the doctrine of*

*fellowship we preach the gospel. WE MAINTAIN THE RIGHT EMPHASIS IF IN THE PROCESS OF PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL WE HOLD FAST TO THE FELLOWSHIP PRINCIPLE SET FORTH BY OUR LORD FOR OUR PROTECTION, for Jesus also said to teach them to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded us.*

*I believe we have maintained the balance. Nevertheless, we must be alert to the dangers of changing the emphasis in any way. If the doctrine of fellowship should become our main focus, we would very easily become legalistic. If we preach the gospel but become unconcerned about the doctrine of fellowship, we would easily become like many around us. In the process of jettisoning Scriptural practice of fellowship, they have also proclaimed “another gospel” . . . .*

• **JOINT ENGLISH PASTORAL CONFERENCE OF THE CLCI AND BELC** (*Missionary David Koenig sent us this report*)

From July 19-21, 2001 we had a

first for our brethren in India. We carried out a pastoral conference in English between our two sister churches with representatives from the CLC-USA also participating. There were six representing the CLCI, twelve representing the BELC, and five from the USA (Pastor Todd Ohlmann, Pastor Michael Schierenbeck, Peter Evensen, Nathan Greve, and Karl Koenig). The requisite for our India brethren was a knowledge of English. There are many other pastors other than those who attended this conference. The CLC covered the expenses of this blessed experience of study of God’s Word and fellowship.

We met at the Melody Hotel in Chennai. With the hopes for a yearly conference, next year we plan to meet at Guntur. By this conference we also hope to create more of an understanding between our two sister churches and even some cooperation in the future in some projects. Our fellowship relationship between the three church bodies manifested itself in devotions and prayers done by a variety of men of the churches instead of having one



**Housing for at least six Bible students in Nigeria. The NCLC consists of 900 members served by fourteen workers and thirteen students in the Bible Institute.**



**Kitchen, latrine, and bathing room in Efa, Nigeria**

chaplain.

Jyothi Benjamin was appointed the secretary of the conference by the missionary. Two communiques were sent out signed by the two leaders of the sister churches, V. S. Benjamin and Mohan Bas, demonstrating the unity we have in our midst on the Word of God. While both churches have their own pastors' meetings and conventions in their own languages (Tamil and Telegu), this was the first English venture.

The agenda was: "World Gospel Missions" (J. Benjamin); "Where Are We going?" [a consideration of Lutheranism in India] (Bas); "Explaining Natural Disasters in the Light of God's Word" (Ohlmann); "The Restoration of Peter and the Meaning Of Love" (Evenson); "A Study of Romans Chapter Seven" (Schierenbeck); "Witnessing" (Koenig); "A Study of the Universal Priesthood of

All Believers" (Koenig); Presentations of the work of the Lord through the CLCI (V. S. Benjamin), and the work of the Lord through the BELC (Bas).

How pleasant and how fair for brethren to dwell together in unity! This could be an apt assessment of the conference. For the next conference in Guntur, the conference passed a motion thanking the CLC for the assistance and asking that CLC representatives also come to Guntur. Another resolution passed inviting Mark Bohde in Thailand to come.

There is so much to be thankful for when we contemplate this three-day conference. One last thing is that there were those five of our men from the USA who could be here. Fellowship is not just a word. It is a relationship of love from God to us and from us to one another. Those five volunteers demonstrated that amply so.

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## Announcements

### Installations

In accord with our usage and order, Neil Bernthal, who was called by Immanuel Lutheran congregation of Winter Haven, Fla. to serve as teacher in its school was installed on July 15, 2001.

—Pastor John Schierenbeck

In accord with our usage and order, Rachel Pfeiffer, who was assigned by the Call Committee for Graduates to be the lower grade teacher at Gethsemane Ev. Lutheran Church, Saginaw, Mich., was installed on July 29, 2001. Her father, Prof. John Pfeiffer, preached the sermon.

—Pastor Mark Bernthal

# Minnesota Delegate Conference

Date: Sunday, September 23, 2001

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Faith Lutheran Church, New Ulm, Minn.

Agenda:

- \* Preparing our Young People to Face the Challenges of Attending a Secular University—Pastor Douglas Libby
- \* Presentation and discussion of the 2001 CLC General Pastoral Conference statement on organizations and the American Legion—Pastor James Albrecht
- \* A practical review of what Scripture teaches concerning a “Divine Call” and guidance for the orderly process of extending and receiving calls—Pastor Rick Grams
- \* Called-worker compensation review and an exploration of congregations providing ROTH IRAs for their called workers—Mr. Larry Eisenbeisz
- \* Summary reports of CLC Boards/Coordinating Council Work
- \* Business Meeting

**Chaplain:** Pastor/Vacancy Pastor of Faith, New Ulm

Please announce attendance to the host congregation.

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, Secretary

## CLC Teachers’ Conference October 7-9, 2001 Holy Cross Lutheran Church Phoenix, Arizona

### Sunday

Religion Methods Refresher Course—Prof. Joseph Lau  
Children’s Music of Praise—Beth Kranz  
Evening Seminar: Overview of Creation vs. Evolution—Dr. David Menton

### Monday

Inclusions—Ted Quade  
Reading Recovery for the Struggling Reader—Candice Ohlmann  
Teachers’ Role in the Church—Wendy Greve  
Learned Helplessness—Karla Olmanson  
Book Review: “*How to Talk So Kids Can Learn at Home and in School*”  
—Barb Mueller  
Evening Seminar: The Fossil Record: Evidence for Creation—Dr. David Menton

### Tuesday

Powerpoint Educational Tutorials—Dr. David Menton  
Abeka vs. Saxon math—Craig Owings  
Title Fives:  
Devotion Books for School—Quinn Sprengeler  
Making Your School Board Effective—Barry

Zumach

Party Ideas—Karen Strike  
Dictionary Skills—Judy Hensel  
Preparing Students for ILC Music Fundamentals—Lynette Roehl

—Kirsten Gullerud, Secretary

### COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Coordinating Council will meet the week of October 14 at Immanuel Lutheran College. Plenary sessions will begin at 10:30 a.m. (after chapel) on October 17.

—Daniel Fleischer, President



“Let the little children come to Me...”

—(Mark 10:14)

Cover: John Fox