

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



1. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,
2. saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."
3. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.
5. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:
6. *But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;  
For out of you shall come a Ruler  
Who will shepherd My people Israel.*"

Matthew 2



*“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:5-6*

## THE GLORY OF GOD SHINES MOST BRIGHTLY IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST

The first spoken words of God recorded in the Scriptures are: “Let there be light!” All creatures depend on the created light for life and survival, but the *souls* of all people depend upon the light that comes from God through His Son. As Jesus Himself said, “I am the light of the world; He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn. 8:12).

The glory of God shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ, because that face did not turn away from sinners but rather sought to save them. His face

had compassion upon the multitudes. When the time came, He set His face to go to Jerusalem and to endure the cross. His face shone in benevolence upon those who wondered whether He had, in fact, risen from the dead.

When you see His face, you understand it is the face of God’s mercy. Sent by the Father, Jesus Christ willingly carried away our guilt and shame while covering us with the glory of His own righteousness. Every promise; every kind, forgiving word; yes, every encouraging, uplifting, life-giving message from the Word of God is seen

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reflected in the face of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Though Jesus Christ no longer walks on the face of the earth, we still see His face every time His encouraging, uplifting, life-giving words speak to us from the pages of Holy Writ. The glory is not reckoned on the basis of the impact He has on the eyes, but on the basis of the impact He has on the heart.

The first thing the Lord did to change His creation from a dark, formless void was to say, “Let there be light!” To change our condition from being empty and lifeless to being meaningful and alive, God had to shine His light into our hearts. And so He has “shined in *our* hearts” through His gospel in Word and Sacrament.

The impact that the light had on God’s creation was stunning, and the impact that the light of the gospel has on the heart of sinful man is no less. It makes all the difference in the world. It changes us from being lost to being found, from being adrift to having a purpose, from being dead to being alive!

### Shine, Jesus, Shine!

Where the light of Jesus is shining, you will find a heart that has been moved to repent. This heart is truly sorry for sins and willing to confess them. More than that, it is willing to let go of things around which our ego has a white-knuckled grip. We don’t want to let go! We would like to take at least a little bit of credit, to receive a little praise, to find some value in ourselves. But the veil is still over our eyes. It is only when we let such things completely go that we will finally realize just how marvelous and complete is the



gift that Christ gives us. We can experience true glory only when we let go of our glory, because then He will cover us with His glory.

When we represent ourselves as the Church of the Lutheran Confession and offer our testimony to the world, we want to always make sure that it is not about us. We are like John in the wilderness who pointed to Jesus and said: “Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29). “Don’t look at me; look at Him!”

Even when people can see the wonderful things God has done among us, even when they behold the love that we share, it is still about God and what God has done. “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

What was true about the congregation in Corinth is also true about the CLC—it is not about us. It is only about Christ Jesus. Our calling is to be a means by which *His* light shines in the world.

The way to do this is to keep on basking in the light of the glorious

gospel of Christ—that is, to hear it, learn from it, apply it, and share it. When the glory of God in Christ Jesus is shining into our hearts, then there will be no way to prevent that light

from shining forth, no way to hide the glory of God that shines most brightly in the face of Jesus Christ.

Shine, Jesus, shine! Amen.

—Pastor Delwyn Maas



## An Epiphany Meditation—

# GOD'S MATHEMATICS

What kind of math were they teaching when you went to school? Was it the old math or the new math? Perhaps you went through the system at a time when they were teaching both kinds, so that you use both of them without knowing the difference. Either works, of course—if you're figuring out how much lumber to buy or whether you received the right change at the store.

Neither does an adequate job in matters of faith.

In a wilderness area Jesus once posed a mathematical question to His disciples. It was a word problem: There were thousands of hungry people in the desert; there was a limited supply of food; how would they all be fed? The need was numerically enormous and the resources were numerically scant. Making matters worse, by the end of the account there was a surplus that was greater than what they had to begin with.

How does that figure? More importantly, when similar situations arise in our life, how are we to calculate the answer?

### Lesson One: Our Inability

Jesus knew what He was going to do that day, but He used the situation to

give His disciples an important lesson. He purposely let them wrack their brains over the problem of feeding thousands, because He wanted them to learn about their own inability.

Quite frankly, that's the toughest part of this system of mathematics. It is extremely difficult to remember that we should not rely on ourselves but on Him. Just a few days earlier Jesus had fed over 5,000 with five loaves and two fish. And yet, when the disciples put two and two together, they still had to ask, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"

Shouldn't they have known better? Yes, they should have. God's math is so easy. We make it complicated by our lack of faith.

Perhaps you find yourself backed into a financial corner from which there seems to be no way out. No matter how you crunch the numbers, the outlook is bleak. Maybe everything has been going smoothly in your career, but then one day there's a pink slip



with your name on it. Problems such as these are part of a mathematical lesson that we have trouble learning, because we rely too much on ourselves and too little on God.

## Lesson Two: God's Faithfulness

No matter how thinly you sliced them, seven loaves of bread and a few fish would not go far enough. But placed in the hands of Jesus, so little became so much.

When the crowds had been seated, the baskets hauled, the multitude fed, and the leftovers gathered, they were given the second half of their lesson: you can always trust the love and faithfulness of God.

Jesus had said, "I have compassion on the multitude . . ." To see what that means, let's leave the area of the Decapolis and journey south to the hill of Calvary. The greatest evidence of

Jesus' compassion was not His divine power, but the fact that He laid His divine power aside in order to redeem us. At the foot of the cross, Jesus leaves us with no doubts about His love and faithfulness toward us. Though He was surrounded by enemies, taunted by the crowds, cursed by God for our sins, we see the kind of compassion Jesus has for fallen mankind.

If God was willing to do that, then "how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?"

Feeding thousands of people with a few loaves and fish will never make sense under old math or under new math, but it makes perfect sense for those who have learned to use God's math. It's a difficult system because it means that we "walk by faith and not by sight."

As long as we live in this world, we need regular reminders of our own inabilities . . . and are given plentiful reminders of God's faithfulness and love.

—Pastor James Albrecht



## As A New Year Begins—

# ETERNITY'S SONG

In our Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany celebrations at Berea (Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota) we have been singing and scrutinizing the songs of the season—our beautiful carols and cherished hymns which lyrically and musically set forth the story and significance of our Savior's birth.

From David's Psalms to Mary's Magnificat to Simeon's prophetic prelude; from Luther's "cradle carol" to many of our traditional and beloved

carols, we of the CLC remain a singing church—giving expression to our deepest faith-feelings through music and song. All who have been privileged to hear the Immanuel Lutheran College choir over the years know just how beautiful God's music can be—in every way!

In terms of popularity and longevity many man-made songs flare across the cultural sky in a meteoric blaze of glory, only to disappear as quickly as

they came.

Yet much of our great Christian music and many of our hymns have captured the hearts of God's people for generations, even centuries. And it should come as no surprise. While many songs have limited cultural significance or historical value and become outdated, our great Christian hymns speak to the hearts and faith of God's children of every age and time and place. Timeless and limitless is the joy they bring.

### A New Year's Song

Outside of "Auld Lang Syne," one is hard put to remember many secular New Year's songs. Yet the sobering realities of this holiday (the passing of time, changing of life-seasons, and approaching end of all things) drive us to even greater spiritual realities—the timeless stability and blessing of our God, His Word, and our Gospel-Savior, all of whom are the same yesterday, today, and forever. And they put an eternal New Year's song on our lips.

Not a few of our hymns allude to the "sacred" and "eternal song," and to the "nobler strain" when we "join the angelic choirs" in "hymning Thy praise" and singing "loud alleluias to our King!" (TLH hymns 30 & 360).

Such a heavenly concert is described in the book of Revelation. In response to the Lamb for sinners slain opening the scroll of salvation, all the angels and company of heaven burst forth in a litany of praise: "Worthy is the Lamb to receive honor and glory and praise . . . Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" (Revelation 5 & 7)

One can hardly think of this eternal song without remembering how

George Frederic Handel put these words to such fitting and powerful music in his epic masterpiece, *The Messiah*. They form a double-forte crescendo and climax to his tracing of the story of salvation. One of our hymn-writers refers to this eternal melody as "the distant triumph song" that strengthens our hearts and uplifts our spirits in the face of the sin-struggles and life-uncertainties that comprise life this side of heaven (hymn 463:5).

All of us enjoy songs of victory and triumph—our Christmas and Easter chorales surely reflect that. Lively, joyous, and confident they are! No matter how difficult life is nor how uncertain the future looks, no matter how much Satan seeks to drag us down, we in the church have a victorious song in our hearts that resounds in faith now and in glory hereafter.

Like a child who wants his mother to sing the same beloved song over and over, we will never tire of hearing or singing the Lamb's praises. Eternity's song will be forever new, beautiful, popular, and enduring.

Oh, sing unto the Lord this new (year's) song!

—Pastor David Schierenbeck



(Back) Pastor Moses, BELC Nellore District, Pastor Jyothi Benjamin, CLCI; (Front) Pastor Mohan Bas, BELC President, V. S. Benjamin, CLCI President. (see story p.19f)

# LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

*First Kings, Chapter Nineteen*

## “Please God, let me die.”

Have you ever uttered or thought the words in our title?

As we travel through this vale of tears there are, no doubt, times when we wish the Lord would call us home to Him. Sometimes these words, however, are spoken because we lack the courage to face what is ahead or are feeling sorry for ourselves because of the troubles God has allowed in our lives.

In our study today we will see how God’s own Old Testament prophet Elijah spoke these words. How did God answer Elijah’s plea? May God’s answer to Elijah provide us with strength and hope in these last days!

Elijah had just defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). God had finally sent rain to end the drought in the land of Israel. One would think that Elijah’s trust in God would have been renewed, and that he would have been eager to continue the Lord’s work. However, when Elijah received word that Jezebel, the queen, wanted to take his life, he fled to the wilderness. He even commanded his servant to stay away from him. Alone, he sat under a tree and prayed to die. The devil loves it when God’s people feel utter despair as Elijah did. Elijah felt he was the only follower of the true God and that his life’s work had been pointless. Why should he go on living?

Elijah removed himself from com-

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*... Our pastors and Christian friends are gifts from God to help us carry our burdens. Make use of the fellowship the Spirit creates and provides for you.*

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panions who could have provided him comfort by reminding him of God’s promises. We too may feel tempted in times of despair to cut ourselves off from those who can provide comfort from God’s Word.

Our pastors and Christian friends are gifts from God to help us carry our burdens. Make use of the fellowship the Spirit creates and provides for you.

### Reason For Living

God did not leave Elijah in his sorrow but provided him comfort and a purpose to go on living. First, He sent the angel of the Lord to nourish Elijah’s physical body. The food Elijah ate sustained his body for forty days. Elijah then journeyed to Mount Horeb and slept in a cave. Here the Lord spoke to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” Elijah recited the reasons for his running away. The Lord now demonstrated that Elijah’s work had not been in vain and that it was not yet finished.

Elijah had seen God’s power over

nature in the past. When approaching Elijah this time, however, God chose to come in a still, small voice rather than in an earthquake, in a great wind, or in a fire. No doubt God was reminding Elijah of the awesome power of His Word.

A prophet is called upon to be faithful in proclaiming God's Word. It is through the power of the Word that people are brought to faith. When we get discouraged in our testimony of Christ, we should remember the still, small voice of God when He came to Elijah.

The Lord had a threefold assignment for Elijah. He was to anoint Jehu king over Israel, Hazael king over Syria, and Elisha as his own successor. The Lord also made known to Elijah that there were 7,000 people in Israel who had remained faithful to Him.

Elijah—strengthened and renewed by God—wasted no time in carrying out his assignment.

Elijah did have a reason for living. God still had important work for him to do. And his previous efforts were not in vain, for there were still many in Israel who worshipped the true God.

And so it is with us! God has work for us to do. When we are despairing and our problems have us turned inward, may God cause us to hear the still, small voice of His Word. And may He cause us to see the work He still has in mind for us.

Lord, it belongs not to my care  
Whether I die or live;  
To love and serve Thee is my share,  
And this Thy grace must give. Amen  
(TLH 527:1)

—Professor Joseph Lau



### Studies In Ephesians

### Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of Christ (See 3:8)

**Chapter 6: 10-24**

## GOING TO WAR WITH JESUS

[Read Ephesians 6:10-24]

*"Onward Christian soldiers,  
Marching as to war,  
With the cross of Jesus  
Going on before . . ."*

We don't hear this song much anymore. Anything that carries the martial note of the "crusades" is politically

incorrect, it seems—especially in the context of the war in Afghanistan.

In A. D. 1095 Pope Urban proclaimed the first of six crusades. These were military expeditions that sought to take control of the Holy Land from the Muslims.

Some five thousand lords, knights, priests, workers, and camp followers took the cross, apparently believing

that Urban granted them plenary indulgence for their sins if they joined. With the Cross as their banner, they conducted a bloody campaign, which succeeded in capturing Jerusalem, holding it until 1187 when it was retaken by the Egyptian Arab warrior Saladin.

What a stain on the pages of religious history, now to become ammunition for terrorist propaganda!

A good time, surely, for Ephesians 6 to give the right understanding about the unique war that has *the cross of Jesus going on before*.

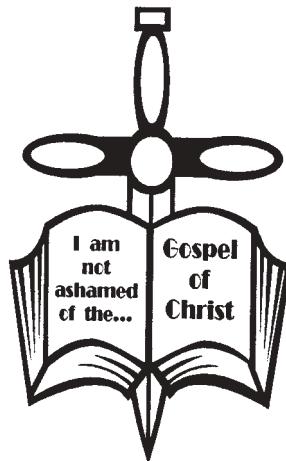
### In The Armory

Visualize the Apostle, bound in chains, deeply concerned about his mission as an ambassador of the gospel (vv. 19-20). Would he stay bold in making known the message for which he had been imprisoned? Would he find the right words for a fearless proclamation of the Cross? He asks for prayer support in Ephesus.

Considering what he writes in 6:10-24, one can assume that Paul was meditating on the portraits of his Lord, the Messiah, in Isaiah [11:5, 52:7; 59:17] as he sat in chains. Perhaps he had been watching a changing of the guard—observing the muscular soldiers as they strapped on their famous armor and fearsome weaponry. In such a setting “words were given him” (v. 19) which would equip the saints for the kind of war for which *every* believer has been called to colors.

### This Fight Is Fierce, The Warfare Long

First, we get a briefing about the enemy we engage. Quickly we understand that this foe is like no other.



“We do not wrestle against flesh and blood” (v. 12). No ordinary military campaign or crusade in *this* picture! “My kingdom is not of his world,” Jesus explained to Pilate. “If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight” (John 18:36).

In this war the most sophisticated weapons of destruction could do nothing. For we are up against “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, *against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*” (v. 12). The commander in chief? “The devil” (v. 11). Has there ever been a more intimidating foe to face?

“Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us . . .” Do we tremble before these spiritual terrorists? A hymn grants, “With might of ours can naught be done, soon were our loss effected.” Let us never underestimate this enemy!

### Able To Withstand

“. . . But for us fights the Valiant One.” That wonderful “but”! However wily the adversary is [v. 11], we are assured that we *can* stand against him,

being strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (v. 10). Jesus Christ is our Commander in Chief, whom God Himself elected.

## How Our Battle Is Fought

If we are nervous about facing such demonic forces in battle, let us take heart. Unlike military commanders who may sit safely in a bunker while their troops are put in harm’s way, our Jesus is always fighting for us as He did in the wilderness, where He frustrated the temptation attacks of Satan with the Word (*It is written!*) and won the day.

We are involved, of course, yet in a surprisingly passive way. We are to be armed with such benevolent equipment as truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer (vv. 13-20).

These do not sound like much fire power, but they guarantee that we shall be “able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (v. 13). All the fiery darts of the wicked one will be quenched. The army of Jesus is safe with the Cross of Jesus going on before.

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

—Pastor Rollin A. Reim



(An article appeared in the SMORGASBORD section, November 2001, entitled “Retaliation.” The author, Pastor Wayne Eichstadt of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota, went on to write a number of bulletin articles on Christian perspectives connected with the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This second article was also part of the radio broadcast, **Immanuel Meditations**, the morning of September 16. — Editor)

## Our Nation in Crisis; Our God still a Refuge— (#2 in a series)

# IN THE FACE OF TERROR

On September 11, 2001 America watched in horror to see fellow citizens dying in the attacks on New York and Washington D.C. Many of us spent hours watching the same scenes over and over, staring at the television screen in disbelief, all the while somehow hoping that in the next replay the ending would change, or that we would wake up from an awful dream. The ending did not change, nor did we wake up from a nightmare, because the four hijacked planes and all of the subsequent destruction were very real.

Such an act of wickedness which we have witnessed brings with it many questions. A question that has undoubt-

edly been raised in nearly everyone’s mind is: “How could anyone do this?! What kind of hate and wickedness could so abound in anyone’s heart that it would move him to intentionally kill so many and destroy so much? From where could such atrocity arise?”

Soberingly, sadly, we find the answer to the question: the fertile bed from which sin grows is our own hearts. Jesus said, “From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness” (Mark 12:21-22).

The wickedness which we have

beheld is the fruit of sin—the same sin which lies in each of our own sinful natures—sinful natures with which we are born and from which only Christ Jesus, our Savior, can rescue us. While none of us would ever conceive of carrying out such horrendous deeds as we have witnessed, yet the sin that produced those deeds is alive in our own hearts as well. Our sin may not bear an equally outwardly destructive fruit, but sin is sin; and even the hidden ones in our hearts—the sins no else sees, and which have no effect on anyone else—these sins are equally offensive before a just God.

So it is that whenever we see evil running rampant in our world with all of its destruction and fear, we can rightly take account of our own hearts and find need for repentance. In each disaster that claims lives we can hear the warnings to our own sinful flesh, showing us the temporary nature of all things earthly; the fragility of all things human; the need for a salvation which only Jesus Christ, our Savior, can give.

Our nation has been hit hard by evil, and we now rally around each other as Americans; but Oh! that the citizens of our country would rally around the truth of God's Word, see their sins, and repent!

When the people of Old Testament Israel were attacked by their enemies and taken into captivity, it was because they had forsaken the true God.

In a similar way the prophet Daniel prayed, “ . . . We have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our

*God Bless America*



princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face . . . to our kings, our princes, our fathers, because we have sinned against You. . . . We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. . . . O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act!” (Daniel 9:4ff)

Quite different from the news of destruction this past week has been the news of heroes—of those risking their own lives to save others: the many firemen and policemen who went into the line of duty in order to aid their fellow citizens and in the process lost their own lives; the passengers of the fourth plane who took it upon themselves to foil the hijackers' plan; and the many workers who have searched heaps of rubble for those who might still be living—and now work on to recover the bodies of those who have died. These individuals are certainly worthy of our admiration and thanks for their courage and willingness to serve in this way.

These people are heroes, and yet

they are limited, for they are able only to rescue earthly lives from earthly destruction. Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for His friends. . . . I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep” (John 15:13; 10:11).

Even more heroic than the courageous efforts we have seen this week is the work that Jesus, the Son of God, accomplished when He died on the cross. Jesus came and lived a perfect life according to God’s Law for each one of us—it’s the perfect life which God demands from each one of us, but which none of us can give—so Jesus came, lived it for us, and gives it to us. Then Jesus went to the cross and there He endured the eternal damnation which every one of us deserves. Again, He did it for you, so that you need not perish eternally in hell. Then on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead and conquered death once and for all. Through faith in Jesus we have the confidence that we too will conquer death and rise to life everlasting in heaven. John writes: “. . . the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:7-9).

The terrorist attacks have shaken our sense of security, but this need be true only if our security comes from men, and money, and government, and buildings, and earthly peace. No terrorist attack, no wickedness, no earthly ill of any sort can touch God nor change Him nor move Him from His promises. Yes, events such as we witnessed do

instill fear and uncertainty. But in times of unrest we turn to the Word of our Lord for help and comfort—to words such as these:

“I will lift up my eyes to the hills—From whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:1-2).

“Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:1-4).

“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Psalm 46:1-2,10a)

In this time of national sorrow let us go to God’s Word for direction. From God’s Word we learn to repent and find in Jesus our salvation from sin. In God’s Word we learn that He is our defense, our protector, our provider, our rock and refuge, which nothing can shake and from whom nothing can separate us. From God’s Word we learn to pray, casting all our care upon Him for He cares for us, and at the same time being sober and vigilant because our adversary, the devil, walks about like a roaring lion seeking those whom he may devour (cf. 1 Peter 5:7-8). We learn to pray “for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence . . . ” (1 Timothy 2:2).

The apostle Peter wrote to early

Christians beset by persecution and enemies. For those Christians Peter offered the following prayer which we now offer for ourselves as well: "May the God of all grace, who called us to

His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 5:10ff).



## SMORGASBORD

### • ON HUMAN CLONING

The following letter was sent to a local newspaper last November by one of our CLC pastors. We heartily agree with the expressions in the letter.

This being the anniversary month of the 1973 Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court ruling in favor of abortion, the letter's contents are especially timely.

*Dear Editor:*

*Since the announcement this past weekend regarding the cloning of a human embryo, there has been a great deal of media discussion both pro and con. Emotions are high on both sides of this volatile issue. But the entire argument comes down to the answer of one simple question: when does human life begin? This was the same question that was asked in the early 1970's when the abortion issue was being debated in our country. For those of us who believe the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God in its entirety, we can answer such a question confidently that human life begins at the moment of conception. For us, the cloning of human embryos for the harvesting of their stem cells is nothing less than the deliberate killing of human beings for their tissue. For those of us who believe that human life begins at conception, cloning humans for their stem cells is no different than killing people on the*

*street so that internal organs can be transplanted. Really, what is the difference, if you believe life begins at conception? This is much more than a scientific issue, and even more than a moral issue. Ultimately, the cloning of humans is a theological issue. What a person believes about God and the Bible will ultimately determine where that person stands on human cloning.*

*/s/ Rev. Stephen C. F. Kurtzahn, Pastor  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Austin, Minnesota*

### • TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE INTO GERMAN

In connection with an article in our October issue which spoke of Luther's translating the Bible into the language of the people, a reader has passed along some interesting information taken from various literary sources pertaining to Luther and the Bible.

In the interest of factual history in this regard, we share a few quotes which indicate that the Bible was available in the German tongue well before Luther's translation appeared.

"The Bible was translated into German as early as the fourteenth century. This translation naturally follows the Vulgate. After the invention of printing it appeared (1462 to 1522) in

no less than eighteen editions, fourteen in the High and four—according to some, five—in the Low German dialect. The origin of this pre-Lutheran German Bible is still uncertain. That Luther was acquainted with it and made use of it has been established by recent investigations. Luther's version was made from the Hebrew and Greek and everywhere bears the stamp of originality. Its merits are well known." (*The Concordia Cyclopaedia*, 1927, pp. 81f.)

"The Bible, it is true, had been translated into German before Luther's time, but in a clumsy idiom that sounded foreign to the people, and not, like Luther's version, from the original text, but from the Latin translation used in the churches. Luther declared that no one could speak German of this outlandish kind, 'but,' he said, 'one has to ask the mother in her home, the children in the street, the common man in the market place, and look at their mouths to see how they speak, and thence interpret it to oneself, and so make them understand.'" (*Life of Luther*, Koestlin, 1881, translated from the German, 1905, p. 224)

"The Holy Scriptures are a vast and a mighty forest, but there is no single tree in it that I have not shaken with my own hand," said Luther. The publication of his translation of the entire Bible into German in 1534 remains one of the celebrated events of the Reformation. Luther's achievement of providing the people with a trustworthy and highly readable rendition of the Bible from the original languages has received fitting attention elsewhere. Here it is enough to note that while Luther's translation was by no means the first to appear in German, it

was by all standards the best and most widely influential." (*Martin Luther, Prefaces to the Books of the Bible*. Introduction, Luther's Works 35:227).

Thanks again to the reader who sent us a print-out of these—and a considerable number of other—quotations bearing on the matter. We would be happy to share more of this information with any who request it.

#### • More Stanzas

Our Christmas issue, p. 15, contained a hymn titled "Immanuel" written by Pastor David & Mrs. Julie Reim. There was room for but three of the six stanzas; the remaining three are:

4. **Enslaved by death,  
Infected with sin,  
None had the power  
Salvation to win;  
Immanuel, Immanuel,  
Almighty God frees us from hell.**
5. **Now none can harm—  
There's nothing to fear.  
Our God is with us,  
He's ever so near.  
Immanuel, Immanuel,  
God is with us, Immanuel.**
6. **All praises bring  
To God on high.  
Our hearts shall sing,  
For Christ is nigh.  
Immanuel, Immanuel,  
All praise to God, Immanuel.**



Pastors Deepak, Valabun, Bas and Ohlmann at Cove Beach on South Andaman Island

# Parables Of The Master

Matthew 22:1-14

## THE GREAT INVITATION

There are invitations and there are invitations. A casual, spontaneous call to a friend or loved one to meet them for lunch is one thing; a formal, personal, in-advance invitation to a banquet feast with a dignitary is something else.

The first is an invitation which may or may not be workable, schedule-wise or priority-wise; the second is an occasion so important nothing should interfere with one's attendance.

The King is preparing a wedding banquet for His son. It is a joyous celebration. Invitations are personally delivered by the King's servants to those chosen to be a part of this glorious event. What an honor and privilege is theirs!

To the shock and dismay of the King, many of His invitations are declined. And when even more servants are sent, they are mistreated, even killed. Enraged, the King and His army attack and destroy those responsible. Determined that His banquet hall be filled, the King orders His servants to search out any who would come. The day arrives and the appropriately-dressed guests are all seated—with the exception of one who tried to enter without a wedding garment.

### Wanted: A Full House

Spoken to the Jewish leaders in the context of the withering fig tree and the lesser-known parables of the two sons

and tenants, the message of this parable is unmistakable. The one great invitation extended by the King of heaven and earth is to the “wedding banquet” of salvation. It is a feast celebrating the spiritual and eternal union of our Bridegroom-Savior and His beloved bride, the Church of believers. All who “come” by faith celebrate eternal victory, joy, and blessing.

And while special invitations were personally delivered to God's chosen people by His prophets and by His very own Son (Luke 21:37-38), their response was generally indifference, disdain, even hatred and murder. Justifiably enraged, our King—also in love—sets out to fill His banquet hall. An intensive effort by the apostle Paul (Acts) and many others since to flood the world with personal invitations to the Gentiles throughout the world has been richly blessed. The seats in the heavenly banquet hall are being filled.

Each of us, unworthy though we are, have received a personal invitation in the gospel message. Every year our Epiphany celebration is a striking reminder. Our response is truly a matter of life or death. What a privilege and honor to be “called and chosen” to be a part of God’s family by faith and to anticipate joining the angels and fellow believers in the joyous heavenly celebration!

May we never reject, misunder-

stand, or treat lightly the gospel call. May our voices of praise and our lives of service ever be “Spirited” expres-

sions of acceptance and appreciation of God’s great invitation.

—Pastor David Schierenbeck



## FROM A PASTOR'S DESK—

# CAVING IN

This week’s local paper brought a clergy column titled “How we can pray in unity?” with which we are compelled to express our disagreement. The writer, a pastor of the local Community Church, is writing from the backdrop of the recent terrorist attacks. He begins by calling attention to the ecumenical prayer service in Washington after those attacks. Noting that the participating clergy included representatives of the “three major faiths—Christian, Jew, and Muslim,” he says that at first he was “disappointed to see Muslim and Jewish representatives who reject Jesus as Messiah participating on the platform. After all, Jesus plainly taught that access to the Father comes only through Him. Islam is a false religion. Judaism is an incomplete religion. . . . How in the world can people of true and false religions pray together? What can light have to do with darkness?”

So far, so good, we thought—until the writer continued: “As I wrestled with this, I changed my mind. We really can pray together—and we should.” As the pastor sought to explain his sudden change of mind, his main point was this: “National and community prayer isn’t about the church, it’s about the state. . . . False gospels are anathema (cursed), but that’s a church matter. This was the government in action,

addressing the wounds of a bleeding nation. We were a nation, not a church, gathered in prayer. . . . The church is inclusive of only one faith, but the state is inclusive of all faiths. . . .”

You get the idea. A change of mind was arrived at by making a distinction between church-sponsored and state-sponsored religious activities. How broad a brush the pastor would use in his application of this distinction is brought out when, toward the conclusion of the article, this is said: “That’s why we should encourage prayer in public schools, support Bible as literature classes and sing Christmas carols about the birth of Jesus in school concerts. Who knows but that this may shine a light for those in spiritual darkness?”

We disagree with the not-so-veiled suggestion that Scripture passages expressing church fellowship principles (when and with whom God’s believing children may worship, pray, and commune together) may be put on the back burner when “state-sponsored” religious activities take place.

Our position has always been that church and state are to be kept separate and that they operate in different spheres of activity. The Savior indicated this when He told His accusers: “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s” (Mt. 22:21). According to the Great Commission (“Go and

make disciples of all nations . . ." Mt. 28:18f), the church operates in the realm of the spiritual, preaching and proclaiming the gospel; on its part, the state as a God-established authority (see Romans 13) operates in the realm of the physical and material, for the protection of its citizens and punishment of evildoers.

That's why we say that we are sorry that the writer of this clergy column, rather than standing firm in his previous confession, caved in to the ecumenical trend of the day. What was written endorses and promotes a state-sponsored ecumenicalism; it also misleads readers by a spurious distinction between church and state religious activities.

As Christian citizens we are thankful for the benefits we enjoy from our government, including the freedom to worship according to the dictates of conscience. We are thankful that in America we are free to express and practice our faith according to our Bible-based convictions and confession. In a day of rampant relativism, religious unionism, and ecumenicalism, that confession includes putting into practice the separation principle; it includes the conviction that we are being true to our Savior-God and His Word when, in the area of religious fellowship (cf. Romans 16:17-18, 1 Corinthians 1:10-11, 2 John 10-11 etc.), we keep ourselves separate from those who teach contrary to His Word and the gospel of Jesus Christ—who is indeed the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the only One through whom sinners can come to the Father.

We need to address briefly one other matter in the aforementioned clergy column. In further support of his change of mind, the writer said this: "The Bible tells us that God heard the prayer of a

pagan named Cornelius in Caesarea." And, he said: "God answered that prayer by sending Peter to him with the good news about Jesus. Perhaps God will graciously answer the prayers of Jews and Muslims and some who call themselves Christians by sending messengers to them with the wonderful news of Jesus."

We have a book which answers directly the assertion made in connection with the account of Cornelius (Acts chapter 10): "The explanation sometimes offered here comes out somewhat like this: 'You see, this poor Gentile didn't believe in Jesus as yet. But God saw he was very sincere, and so he made allowances in Cornelius' case. He accepted his efforts at doing good works and declared himself pleased with Cornelius, even though there was not true faith in his prayers and gifts.'" The explanation continues: "This is a distortion of the facts. Cornelius was no longer a pagan, with perhaps a thin veneer of Jewish religiosity. He was on a par with true Old Testament believers. Therefore his frequent prayers were fervent pleas to God to give him more understanding of His Word, especially of the great promise of the Messiah" (Franzmann, *Bible History Commentary*, New Testament, Vol. 2, p. 1264).

Contrary to assertions in last week's clergy column, God hears the prayers only of those who pray in Jesus' name. The Savior said: "My Father will give you whatever you ask in my name" (John 16:23). God does not hear the prayers of those who pray to, or in the name of, any other god (see Hebrews 11:6, Isaiah 1:15, 1 Peter 3:12).

—Pastor Paul Fleischer  
Grace Lutheran Church  
Sleepy Eye, Minnesota

# 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.

## DOXOLOGY

**"For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen"**

Our Bible concludes the prayer our Lord taught us to pray, as we learn it from Matthew, with what is known as the "doxology." A doxology is a word of praise giving glory to God. The Gospel of Luke in chapter 11 does not include the doxology.

Martin Franzmann said, "The doxology . . . is thoroughly in keeping with the spirit of the prayer, which seeks first God's kingdom and His righteousness, makes the petitioner dependent on God's grace, and so gives God the glory" (*Concordia Bible with Notes*,

### THE CONCLUSION

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

*What is meant by the word "Amen"? That I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us so to pray, and has promised to hear us. Amen, Amen, that is, Yea, yea, it shall be so.*

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

### The Doxology

"For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen."

#### *What does "Amen" mean?*

"Amen" means that I should be certain that these petitions are really heard by the Father in heaven; for He Himself has instructed us to pray in this way and promised that He will hear us. "Amen! amen!" that is, "Yes, indeed, it shall be so!"

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

CPH, 1971, p. 26). Our God, the Triune God, alone is the King from Whom we seek help. He alone has the power to grant our petitions. The child of God gladly gives to Him all glory and praise for all His benefits toward us.

To this doxology is appended “Amen.” We conclude all our prayers, our hymns, and the sermon each Sunday with “Amen.” We conclude the service with the benediction, followed by “Amen.” This is not a meaningless exercise, or sigh of relief that now we can go home. “Amen” means “It is so.” It is a confession in itself that we believe and trust in the Lord God. “Amen” says

we subscribe to and confess that which we have just heard or spoken!

“Amen” at the end of the Lord’s Prayer expresses our confidence that the Lord Who commands us to pray and Who finds our prayers acceptable in Jesus Christ has heard our prayer and will answer. Martin Luther stated it very simply, “Amen, Amen, that is, Yea [Yes], yea [yes], it shall be so.”

To God alone the glory. Amen!

*(This concludes the series on the Lord’s Prayer and its petitions by Pastor Daniel Fleischer. We thank him, and pray the Spirit of God bless these studies. — Editor)*



## **TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

On December 13, 1981 Mohan Bas and several men formed the Bharath Evangelical Lutheran Church. Bas had decided to leave the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (LC-MS affiliate) over doctrinal concerns.

It is now twenty years since that step was taken. What has the Lord done?

Mohan Bas inquired of different Lutheran churches, one of which was the CLC. When he inquired of us, correspondence was initiated with the Mission Board’s secretary as directed by the Board.

As correspondence proceeded, it appeared that he was in agreement with us on what was written. The point was reached where a face to face meeting was called for. Although the Mission Board in January 1983 had sent a team to India to have doctrinal meetings with what became the Church of the Lutheran Confession in India, one year

later another trip was called for that was well worth the expense.

In January 1984 a visitation team of Pastor Norbert Reim (an experienced overseas missionary) and Pastor David Koenig (secretary of the board) met with Mohan Bas. The meeting at Trivandrum disclosed an agreement on the teachings discussed and a willingness of Mohan Bas to continue in the Word.

At the July 1986 CLC Convention it was formally recognized that confessional fellowship existed between us and Pastor Bas and the Bharath Evangelical Lutheran Church.

We called Mohan Bas “pastor” because he functioned in that office, though his theological training had been brief and not completed to become a pastor. This caused him difficulties in the southern tip of India where there is a concentration of Christians. Other Christians accused Mohan Bas of being a fake, and not truly a pastor. The problems that arose caused Pastor Bas to investigate a new area of work which culminated in him

moving his labors to an area outside of Madras (Chennai) in 1990.

What has the Lord done? See for yourself. In 1986 the BELC consisted of two pastors serving six congregations totalling about 300 souls in the southern tip of India. In 1990 the BELC, centered at Uthukottai outside of Madras, numbered about 2,000 souls. In 2000 the BELC had about 150 congregations and preaching stations with 4,636 souls. They have members and contacts in seven Indian states. Even as this is being read, new contacts are being made and outreach is going on (so that the statistics are outdated).

The membership growth of the BELC is found in three groups generally: converted Hindus, Christians scattered in villages not served by a pastor, and pastors and congregations which find in the BELC a church that is in the Bible and seek to affiliate. This last group was demonstrated dramatically when a group of about 1,200 in 1998 in the Nellore District sought to join. Nellore has now become a faithful center of the BELC's work alongside of Uthukottai.

We pray for God's blessings to be continued to the people of India through the channel of the BELC. May God make the pastors and people of the BELC faithful witnesses of His grace and love in Christ Jesus.

What God has done we pray He continues and increases!

—Missionary David Koenig,  
Reporter



## Announcements

### Sunday School Lessons Series

Work is progressing on our three-year Sunday School Lesson Series, *God's Hand in Our Lives*. Many have volunteered to write stories for Year 3.

However, more volunteers are needed.

Each Lesson needs four levels written. The best way to proceed would be to log onto our website: <http://www.clclutheran.org/godshand.htm>. Read through the several links on the left side. Then contact Prof. Ross Roehl at: [rhroehl@charter.net](mailto:rhroehl@charter.net) to discuss the lesson on which you would like to work.

If you prefer to work offline, you may telephone Prof. Ross Roehl at 715-836-6635 (office) or 715-831-8306 (home) and discuss your participation.

—Gayle Stelter, Chair  
CLC Board of Education

### Spring Teachers' Conference

The Great Lakes Spring Teachers' Conference will be held on Friday, February 22 at 9:30 a.m. at Messiah Lutheran Church, Hales Corners, Wisconsin. The faculty from Faith Lutheran School, Markesan, is the presenting faculty.

### Grade School Basketball Tournament

The 17th annual CLC Grade School Basketball Tournament will be held on the campus of Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin March 8-9-10, 2002. For more information contact Teacher Ted Quade or Professor Mark Kranz.

### Installation

In accord with our usage and order, Dwight Franklin Gantt, who was called by St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Lemmon, S.Dak. to be its pastor, was installed on December 9, 2001. Assisting in the installation were Pastors Michael Schierenbeck and Michael Wilke.

—Pastor Michael Roehl