

Lutheran Spokesman

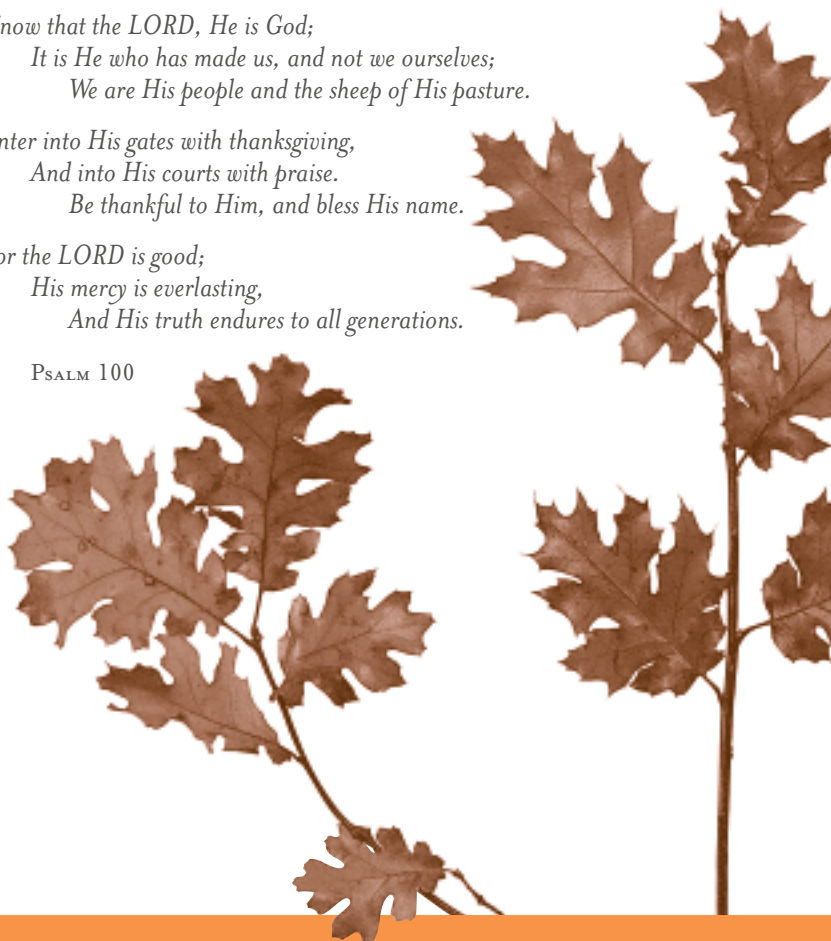
*Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!
Serve the LORD with gladness;
Come before His presence with singing.*

*Know that the LORD, He is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*

*Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.*

*For the LORD is good;
His mercy is everlasting,
And His truth endures to all generations.*

PSALM 100



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No Thanks?

—Learn From These Lepers

Parents wish their children to be grateful. They attempt to instill in them an attitude that reflects gratitude for the good things that are done for them. It is a constant learning process.

There are times that prodding is needed to elicit the simple words "Thank you." A knowing glance or the words "What do you say?" often do the trick.

It is so easy to forget to give thanks. Adults have this problem no less than children, especially when it comes to giving thanks to our God.

There is an example of thanksgiving found in the account of the healing of the ten lepers as recorded in Luke 17:11-19. We can learn both from the good example and the bad example given by these lepers.

Leprosy is a horrible disease. It is an affliction in which a person literally rots away. God saw fit in His Old

Testament Law to isolate lepers from the rest of society so that the disease would not be spread. Leprosy was a death sentence served out in a lonely and isolated existence.

Somehow, though, these lepers had heard about Jesus. They called out to Him from a distance, asking for mercy.

Jesus didn't owe them anything. His compassion for them did not come from obligation, but out of love. It was because of that mercy that He healed them.

Despite the dramatic change in their lives, only one out of ten lepers returned to give glory to God. The other nine loved the gift so much that they ignored the One who gave it.

Examining Ourselves

It is quite appropriate to compare ourselves to these lepers. Because of our sin, we have no right to approach

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God or expect His mercy. He was under no obligation to heal our souls through the forgiveness of sin.

This disease of sin rots a person from the inside out. But our spiritual health has been restored in an act no less miraculous than the curing of the ten lepers--the death of the very Son of God. We have been bountifully blessed as forgiven children of God. We have every reason to give thanks and glory to God.

However, ingratitude is even more contagious than leprosy. We may find that in our lives--when we compare

how much we thank God to how much we ask of Him--that ten percent figure of thanks is stretching it a bit.

How often do we plead and plead with God, and then quickly forget about Him when we receive that for which we ask?

How much does God give us without our even asking or thanking Him?

Every good thing in our life has come from God. When we recognize God as the Giver, then we will not only thank Him more, but find satisfaction and joy in what He has given us.

God has done more than welcome us into society, as was the case with the ten lepers. He has received us into His family. If we need a reminder to give thanks, all we have to do is consider what our spiritual condition was *without* Jesus, and now is *with* Jesus.

For the Christian, Thanksgiving is more than just a day. It is a way of life.

Learn from the nine lepers not to put the gift above the Giver. And learn from the thankful one to give glory to God, the Giver--and to recognize the best Gift of all in our Savior, Jesus.

—Pastor Michael Schierenbeck



THE END OF THE CHURCH YEAR

The Sunday after Thanksgiving, December 1, introduces the season of Advent, a season of preparation for the celebration of the birth in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also the beginning of the new church year.

As we leave the old church year, we are reminded of the passing of time. Each minute that passes adds up to hours, hours to days, days to months, months to years. Each step in that progression brings us closer to the end of life personally and the end of the world

in which we live.

This is truly a despairing progression—except that as each church year in our life ends, we enter into Advent and contemplation of a new beginning. In each new beginning we are reminded of the truth that the Christian is

closer to the entrance into eternal life, the ultimate blessing for all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This calms our fears.

This writer knows from personal experience, because he was the one on the receiving end of the professor's rebuke. As the student was watching the clock in class instead of listening to the lecture, the professor said nothing. He just pulled out a placard from under the lecture table and held it up before the class. It said simply, "Time will pass! Will you?"

That statement has a spiritual application. Time will pass. It is passing. We too will pass—from time to eternity. So the question really is, "Where will we spend eternity when time has passed?"

That is not a question that we can dismiss lightly. It is not one to put off until tomorrow. Tomorrow is guaranteed to nobody on this earth. We need to consider the question so that day by day we might be assured of the answer.

The answer is that "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16). The believer in Jesus Christ will be saved. The believer in Jesus Christ is one who looks honestly at his life past and says, "I have sinned." He who despairs over his sin need not despair over his future, if in the faith of heart he follows up his confession with "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk. 18:13) and believes that God will show mercy because of and for the sake of the Lord Jesus, "Who became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

For all such as believe there is no fear in the passing of time, for the passing of time is but the element through

which we pass "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11).

A Celebration of Joy!

So this Advent season is for the faithful Christian a celebration of joy in the birth of Christ, during which also we anticipate the greater, namely, the advent of our Lord Jesus who will take His children Home.

Christmas itself is not only a time of celebration of what is past when Christ came to dwell among us, but a celebration of what is and shall be when believers in Jesus shall go where He is!

But let each ask himself—how have I spent the past church year? Has it been a time of indifference, neglect, and spiritual self-abuse? If so, there is still time—time to repent and time to start anew, time to study and be refreshed and grow in faith in the Lord Jesus.

As class time passes and a test is failed, the test can still be made up. When the time of life passes, there is no making up. Let this Advent season approaching be a reminder to us all of the yearning that the Lord has for each of us.

The Lord speaks through the writer to the Hebrews, telling us of the blessing—as well as of the loss, should we not heed His yearning call. This call is no better manifest than through the fulfillment of the divine promise, the birth of our Savior.

"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was

grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily,

while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said, today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation" (Heb. 3:7-15).

—*Pastor Daniel Fleischer*



"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe" (Hebrews 12:28).

"... We have the King of Heaven on our side"

We are always interested in what God has to tell us about Himself and our relation to Him. Here He provides us with one of the most glorious aspects of our relationship with Himself. We are members of His kingdom.

We have a King whom we are privileged to serve: "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe."

This is surely not news to any of us, but it seems to stand in contrast with a word of Jesus from John 15: "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knows not what his lord is doing; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." And that is another wonderful view of our relationship to Jesus. But now what is it: servants OR not servants?

Both are true, of course, for these

are two facets of how God feels about us. We could remind ourselves briefly that we are also called the sheep of His fold, God's children, and branches of the Vine. Each picture is true, and each adds to our understanding of how things are between us and our God, who is at once our Father, our Shepherd, and our Lord.

Yes, God is our King, and we are His subjects in His kingdom. It is too bad that our modern world contains so few and such anemic examples of king-



doms. Where is there a royal monarch who rules all his subjects equitably, with wisdom and compassionate insight, who handles all the affairs of state personally? Cuba? Kingdoms are simply out of date; and an enlightened monarch has always been hard to find, not only in Jesus' day.

Let me also point out that the kingdom of God is NOT a democracy. God's position is not open for election every four years. God's ways are not subject to amendment by popular vote. He need not revise His policies to keep up with the changing times. And isn't that wonderful?

Isn't it wonderful for you and me that "we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken"? Isn't it a blessing for you and me that God does not make mistakes in His Supreme Court, and He will never have to reverse even one of His decisions? Isn't it comforting that in His kingdom that cannot be shaken His stock market never loses value, but keeps gaining value forever? Anyone who invests in God's kingdom-work cannot go bankrupt spiritually. And what's even more amazingly wonderful—God issues His treasure notes tax-free as gifts to the whole human race, free to any and all takers, signed with His holy Name. "Come and take salvation," He offers; "Trust me," He assures; "Put yourselves and your souls and your eternal welfare into My hands; join Me in My kingdom and live securely forever. I am King for your blessing."

"Therefore (*since God is true, genuine, reliable, faithful, and runs a kingdom in the heavens that shall survive the cataclysm of Judgment Day, therefore . . .*), since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken (*what*

manner of persons ought we to be?), let us be grateful, and (*in that attitude of heart*) so let us serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

We could not have reverence and deep respect for a dictator. We would not entrust ourselves to a politician. Our God has earned His place of superiority in our hearts! For our God has blessed us from our mother's womb. How else did we arrive at our bodies and souls, with brains and eyesight, our personality and character? How else did we get our souls salvaged from the slimy pits of sinfulness under Satan's control?

God took you in hand, made you look at Him squarely, and let you behold the blessings He has had for you from the foundation of the world. He convinced you that He loved you in spite of yourself. Exactly and precisely because you could not help yourself when you needed to acquire moral worthiness before Him, He lowered Himself to you and me and gave you and me the gracious gift of His free merit and worthiness. And He got into our hearts to bring us to know that and trust in Him for everything we never before had. And thus He got us to cast ourselves before Him and kneel in our hearts before Him as our King, and be happy to serve Him in our new life.

In this kingdom, under His lordship, we surely will get through today's little problems and next week's big ones—because we have the King of Heaven on our side, who reaches down to push obstructions aside and pull us along past the pitfalls. We are able to face even the big killer—the enemy against which there is no earthly defense. Death has been swallowed down like a piece of stale bologna, and God will

never throw it up again against us.

Aren't you glad you belong to God the King? Aren't you pleased to be in His kingdom, under His care and protection? "Therefore, seeing as how we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us be grateful. . . ." And with that holy and blessed stance of our heart bowing before our God, "let us serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

HOW? Well, there are a lot of things to be said and done about this! And these are the sermons we will live rather than merely speak. Bless us, O Lord, and we shall be blessed.

Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours today.

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and Him who reigns
With them in highest heaven:
The one eternal God,
Whom earth and heav'n adore!
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore. (TLH #36:1&3)

Amen.

—From the Chapel Talks file of
Professor Emeritus Paul R. Koch

"Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
— 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

GIVE THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Of course we thank God for the good endowments and perfect gifts that come down from above, the greatest of which are: faith, hope, love. From the foreign field—especially from my perspective—I give thanks to God for "the reception of the Word" (1 Thess. 2:13). And then there is that superabundance of lesser gifts. Four of which I thank Him for from my perspective: the airplane, e-mail, medical services, electricity. How dramatically our God has changed things when we look back 200, 100 or even 50 years ago. *"Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good, and His steadfast love endures forever."*

God gave the airplane to us to carry the gospel around the world and to the four corners. Read in Celeste Reim's

book how it was for the Reims to travel to Africa a little over fifty years ago. Weeks were involved and then inland travel after that. Two hundred years ago it was months for the missionaries to reach the fields in Africa. Despite some airlines' consolidation and some financial troubles, the large number of carriers around the world are available to carry the missionary with His Message wherever—and at such comfort compared to the days of old. *"Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good, and His steadfast love endures forever."*

Whether in the USA, Africa, or India we are able to cheaply and quickly have good communication with our brethren through e-mail. We are able to exchange information that is needed

quicker than any could have dreamed of one hundred years ago. It is amazing how our God has granted this gift so recently, which we use so regularly now (and take for granted?). Our fellowship with the brethren overseas is greatly enhanced through this split-second communication. *"Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good, and His steadfast love endures forever."*

You could be pretty sure that going into the foreign fields two hundred years ago meant your death, or your wife's, or the demise of one or more of your children. West Africa, where Nigeria lies, was called the 'white man's grave.' Part of the coast of Nigeria was called the Bight of Benin. A ditty indicating the health/life danger was: "Beware, oh beware, of the Bight of Benin, Where one came out, but three went in." Now we can live and thrive in climes with all the multitude of medical advances from the mind of man from the hand of God.

"Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good, and His steadfast love endures forever."

A little over fifty years ago the REA was making its way into western South Dakota. Electricity is such a boon. While in Kinshasa (Congo capital), I noticed constant electricity. This also in Nairobi, Kenya. Electrification has gone to the vast majority of villages in India, though there are outages. Anyone who has ever had night services in these places knows the advantages of light. Even where we have little constant electricity from the national grid (Efa, Nigeria), we have a generator to literally light up the dark night. How symbolic of that power of God that has come into the dark night of this world and illuminated hearts and continues to without outages. *"Oh give thanks to the Lord for He is good, and His steadfast love endures forever."*

—Missionary David Koenig



Missionary Koenig submitted these photos. This one shows participants in a Baptismal service at Denu, Ghana, April 2002.



Pastor Gidon, his wife and son at Denu, Ghana



Kossi, who is studying with us at Lome, Togo

LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

Second Kings Chapters 17-20

The Assyrian Captivity and Hezekiah

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness," wrote Peter in his second letter (3:9).

It appears there were those who were laughing at the idea that the Lord would ever return, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (3:4)—meaning that if things have not changed yet, they never will.

This wouldn't have been the first time people had been so deceived. The same thing had happened at the time of the flood. There had never been one before—that is, until all but eight were washed away.

The mistake people make is thinking that, because God doesn't thunder down in judgment upon sin immediately or at least soon afterwards, He never will. They are lulled into a false sense of security in their sins.

The truth of the matter is as Peter puts it, "He is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3:9).

God's Patience Has An End

The Bible history of the children of Israel is a shining example of God's longsuffering patience and gracious love. But it is also a sobering display of how that patience and forbearance does have an end.

It had already been several centuries since the split between the two kingdoms, the ten tribes of Israel to the north and Judah to the south. For the kingdom of Israel, those years had been filled with one wicked king after another.

Those same years had been filled with proof after proof of God's love and His desire that His people turn from their wicked ways and live. Prophet after prophet had been sent to them with words of the coming judgment. But it was all to no avail, and finally the end of God's patience arrived: "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria" (2 Kgs. 17:6).

God makes perfectly clear in the rest of chapter 17 exactly what was going on and why: "For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God . . . Yet the LORD testified against Israel . . . by all of His prophets . . . saying, Turn from your evil ways . . . And they rejected His statutes and His covenant . . . Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight . . ." (17:7, 13, 15, 18).

What an example for us today! How thankful we should be that God is longsuffering! God forbid that we ever fall prey to thinking that we dare abuse and

ignore and trample that love beneath our feet!

As terrible as the Assyrian captivity was, don't fail to notice that those captors had their limits. Yes, the Assyrians served as the Lord's tool of judgment; but when they became full of pride and tried to go farther, the Lord stopped them and mercifully spared the kingdom of Judah.

2 Kings 18 chronicles the vain boasting of the Assyrians. King Sennacherib sent some of his army to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. In front of the city walls and in the hearing of the Jews, the Assyrian envoy mocked and blasphemed the true God as they arrogantly demanded terms of surrender: "Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?" (18:33, 35)

A Man Of The Lord

From his youth King Hezekiah had shown himself to be a man of the Lord. "He did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars . . ." (18:3, 4).

That reliance on the Lord didn't change when he was faced with the Assyrians. "And Hezekiah received the letter from the hands of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD . . ." (19:14, 15).

Through the prophet Isaiah Hezekiah received the Lord's answer,

" . . . How thankful we should be that God is longsuffering! God forbid that we ever fall prey to thinking that we dare abuse and ignore and trample that love beneath our feet!"

"Thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city, for I will defend this city . . ." (19:32, 34). And so it happened during the night that the angel of the Lord destroyed 185,000 Assyrians. "So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home . . ." (19:36).

It is true of us also, is it not? Those things which the Lord allows to come our way to discipline and correct us are powerless to cause harm or evil beyond the good that the Lord would cause through them! Nothing has the power to take us out of the Father's hand!

The remainder of King Hezekiah's reign gives us yet another glimpse of God's loving willingness to deliver His own. When Hezekiah begged to be spared from a fatal boil, through a poultice of figs the Lord spared His servant's life. By miraculously causing the sun to move backwards, the Lord proved to Hezekiah that he would live another fifteen years.

But even Hezekiah was not free of sinful weakness. When representatives from Babylon came to see Hezekiah because he had been sick, the king proudly showed them all the military might he had in his armory and all his treasures of silver and gold. Afterwards God sent Isaiah to him with the message that those very Babylonians would one day be back to take some of

his own family away as captives.
Thank the Lord that He continues to
abide with us with His much needed
forgiveness and love—both in our

times of strength and our times of
weakness!

—Pastor Paul Krause



CONVENTION ESSAY EXCERPT — #2

[Editor's note: The theme of our Synod Convention last June was "*Jesus Christ — Our Cornerstone.*" Three essays were presented on aspects of this theme. While we hope our pastors and delegates have been sharing these essays with their congregations, it is our intention to print a few snippets from these essays. The second essay (by Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, Immanuel, Mankato, Minnesota) was "*We Wish To See Jesus — Christ is The Cornerstone of Our Confessional Life.*" This particular excerpt warns against a confessional life built on the law.]

'Law-building Within Christianity'

A confessional life built on law emphasizes the external without really caring how or why the action was done or what led the actor to do it. Thus, one might live in a very moral society with high standards of external righteousness, but the hearts of the people may not be trusting in Christ. If such were the case, the society, as noble as it appears, is without Christ and without hope in the world. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for this type of externalism when He called them "whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness" (Mt. 23:27). Simply having a confessional life that says all the right things, acts uprightly, issues the proper cautions, and supports the proper causes does not of itself indicate a life built on the "Sure Foundation." Jesus echoed God's lament through Isaiah, "These people draw near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" (Mt. 15:8).

The Old Adam is all "Pharisee" and

will look for ways to give credit to himself and take pride in his perceived holiness, and he will thank God that he is not like other men (cf. Lk. 18:11). A confessional life built on law leads to pride in that life and its "confessionalism." Such is not and indeed cannot be the case with a life built upon Christ.

There is a goodly amount of building upon the law that is done within visible Christianity. In truth, we are surrounded by it. Whenever "religion" and the truths of Scripture are condensed into marketable formulas for successful living, there is a danger that the Word of God is being reduced to law formulas we can keep. God does prescribe for our lives what is good and pleasing to Him; and it may be helpful at times to make use of packaged phrases and easily remembered themes. However, if these become the essence of faith for one's confessional life, it is a life being built upon law.

Law-building within Christianity is revealed most of all in the approach toward the Means of Grace. The Means

of Grace is the gospel. God has provided His Word and the Sacraments as vehicles to bring the gospel to us. The Sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper) are "heaven-to-earth" actions. Through them GOD GIVES the forgiveness of sins and salvation to sinners. Whenever the sacraments are made into "earth-to-heaven" acts of service and become a testimony which MAN GIVES to God, they have been stripped of Christ. When the Sacraments are stripped of Christ, their purpose and the comfort of the gospel are lost. The Sacraments are then made into part of a confessional life built upon law.

Law-building within Christianity also attempts to make prayer a Means of Grace. Prayer is an "earth-to-heaven" activity. It is a precious gift from God whereby we go to Him. God is active in His response to our prayers through His Word and in His control of the affairs of this life, but the prayers themselves are ours directed heavenward.

Very often prayer is presented as the way by which we will attain life, or through which our faith will be strengthened. In the wildly popular publication *The Prayer of Jabez* (a prayer found in Scripture) the author writes much that is good. However, he leaves the impression that any failing in a Christian's confessional life can be

remedied by praying this particular prayer. What happens, then, if two Christians faithfully pray this prayer and God sees fit to give each a dramatically different course in his life? Was one a better believer . . . more faithful . . . more trusting in his prayer? Do we go to the one individual and suggest that his apparent lack of blessing must be due to some failing in his prayer and that he should pray the prayer all the more? If we were to suggest this, then we would be offering counsel no more trustworthy than that which the friends of Job offered him in his distress.

Please don't misunderstand—prayer is a tremendous gift. It is a means of "casting our care" (cf. 1 Pet. 5:7) upon our Savior, "calling upon Him in the day of trouble" (cf. Ps. 50:15), and communicating with our God. Prayer should be used regularly and without ceasing; but when prayer is made into a solution by which a Christian will remedy his life, then he is attempting to build his confessional life upon a law.

Although a confessional life built on law may appear identical to a life built on Christ by virtue of its moral standards, there couldn't be two foundations with greater difference. A law foundation is built upon what the sinner does. When we build our lives with Christ we are anchoring them on what Christ has done. ●



Organists for anniversary service in Cheyenne: (back) Mary Greening, Susan Eichstadt, Alice Kenyon, Barbara Ruegge, Elizabeth Greve; (front) Kathy Sydow, Sylvia Sprengeler, Grace Schreyer, Carla Pelzl

Address at Redeemer Lutheran, Cheyenne, Wyo. on the occasion of its Fiftieth Anniversary, August 4, 2002; the speaker was Pastor Michael Eichstadt, Messiah Lutheran Church, Hales Corners, Wis., pastor at Redeemer from 1984-1988—

Keep On Singing!

Text: "... But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We have been singing today. We have been singing a great deal! And it has been tremendous! We have reason to sing. We have been redeemed from sin and death by the blood of our Savior shed on the cross. We have had the privilege of gathering here and celebrating a half-century of God's redeeming love shown to this congregation.

But now what? What happens after today? I'm sure that after all is said and done, the committees and the congregation as a whole will breathe a deep sigh of relief and finally relax after all the preparations and work. But then what? Where do we go from here? What do we get excited about? How do we justify our existence? Some say Christians are "so heavenly-minded that they are of no earthly-good." Some view churches like ours as irrelevant relics of a bygone era. Some churches react by becoming introverted. They withdraw from others around them and keep to themselves. Others reinvent themselves as social, recreation, or counseling centers.

But we do not have to go searching for a purpose or invent a cause. The Lord points out the reason He has put us here. He says, "You are a chosen

generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." After fifty years, what now? The Lord encourages you to keep doing what you have been doing—keep singing! Sing out the Lord's praises loud and clear for all to hear.

It starts in the heart. The singing here today has been awe-inspiring, not because of its volume, nor because every note was right on pitch, but because it came from hearts filled with love for the Lord. The singing reflects who we are—children of God. He has made us that. By nature we were dead in sin, enemies of God, and deserving of eternal death. But through Christ we are now His chosen, holy people. He has called us out of the world. He bought us with the price of His own Son's death on the cross. He set us apart for His own special purpose. We are now a royal priesthood. We are sons of the King who enjoy all the privileges of royalty. As priests we have free and direct access to God any time. That fills our hearts to overflowing with praise. Sing out loud and clear for all to hear!

We do not have to make up our own

words to sing. We are not celebrating fifty years of what Redeemer *congregation* has done, but the accomplishments of *our Redeemer Himself*. We are to proclaim His praises. We proclaim Jesus' perfect life, not our own. We tell of His suffering and death, not our own works. We sing that Jesus alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There is salvation in no one else.

A Message Of Comfort

Keep singing His praise beyond these walls. You have a message of comfort for the friend wrestling with feelings of guilt. You can tell the co-worker or neighbor worried about his job or overdue bills, that the Lord who died for his sins also promises: "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these other things shall be taken care of as well." When sickness and death strike, you can share the news of Christ's victory which assures resurrection and life to all who believe. Proclaim the Lord's praises in Sunday School to little ones. Preach the saving Word in every worship service. Let the community know that you have more to offer than social programs.

And don't let lack of numbers or resources discourage you. The power is in the Word! Paul states confidently: "I

am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." The Word will work. It will not return empty. Over the years the Holy Spirit has used the Word to bring many infants into the Kingdom right here through the Sacrament of Baptism. The Word taught and preached here has strengthened and preserved faith. At the same time Jesus' body and blood in Holy Communion has fed your souls.

The Word works even when we do not see the results. The Lord taught me that early in my ministry. He led a man to our congregation whom I began instructing. After a few weeks, however, he suddenly stopped coming to church, and left no way for me to contact him. I thought it has been wasted effort. But a few months later I happened to be talking with the pastor of a sister congregation. He mentioned that someone new had just begun attending there. You can guess who it was. Sing out the Lord's praises loudly and clearly for all to hear, for His Word works!

When you sing from the heart, it shows in actions as well as words. Sing out His praises in everything you do. We have been rescued from the darkness of sin and unbelief. Like the nine miners in Pennsylvania who were pulled out of the pitch-black mine shaft which almost became their tomb, we now live in the sunshine of God's grace. "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Proclaim the Lord's praises at home, work, school, and wherever you go. Proclaim His praises in self-sacrificing love for others, in offerings for His work, and in time given in service to Him. Whatever you do, do it all to



Former pastors at Redeemer: (back) M. Eichstadt, M. Sydow, M. Sprengeler, F. Gannt; (front) N. Greve, P. Fleischer (current), L. D. Redlin

the glory of God!

We are singing today in gratitude for fifty years of God's blessings. Now what? Are we in for a letdown tomorrow? No, because the singing doesn't have to stop today. When my family and I head for home, the music we

sang today will continue to echo in our minds and hearts—as it will, I'm sure, in yours. Let it fill your heart and then overflow to others! May we proclaim the Lord's praises. Let's keep on singing all the way to our heavenly home! Amen.



Celebrating a 50th Anniversary--

Singing Redemption's Story In Cheyenne

On August 4, 2002 members and friends of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, Wyoming gathered for morning and afternoon worship services commemorating God's blessings for fifty years.

Formal activities began with a picnic at a city park the day before. Though plans had been made for 50-60 people, twice that many arrived for good food and fellowship. The Lord "multiplied the loaves" so there was plenty for all. For two Sunday meals (noon and evening) an outdoor canopy was procured to accommodate the expected overflow.

With the help of basement audio-visual aids, a church which seats 70-80 people accommodated 123 worshippers for the morning service and 125 for the afternoon service. Great weather and a wonderful spirit of fellowship prevailed.

An evening program emceed by congregational chairman Robert Ruegge concluded a well-organized weekend. After a slide show and reminiscing, a plaque was presented to Vernon Sprengeler ("*one of the charter members, . . . still a dedicated member of Redeemer Lutheran Church. His many years of council work and help in*

maintaining the church property are very much appreciated"-- history booklet). Vernon's wife, Sylvia (nee Schwarting), was called as first full-time teacher in Redeemer Lutheran School in 1955.

Most invigorating among weekend highlights (oh, those 'mass choir' numbers!) was the spiritual food provided by former pastors of Redeemer. In the morning service Pastor L. Dale Redlin (St. Peter, Minn.) spoke on "God's Marvelous Grace In Our Past" (text: Genesis 32:10). Pastor Norman Greve (Eagle Lake, Minn.) spoke on "God's Marvelous Grace For Our Future" (texts: John 12:21, 1 Corinthians 2:2). Redeemer's current pastor (Paul Fleischer, who just arrived in April) served as liturgist.

The afternoon song service featured messages and hymns revolving around the Second Article and the theme "Singing Redemption's Story." "Redeemer" stanzas from 26 different hymns from throughout the church year were sung. Michael Sprengeler, son of the congregation, served as liturgist. Speakers were former pastors Prof. Michael Sydow (ILC, Eau Claire, Wis.; text: Romans 3:22-24); Pastor Frank Gantt (Lemmon, S.Dak.; text: 1 Peter 1:18-19); and Pastor Michael Eichstadt (Hales Corners, Wis.; text: 1

Peter 2:9).

"Throughout the history of Redeemer, the congregation has been blessed with several organists at all times" (history booklet). Former and present organists took part in the two anniversary services.

Among other highlights in Redeemer's history are the following. In 1943 Pastor Victor Tiefel of Greeley, Colo. undertook a Wisconsin Synod outreach effort in Cheyenne; besides those mentioned, other pastors in Redeemer's history include Winfred Schaller Jr., Roland A. Gurgel, and Herbert Witt (d. 1983). In 1952 Duane Riggert was on the first church council with Vernon Sprengeler. Pastor Schaller organized Redeemer School in 1954 and did the teaching that year. He was also first editor of the *Lutheran Spokesman* when the Interim Conference--in Cheyenne in May 1958--authorized its publication. LeRoy Greening (d. 2002) served as Christian Day School teacher (1957-64, 1989-93) and was a frequent delegate to CLC Conventions. Redeemer became a charter member of the CLC in October 1960. *"In the late 1970's a nucleus of families in the CLC moved into the Loveland, Colorado area. They became members of Redeemer. In 1981 they felt the time was ripe to organize into a*



Vernon and Sylvia Sprengeler beside the current church sign. Sign at right is from the time of Redeemer's first pastor (and first *Spokesman* editor) W. Schaller, Jr.

BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL in connection with this anniversary account:

"The editorship of the Lutheran Spokesman—official publication of the CLC—has come full circle back to Cheyenne with the arrival of our present pastor, Paul Fleischer. Pastors Winfred Schaller Jr. and Norman R. Carlson were co-editors of the Lutheran Spokesman the first year. The first issue of the publication (June 1958) was mimeographed and assembled by members of Redeemer congregation in the church basement. This was soon hired out to a competent Cheyenne firm. This first printing was 200 copies and increased to 700 copies for the second printing. After the first year, the business manager duties were assumed by Vernon Sprengeler. In subsequent years the Lutheran Spokesman reached over 1000 subscribers and was published bi-monthly for \$1.00 per year." (Fifty-year history booklet of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, Wyoming)

Spokesman subscriptions—which had totaled 2600 as late as 1999—currently stand at 2,319 (bulk subscriptions 2,058, Individual 107, gift 28, gratis 89, and foreign 37). The printer and mailer for many years has been Stoyles Graphic Services of Mason City, Iowa.

—The Editor



School teachers: Sylvia Schwarting Sprengeler, Barbara Rutz Ruegge, Carla Thurow Pelzl, Marilyn Greening, Grace Meyer Schreyer, Kathleen Gilbertson Markus, Judy Greening Hensel



Chairman Robert Ruegge presents plaque to charter member Vernon Sprengeler

congregation of their own, and Prince of Peace (Loveland) was formed" (history booklet). Hynds Lodge, the location of many congregational campouts, was the site of the first CLC Singles Retreat in 1991.

Fifty-eight souls make up the current membership at Redeemer. The history booklet reports the following pastoral acts over fifty years: 224 child and 19 adult baptisms, 88 child and 74

adult confirmations, 86 marriages and 24 funerals. ". . . By the grace of our Lord we remain steadfast in His Truth in spite of the numerous tribulations and temptations that have befallen us. May the gracious good will of God be that we hear and keep His holy Word in its truth and purity. May we remain in His Kingdom in the years ahead!" (history booklet)

—Submitted by Pastor Paul Fleischer



From the Editor:

The pictures of the conference tell a wonderful story, but so does Pastor Jyothi Benjamin, conference secretary, in the comments he has shared below. For example, he writes:

Dearly beloved, Greetings in the saving name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, through whom all blessings flow.

This is just a few lines of thanks for every one of you, who have attended the joint India Pastoral Conference—2002. It's a joy to write you about the conference 2002 blessings we enjoyed in this year also. It was extremely nice of every one of you to have able to participate in this pastoral conference. I

hope that all of us are greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm generated through this Joint India Pastoral Conference 2002. Several of you have



"What should have been taught in 3 years has been imparted in 3 days. The duration of the conference must be longer." - A student

presented excellent essays in this conference. This has added an extra fuel to next year's Joint pastoral conference gospel fire. We praise God for the rich input that we have received from our beloved CLC missionaries.

. . . Every time we prepare for this type of joint pastoral conferences, we are again reminded of the humble beginnings of our Missions in India. At the beginning, practically we have no idea of growing up through these con-

"The essay on 'A CULTURAL PRACTICE FOR THEN OR COMMANDED BY GOD FOR NOW?' by Rev. David Koenig, was sword-piercing and I fully understood what is important. And also it revealed to me my blunders in some of the areas of ministry." - A pastor

ferences to what it is now. "This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvelous in

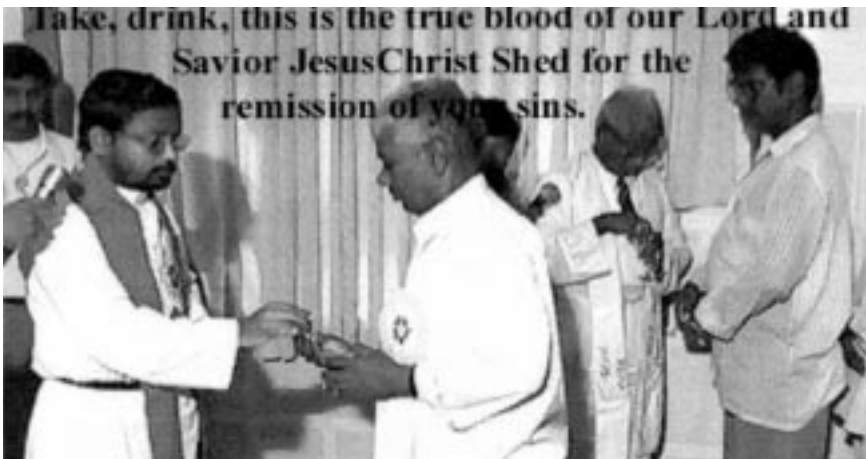


our eyes!"

. . . I have asked some of our CLCI pastors and Bible Institute students for their opinions on the Joint India Pastoral Conference—2002. I quote here few lines from the comments of the CLCI pastors and CLCI Bible Institute students expressed regarding this 2002 pastoral conference.

Here and there among the photos we share some of the quoted expres-

"From the essays by Rev. Paul Bakthavachalam, I have decided to increase my prayer time" - A pastor



"The essay from Rev. Moses, Nellore area, certainly was a blessing to me and I thank you for making me possible to attend the conference and hear it." - A student

sions of those who attended the Conference. Secretary Benjamin concluded:

In conclusion I would like to add that the presence of God was real throughout the Joint India pastoral conference 2002 to break us, melt us, mould us, to fill us and to bless us.

Once again I shake hands with you all for your participation and in praising God for His goodness and hope and pray that we meet you all in the next year's conference.

"The essay, 'Who needs Counseling?' by Bro. Nireekshana, opened my eyes to see some of my mistakes." - A pastor

"The essay SON OF MAN from Rev. Victor Vemuri, Nellore area, was so impressive that I would like to use it in my sermon." - A pastor

Announcements

Spokesman Index

As previously reported here (see issue of May 2002), a 40-page (5 1/2 x 8) hard-copy index covering volumes 33-42 (July 1990-June 2000) is now available at \$5.00 per copy. Contact the CLC Bookhouse at 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701 or CLCbookhouse@ilc.edu.

