

# Lutheran Spokesman



*Convention Chaplain was Pastor Theodore Barthels, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Austin, Minnesota. This is one of his edifying, inspiring devotions.*

## "A FASCINATION WITH THE SCRIPTURES"

"Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which even the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:10-12).

In Christ Jesus, who is the heart of all the Scriptures, dear fellow redeemed—

Read a good book lately?

A couple of my daughters are readers. One of them in particular, when she finds a book especially fascinating, will read it again and again until she has mastered every detail.

Oh, that we had such a fascination with the Scriptures!

A fascination with the Holy Scriptures—that is exactly what our text described of the prophets themselves who were inspired to write the

words of the Old Testament.

Their fascination was not only for the writings of the other prophets who had gone before them, but they searched diligently through the very words which the Holy Spirit of Christ had led them to write. They were fascinated by their own prophetic writings because they understood the truth about the Old Testament Scriptures which Jesus declared to His enemies: "You search the Scriptures, because in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (Jn. 5:39).

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The Old Testament prophets searched their own writings—looking for every clue, for every bit of precious truth—that they might learn of the coming sufferings of their Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. They did this, realizing that the truth which they wrote was greater than they were; it was the gospel truth given to them by the Spirit of Christ!

That expression being connected with the Old Testament prophets is very telling. It emphasizes not only the intimate connection between the Son and the Holy Spirit, but also that the Spirit's message is Christ crucified—whether that message be found in the Old Testament days of promise, or in the New Testament age of fulfillment.

We may be inclined to focus our meditation so much on the New Testament that we miss out on the richness of the "word of reconciliation" revealed for our comfort in the Old Testament. Consider just the writings of Isaiah, and the amazing comfort of forgiveness transmitted to us by the Spirit in the very first chapter of that prophecy: "Come now and let us reason together, says the LORD, Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Is.1:18).

The prophets studied their own writings with fascination, hoping to learn more from the Spirit about the sufferings of Christ which were to come. One can only imagine the wonder that filled Isaiah's heart as he contemplated the grace of God and how it speaks of Jesus' sufferings, that "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Is. 53:5)!



**Chaplain Barthels  
addressing the  
assembly**

Now, through inspiration of the apostle Peter, the Spirit reveals that the prophets realized that they didn't write all this for themselves, or even for just the Old Testament believers who were to follow them. These wonderful Old Testament Scriptures were written for us, for OUR learning! And so Peter reminds us that the teachings of the New Testament apostles and evangelists were built upon the foundation of the writings of the prophets.

Isn't that fascinating!?! Doesn't it pique our curiosity about the riches of forgiving grace, the gems of truth which God has stored up for us to dig out, and find, and treasure in the writings of the Old Testament!?!

How much glory waits for our discovery that we might find new facets of this shining gem of grace which God has revealed to us in the inspired preaching of the prophets and apostles! The Holy Spirit is encouraging a richer knowledge of the Old Testament that we might have a deeper appreciation of the reconciliation that has been expounded in the fulfillment recorded in the New Testament.

This is a book unlike any other! This is a book that holds fascination even for the angels of heaven! May

God the Holy Spirit instill a zeal for all the Scriptures that we might grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.



CONVENTION SITE

## 26th CLC Convention Report

The 26th Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) was unique in several ways. With the temperature staying below 75 degrees for the entire week, it certainly had to be one of the coolest Conventions ever. It was most likely the shortest Convention ever, since the work was completed in four days rather than five. The floor committee on doctrinal matters gave its report one day ahead of the tentative schedule; I cannot recall such a thing ever happening in previous years.

Perhaps most unique was that there were no major differences of opinion on any matter brought to the Convention. The item that produced the most discussion was a proposed by-law change having to do with the appeal process.

With considerable opposition to the change, no change was made at this Convention.

(At this point Prof. Lau provided a summary of the Convention theme and essays, each based on 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; find that summary elsewhere in this issue.—*Editor*)

Pastor Theodore Barthels led us in the Convention devotions, emphasizing particularly how the Holy Spirit uses the Word of reconciliation as His means of grace to accomplish His goal—bringing sinners to faith in Christ and keeping them in that faith until journey's end. One devotion was devoted to consideration of our nation and its leaders in time of war, in keeping with Paul's direction that we are to pray "for all who are in authority" (1 Tim. 2:2).

The Convention Communion service

was a joyful celebration of the grace of God in Christ, led by liturgist, Pastor David Povolny (St. Stephen Lutheran Church, San Francisco), Convention choir director, Prof. Paul Schaller (ILC, Eau Claire), and a team of gifted organists and other musicians.

The service folder announced the sermon theme of Pastor David Fuerstenau (Holy Truth Lutheran Church, Ketchikan, Alaska) as "A Quartet of Donkeys." Do you ask how the message of reconciliation can be proclaimed under such a theme? Convention chroniclist (Prof. Joseph Lau of ILC) summarized it like this: "The speaker used texts from Exodus 34, Mark 11, Numbers 22, and Judges 15 in comparing the lives of Christians to the donkeys presented in Scripture. The first, the redeemed donkey, was the unclean beast of the Old Testament which needed to be redeemed by a lamb. We too were unclean in need of redemption by The Lamb. As the redeemed we now wish to serve our Master. The second, the Palm Sunday donkey, was the young unbroken colt who submitted to Jesus riding on him.

He was obedient, steadfast, and faithful. Jesus too has tamed us, not through harshness, but through the gentle, inviting message of the gospel. The third, the donkey of Balaam, protected his master from harm even while he suffered from his abuse. Balaam is like most in the world today who fail to recognize the spiritual danger they are in and abuse donkeys like us who speak the warning call. We can expect to be mistreated like Balaam's donkey because of the message we proclaim. Finally, the dead donkey is that donkey which Samson used in slaying the enemies of the Lord. It is only by being dead to sin and dead to pride that we become useful tools in the hand of our Savior. 'We are donkeys—rejoice in it!'"

## DOCTRINE, EDUCATION, PUBLICATIONS

Guidelines for the Establishment of Fellowship with Foreign Church Bodies had been drawn up by the CLC Board of Doctrine and were approved by this Convention. Flags displayed in the Fieldhouse reminded us of work being done by our brothers in Christ in



**Pastor Paul D. Nolting speaks for his committee**



**Moderator Roehl and Secretary Albrecht at work**

Tanzania, Congo, Kenya, Togo, India, Nigeria, Thailand, Ghana, and Canada. Encouragement was given to the staffs of our periodicals (Journal of Theology, Lutheran Spokesman, and Ministry by Mail), as well as to those working on projects in various stages of development: the Sunday School materials on line, the On-line Bookstore, the teacher mentoring program, a CLC history, the Sydow Catechism, and reprints of devotional books by Madson, Zorn, and Gullerud.

It was decided that the name of the Board of Education should be changed to the Board of Education and Publications, and that the members of this board should be elected rather than appointed. The CLC By-laws were changed to show that for organizational and reporting purposes the CLC Publishing Division, the CLC Book House, and the three publications (cf. periodicals above) are now under the auspices of the Board of Education and Publications.

A committee was appointed by the Moderator to consider the advisability of having the CLC Coordinating Council become "a true Board of Directors with decision-making power subject to the Convention." The CLC President's interpretation of the 2002 Convention resolution concerning the

American Legion was accepted as "a correct interpretation of the will of" that Convention.

## **IMMANUEL LUTHERAN COLLEGE**

Prof. John Pfeiffer has been reappointed as president of Immanuel Lutheran College. The longtime work of Lowell and Rita Moen as ILC business manager and assistant, and the work of Fran McDonald (six years) and Kendra Ahrens (1 year) as housemothers, were acknowledged with thanks. Dr. James Sydow is now the business manager of ILC and treasurer of the CLC. Mrs. Yvonne Rudolph will be taking up the work of housemother this fall.

Efforts to add Spanish to the high school curriculum were lauded. But it was hoped German would not have to be dropped altogether. Seminars at the seminary level have improved seminary education. Mini-courses at the college and high school levels have been well-received and will be continued. The heavy workload of all ILC teachers will be examined and, if possible, changes will be made to alleviate the problem.

Our gracious Lord was thanked for enabling us to retire the debt on the Dining/Commons facility. On the proposed ILC Academic Center the following resolutions were passed:

*"That we continue the Academic Center project as resolved by the 2002 Convention, as soon as possible;*

*"That the Building Committee be directed to review the plans for cost savings and revise them without significantly altering the site plan or the integrity of the building;*

*"That the existing fund-raising effort be continued and that construction be authorized to begin*



*when the Coordinating Council determines that an appropriate combination of offerings and CEF financing for the entire project has been obtained;*

*"That the repayment of principal and interest on any mortgage be accomplished without using General Budget funds;*

*"That the newly appointed publicity committee pursue its work forthwith;*

*"That delegates and called servants encourage congregations to address this urgent need;*

*"That the President appoint a new Long Range Facilities Planning Committee to report to the 2006 Convention."*

In past years volunteers have been able to do much necessary maintenance and repair work on the ILC campus. So also this year "you are cordially invited to serve the Lord and His church by lending your time and talents to assist in a labor of love at ILC." Contact Luther Sieg, 715-836-6637, luthersieg@yahoo.com.

## MISSIONS

Our Lord has seen fit to give our church body the privilege of proclaiming the gospel of Christ in confessional union with several small church bodies in other lands. We should become increasingly familiar with these initials:

BELC—Bharath Evangelical Lutheran Church (India);

CLCI—Church of the Lutheran Confession in India;

ELCC—Eglise Lutherienne de Confession du Congo (Church of the Lutheran Confession in Congo);

LCEA—Lutheran Church in East Africa (Tanzania);

NCLC—Nigerian Church of the Lutheran Confession;

. . . as well as other small groups in Kenya, Togo, and Ghana. Nor do we want to forget our brother in Christ, Mark Bohde, who with his family has established an orphanage in Thailand. The number of members participating in these foreign churches is larger than our stateside membership. The very fact that we are so small makes it necessary that these church bodies in other lands—as financially poor as they may be—cannot depend on huge gifts of money coming from America. All we can do, by the grace of God, is help them in certain limited ways. The Convention declared: "We not only pray that the Lord of the harvest inspire and disperse laborers into all the world; we also pray specifically for those in fellowship with us who spread the unique gospel of life and light in Jesus Christ in the ripe fields in India and Africa. We ask that the Lord not only prosper the work of missionaries and pastors and keep them in His care, but that He shine His light of love, comfort, and protection on their spouses and families."

Missionary Matthew Gurath found it necessary to resign from his call as second foreign missionary to assist Missionary David Koenig in his extensive work. (Since the need is just as great as before, the CLC Board of Missions after the close of convention extended this call to Pastor Wayne Eichstadt of Mankato, Minnesota; at the time of this writing his response to this call is not known).

The rapid growth of these groups in Africa and India may make it seem that the mission work in our own country is not very important. But of course there are heathen all around us in the United



**Missionary Koenig  
has an attentive  
audience**

States and Canada, as well as confused Christians who have not yet been led to a strong, Bible-based understanding of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore we need to continue financial support and prayer for our Canadian mission congregations in Calgary, Alberta, and Vernon, British Columbia; and for our American mission congregations in Lawrenceville, Ga., Batavia, Ill., Grand Rapids, Mich., Tacoma, Wash., Live Oak, Fla., Sioux Falls, S.Dak., Ketchikan, Alaska, and North Port, Fla.

Several other areas where we have small groups that could use full-time missionaries—if we had them and could afford to support them!—are: Fairbanks, Alaska, Monterey, Tenn., Liberty, Mo., Mapleton, N.Dak., Weslaco, Tex., and Onalaska, Wis.

Our membership can participate in mission ventures in many ways beyond prayer and financial support. Organized ways include the Traveling Vacation Bible School (TVBS) program, the Mission Helper program, and Project Kinship (which supports orphans and seminary students in foreign countries through individual sponsorship and other gifts). There is much we can pray

for—much we can assist in.

May our gracious God, who wants all persons to be saved everywhere, fill us with zeal to do what God has enabled us to do, selflessly, cheerfully, and continually.

## **FINANCES**

As recommended by the Board of Trustees, the Convention terminated the current CLC Medical Plan. Each congregation is now on its own as far as medical insurance is concerned. The Board of Missions and the Board of Regents are required "to regard medical insurance as an essential component of the compensation package of each called worker." Congregations and boards were encouraged to select "portable" insurance plans, so that it would not be difficult for called workers to move from one state to another, as the Lord calls them.

The following budget for fiscal year 2005 was adopted: Board of Education and Publications — \$4,500; Board of Trustees — \$185,000; Board of Missions — \$294,339; Board of Regents — \$275,000; Total \$758,839. ILC revenue from students and their parents was estimated at \$814,840.





**Synodical officers:  
President Schierenbeck,  
Vice President Bernthal,  
Moderator Roehl,  
Secretary Albrecht.**

The offering at the Convention Communion Service came to more than \$10,000.00 for the ILC Building Fund.

## **ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

President: Pastor John Schierenbeck  
Vice President: Pastor Mark Bernthal  
Secretary: Pastor James Albrecht  
Moderator: Professor Ronald Roehl

Board of Trustees: Pastor John Ude and Mr. Phil Radichel (reelected to join Pastor James Sandeen and Mr. Eugene Lang).

Board of Missions: Pastor Todd Ohlmann and Mr. Larry Hansen (elected to join Pastor Bruce Naumann and Mr. Jack Mayhew)

Board of Regents: Pastor Theodore Barthels (reelected) and Mr. David Aymond (elected) to join Pastor Vance Fossum and Dr. David Menton

Board of Education and Publications: Dr. Gayle Stelter and Teacher David Bernthal elected to join Prof. Ross Roehl and Pastor David Naumann

Board of Doctrine (appointed): Pastor Daniel Fleischer, Pastor Mark Bernthal, Pastor David Schierenbeck, Mr. Melvin Eichstadt, Pastor Thomas Schuetze, Prof. David Lau, Prof. em. Clifford Kuehne.

Lutheran Spokesman editor: Pastor Paul Fleischer (reappointed)

Journal of Theology editor: Prof. Steven Sippert (newly appointed)

Ministry by Mail editor: Pastor Wayne Eichstadt (reappointed)

Four pastors and two teachers were received into membership: Pastors Luke Bernthal, Matthew Hanel, Nathanael Mayhew, and Glenn Oster; Teachers Joel Gullerud and Ryan Libby.

Two pastors were declared eligible for call into the pastoral ministry: Jay Hartmann and Matthew Gurath.

The Lord willing, the next Convention of the CLC will be held in June, 2006, at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire.

Meanwhile, the ministry of reconciliation continues among us. In the words of President Schierenbeck, "We have been given tremendous opportunities to proclaim this gospel of reconciliation to our generation. — This is God's ministry of reconciliation. Let us rejoice in this day which the Lord has made for us. 'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.'"

*We thank Professor David Lau for this report—Editor*



**Pastor Povolny  
installs newly-elected  
officers**

\* In connection with his review of the highlights of the 26th CLC Convention, Prof. David Lau passed along this summary of the essays on the Convention theme.

## “The Ministry of Reconciliation”

The theme of the June 21-25 Synod Convention was the "Blessed Ministry of Reconciliation," summarized in the words of the apostle Paul: "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

In his presidential address Pastor John Schierenbeck referred to this ministry, emphasizing the fact that this ministry is from God and not from man. When we were dead in sins and enemies of God, He reconciled the world to Himself through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

In his keynote address Professor Steven Sippert defined reconciliation as involving a blessed change in our status with God. Sinful man did not change when God reconciled the world to Himself. God Himself did not change, since He always remains the same in His grace and in His holiness. What changed through Christ's work was the status between man and God. "The enmity once there because of sin has been replaced with peace—primarily a

peace from God to us."

What is so rare in Christian preaching is the necessary emphasis on God's reconciliation of the whole world in Christ. "At Calvary on Good Friday, God dealt with all the sins of all the sinners in one place, on one person. He punished one sinner, whose innocent suffering was deemed to be the equivalent of all sinners suffering their own punishment. In that supreme act of atonement, the matter has been settled and the conflict resolved." In times past the Synodical Conference used the terminology of *universal justification* and *objective justification*, and we continue to use this terminology. But we need to make sure that our hearers understand what these terms mean. "God's decree of justification is universal because it applies equally to all: all sinners are declared righteous because of Christ. God's decree of justification is objective because the sins of all have been forgiven in Christ, regardless of whether they know it or not and regardless of whether they believe it or not."

As ambassadors for Christ,



Essayists L. Dassow, P. Sullivan, A. Schaller, S. Sippert

Christians now go out into the world, preaching forgiveness in Christ. "We offer to them a finished product, not a future possibility" (a quotation from E. W. Koehler). Faith in Christ is the only way this finished product can be received by sinners like ourselves, and this forgiveness is lost by those who reject the gift God offers in the gospel. All believers in Christ thus become ministers of Christ. "This ministry embraces both the full-time efforts of called workers in the church and the private efforts of believers when they share the gospel with their families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and any others whom they encounter in this world."

The apostle Paul talks about pleading and imploring on the part of Christ's ambassadors as they bring the gospel of Christ to the world. There is an urgency here. "Their opportunity to hear the gospel will not go on forever. Their time of grace is now; tomorrow may be too late (cf. 2 Cor. 6:2). God's reconciliation, provided through Christ and communicated in the Bible, is the only solution and the sure solution."

We had further opportunity to consider this ministry of reconciliation through the work of three essayists: Mr. Larry Dassow (Prince of Peace, Loveland, Colo.), Pastor Andrew Schaller (Trinity Lutheran Church, Watertown, S.Dak.), and Professor Paul Sullivan (Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire).

The individual Christian (Dassow essay) has many opportunities to serve the cause of ambassadorship, beginning with prayer. One Christian does not have the same gifts as another, but he can serve with the gifts he has.

In our congregational work (Schaller essay) we were reminded that

we sow the seed of the Word in confidence that God will work through that Word. We can be deterred from this work by an apparent lack of success and because of all the obstacles that Satan lays in our path. "We need to remember that we are clay jars. We are powerless ourselves. But God has placed in us His powerful Word, which can accomplish much."

In our synodical endeavors (Sullivan essay) we were told that we have no specific word from God that details exactly how we are to use our resources. "The identification and selection of those specific endeavors the Lord leaves up to us in the exercise of our collective wisdom and Christian love." Our CLC Constitution refers to four purposes, of which the second listed is, of course, primary: "To afford its membership additional opportunities for the proclamation of the gospel." Almost everything done by the CLC and its individual boards (Trustees, Regents, Missions, Education and Publications) is directly related to the great work of gospel proclamation.



**CONFERENCE VISITORS**  
**David Schierenbeck, Minnesota**  
**Michael Roehl, West Central**  
**Thomas Schuetze, South Eastern**  
**Michael Eichstadt, Wisconsin**  
**Delwyn Maas, Pacific Coast**

# The Discourses of Christ

Christ, the Bread of Life—John 6:52-66

Part Four

## Real Food and Real Drink

*When God's own Son came into the world offering forgiveness of sins and release from death, we might not expect that people would have complained about what He said or quarreled with His teaching.*

Yet that is exactly what happened. When Jesus spoke of Himself as the living bread in this discourse, His words did not please many of those who heard them. They complained that His words were hard—even impossible—to understand. "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" (v. 60)

How ungrateful! It was as if a drowning man should pick an argument with the one throwing him a lifeline.

We see the same thing today. In the Scriptures God offers salvation in His Son, Jesus Christ. Yet people respond by complaining about what the Scriptures say: "It's too hard to understand." "It doesn't make sense." "How can it be that Jesus Christ is both God and man in one person?" "Why would God punish His Son for the sins of mankind?" "Surely Jesus isn't the only way to God."

Here Jesus' hearers found fault with His saying that they needed to eat His flesh and drink His blood, and that if they would not, they had no life in them (v. 53). He was speaking in figurative language as He often did—for example, when He said of Himself, "I am the door" (Jn. 10:7) and "I am the vine" (Jn. 15:1,5). Here He spoke of

His flesh and blood as food and drink.

These words sounded strange, even bizarre, to many who heard them. Yet if we study all that Jesus says here, we will have no trouble understanding what He means. To eat His flesh and drink His blood is to believe in Him. By speaking of faith in Him in such striking terms Jesus teaches what it means to believe in Him (Jn. 6:35).

### **The Blessings of Redemption!**

Consider what Jesus means by His flesh and blood. Notice that He speaks of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man (v. 53)—that is, of Christ, the Mediator between God and man. This is the flesh and blood that Christ took on at His incarnation and which He offered as sacrifice in His passion and death. He had said, "The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (v. 51). His flesh and blood were the sacrifice given in place of the life of the world—in place of our life.

So Jesus' flesh and blood are to us all the blessings of redemption: complete pardon for all our sins; the assurance that God accepts us; adoption as God's children; access to the throne of

God; eternal life. His flesh and blood are food indeed and drink indeed (v. 55)—that is, real food and drink that really nourish and satisfy.

The problem with the people who objected to what Jesus was saying was that they did not believe in Him. Their heads were filled with their own ideas about who Jesus was or should be. Even Jesus' true disciples who really believed in Him as the Son of God, the Savior, did not always understand what He taught them. But they did not quarrel

with His doctrine. When they did not understand a parable they would ask Him and He would explain it to them.

This shows us how to respond when we find some teaching of the Scriptures difficult or puzzling. Let us seek to understand by searching the Scriptures and by asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten us. The Spirit is pleased to answer such prayers and to give us the real, life-giving food and drink of the Savior.

—Pastor John Klatt



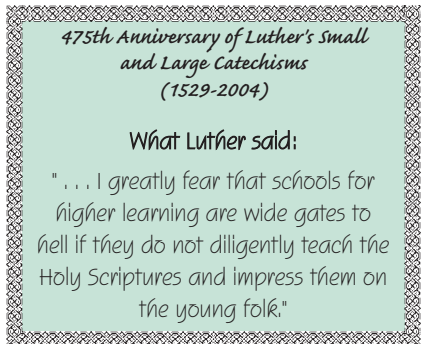
## CONFESSION IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL

We have all heard that sentiment expressed in our title. Even the world recognizes that the wrongs we have done towards others can eat away until we have confessed the wrong, hoping for a chance at some semblance of forgiveness.

And yet the same world hesitates to confess the sins against God which condemn us all. There is an illusion that man is ultimately good and can attain his own righteousness before God. For some, confession may be one act towards achieving that end.

This misunderstanding of confession is not true confession at all; indeed, it is quite the opposite. It is just a different spin put on the Pharisee's confession, which Jesus depicted in the parable of the Pharisee and publican. "God, I thank you that I am not as other men are. . . ." Such confession is NOT good for the soul.

The refusal to truly confess with repentance is a spiritual disaster. "If



we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us" (1 Jn. 1:8,10).

### TRUE CONFESSION

Confession—as we have been taught to understand it by the Holy Spirit—includes a ready admission of our deserving only death and eternal condemnation.

Confession that is actually good for the soul can be taught only by God.

### **1. What is Confession?**

*There are two parts to confession. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from a fellow Christian as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that our sins are forgiven in this way before our heavenly Father.*

### **2. What sins should we confess?**

*Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we don't know we have done, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. However, before one another we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.*

### **3. Which sins are these?**

*Examine your place in life according to the Ten Commandments. Have you been faithful as a father, mother, son, daughter, employer or employee? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you injured anyone by what you have said or done? Have you stolen anything, neglected your duty, been careless, or damaged anything?*

### **4. What will a fellow Christian say to someone who has confessed his or her sins?**

*He will say, "According to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."*

#### Large Catechism Comment:

*"...In our view of confession, therefore, we should sharply separate its two parts far from each other. We should place slight value on our part in it. But God's Word on the absolution part of confession we should hold in high and great esteem."*

For confession to be good for the soul we must understand how Luther taught it in the Catechism: "There are two parts to confession. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive absolution, or forgiveness from a fellow Christian as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that our sins are forgiven in this way before our heavenly Father."

True confession is not only the acknowledgment of wrong, but it includes faith's reliance upon the merits of Christ to make those wrongs right, to remove sin's stain.

Isn't it amazing that God has provided so great a salvation that our every sin not only can be forgiven, but

has been atoned for by the sufferings of Jesus?! It is the absolute certainty of Jesus' atoning death providing redemption for all the world which makes the reality of the gospel proclamation of the absolution so sure and certain. The Spirit opens our hearts to believe—not doubt, but firmly believe—that as we hear a fellow Christian assure us of God's forgiveness, we ARE forgiven by God!

What a marvel of grace God has established for our faith-life, blessing us with this ministry of the keys in the confession and absolution!

But do we make use of this blessing as we ought?

From our earliest days we were



taught to make daily confession to God in the beautiful childlike confession, "Jesus, Savior, wash away, All that has been wrong today." We continue to regularly confess with our fellow believers all our many sins against God and to rejoice as the sweetest gospel is proclaimed for our solace.

However, do we make use of this special gift in private confession as we might? Do we gain the full blessing and spiritual advantage that God would bestow upon us? Or do we miss out by our reluctance to confess to a fellow believer "those sins which we know and feel in our heart"?

The gift of Christian confession is most important when we are plagued by sin. While the pastor is well versed and trained in Scripture to hear and absolve sins and to do so with confidentiality, it need not be the pastor to whom a Christian makes confession.

When the guilt of sin continues to plague our conscience, let us realize

that we are being victimized by Satan's accusations. Yes, Satan would accuse us, while casting aspersions upon the true quality of God's forgiving grace. It is with this gift of Christian confession that God would help us quench the fiery darts of Satan's lies.

With the application of God's precious gospel, each of us can proclaim peace for the troubled conscience. Let us be ready to give that confident assurance to our fellow believer, that "when we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"; "for the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from sin" (1 Jn. 1:9,7).

Confess your sins, hear the words of His forgiving grace and KNOW, within your heart, "Yes, even MY sins are forgiven before God in heaven!"

Such confession truly is good for the soul!

—Pastor Theodore Barthels



## The Last Two Commandments

There was nothing wrong with what King Ahab did—at least not at first. That he saw a vineyard near his palace that he wanted to turn into a vegetable garden was fine. As a matter of fact, it was good and proper that he approached the owner Naboth as he did: "Give me your vineyard," Ahab said. "And for it I will give you a vineyard better than it. Or, . . . I will give you its worth in money" (1 Kgs. 21:2).

The problem started when King Ahab wasn't satisfied with Naboth's refusal to sell property he had inherited. Ahab "went to his house sullen and

*475th Anniversary of Luther's Small  
and Large Catechisms  
(1529-2004)*

**What Luther said:**

"Think how . . . you are bringing sin and wrath upon yourself and are thus earning hell by the neglect of your own children, even though you may be pious and holy in other respects. . . . If we have children and subjects who are spoiled and disobedient, they are the products of our training."

### **The Ninth Commandment**

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not sinfully desire to get our neighbor's inheritance or house by a trick or in a way that appears to be right; but we should do everything we can to help him keep what is his.

### **The Tenth Commandment**

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his workers, or his animals, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not sinfully desire to use tricks or force, or do anything that might cause our neighbor to lose his wife, workers, or animals; but we should urge them to stay and do their duty.

displeased. . . . He lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food" (v. 4). He had a sinful desire to have something which he could not have, a sin which is identified in these two commandments as "coveting."

When God commands us not to covet our neighbor's house or his spouse, workers, animals, or anything else that is his, He is making it clear that sin is not something which is limited to actions such as murder, adultery, and stealing, nor is it limited to spoken words like bearing false witness. Sin can also be committed in the thoughts and intents of the heart.

We see the symptoms of coveting in the way Ahab pouted when he returned home. And, as God's Word says, "When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin" (Jam. 1:15). Ahab's covetousness led to several other sins. First, when Jezebel had men lie about Naboth's character; then when they had him murdered; and finally when Ahab took possession of what was not rightfully his.

Such is the danger of coveting. The temptation is immediately there to act on one's sinful desires, to "get our neighbor's house by a trick," or to "cause our neighbor to lose what is his." As Luther writes, "Thus God has aimed these commandments especially against jealousy and miserable avarice, His purpose being to eradicate the roots and causes from which spring the things by which we injure our neighbor."

In the place of any sinful desire, the Lord encourages us to be content with what we have. Instead of coveting, we are to "be renewed in the spirit of our mind" and to "put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). Or, as Luther puts it, "we should do everything we can to help our neighbor keep what is his," and urge those who are his "to stay and do what they are supposed to do."

The Law shows our sin. These last two commandments are no different than any others of the ten in that they have X-ray ability to shine right through us, revealing how we have

failed to do what we should have done—and how we have done what we should not have done! "Above all, God wants our hearts to be pure," Luther writes. "However, as long as we live we will never be able to attain that standard. Thus, like all the other commandments, this commandment, too,

constantly accuses us and shows us what our righteousness really amounts to in the sight of God."

Thank God that, for Jesus' sake, He forgives all our sins "in THOUGHT, word, and deed"!

—Pastor Paul Krause



# "CLOSE COMMUNION"

Or: "Who is to be admitted to the Lord's Supper?"

Twelfth In A Series  
(Conclusion)

It is such a precious blessing to be able to go to Communion. We are a Word-Sacrament church, which implies a definite stewardship of both.

God has given us a beautiful Communion Liturgy, which highlights both Word and Sacrament, flowing up and up in the sheer majesty of His tenderness towards sinners. Liturgy, hymns, readings, sermon, prayers and sacrament are all pure Bible. Jesus Himself—with Father, Spirit, angels—stands among us, inviting us to come to the Holy Table (Matthew 11:28; 18:20; 26:26-28).

It is exciting when visitors come and eventually enroll in an instruction class. Many have some kind of church background. But they are often startled, and heartened, when it comes to the subject of Holy Communion. They never heard anything like this before: Real Presence . . . bread and wine *and* body and blood . . . forgiveness of sins imparted! No magic or mental gymnastics, no superstition or twisting of concepts. Just simple words from Jesus



and Paul—all provided by a Spirit Who says: "Come!"

They usually say: "We understand *now* why you practice 'Close Communion.' But if this is really what you believe, why not offer and take the sacrament more often? We ourselves would love that! Why is it so restricted? Does this have something to do with 'Close Communion'?"

The "offer" part of that question is a long story—for another time. (It has to do with "we never did it that way before"—those seven last words of a dying church, closely akin to "the tyranny of the status quo.")

## Observations?!

But miracle of miracles, these new

people join! And in a short time they make some observations about the "take" part of the above question. One of them might feel bold enough to say to an older member, in a gentle manner: "I noticed you didn't take Communion last time." The answer might be: "Oh, my spouse was away hunting, and we usually take it together." Or: "If I take it too often, it cheapens the Lord's Supper for me." Or: "I didn't spend enough time focusing on my sin and unworthiness." Or: "Oh, it's okay, I already took it once this month, up at Convention." Or: "The Communion service is too long, so I often leave right after the offering." Or: "I have *never* taken the Sacrament more than once a month! I wouldn't want to give the impression that I am overdoing it."

This new member may start to think that these answers have something to do with our right (?) to practice another kind of 'Close Communion'—sort of—a practice that admittedly over-rides Jesus, Paul, and Catechism. And he thinks: "Do those excuses sound a bit silly, or did I miss something in instruction class? Is this a form of self-serving and self-righteousness, or is it just me? Dare I ever exercise the right, in the face of Jesus' invitation—and right there in

church!—to say: 'No thanks, Lord, I am not taking Your Sacrament today, because . . .'? The pastor said that the only excuses for not partaking of the Sacrament are unbelief or unconsciousness. I'll have to ask him again. Because I think I could do more damage to my soul by not attending than by attending! Hm-m-m-m."

The way a person thinks of Holy Communion, that's the type of Christian that person is. Hence the encouragement to take Christ's body and blood as often as offered. And the oftener the better, for it is such a precious blessing—such a refreshing, salutary gift, necessary and available!

Not all old-timers necessarily agree with that, because it may seem to border on coercion. But new-timers would invariably agree, because of their new-found yearning. And right there is a good reason for bringing new people in! They keep hearing Jesus clearly saying every time: "Come!"

Keep them coming!

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**With this concluding article in series, we heartily thank Pastor emeritus Warren Fanning for his helpful treatment of a topic challenging, at times, even for conservative Christians to appreciate and understand. — Editor**



**St. Paul Lutheran Ladies,  
Vernon, Canada (B.C.)**

## The View From Here

The July 19, 2004 issue of *Christian News* (CN) reported the results of the much ballyhooed presidential election held at the recent Convention of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). Incumbent President Gerald Kieschnick was re-elected (to a three-year term) on the first ballot with 52.8 percent of the vote. His conservative rival, Rev. Daniel Preus, received 31.6 percent of the votes of more than 1,200 delegates.

Under the heading "Embattled Lutheran president wins vote," a newspaper report on the election said: "Many convention delegates said Kieschnick's win puts an end to the years-long fighting over a controversial interfaith service at Yankee Stadium in New York. The president came under fire after he allowed Rev. David Benke, Atlantic District President, to participate in the service after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Some say the move ran afoul of church belief, which says that members should pray only with people with whom they agree on doctrine. . . ." (*St. Louis Post Dispatch*, July 12, 2004, printed in CN)

### **Re: LIMITATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH ESTABLISHED FELLOWSHIPS**

**#61** *We further reject the teaching that false teachers and churches are to be avoided only when they no longer listen to admonition. In those communions which agree with us that there must be unanimity in all doctrines of Scripture as a basis for fellowship, some teachers have arisen who have taught that an existing fellowship is not to be terminated as long as the errorist will discuss the issues involved and permit admonition to be addressed to them. Though this argument is presented in the sheep's clothing of Christian love and patience, we must condemn it as unscriptural and unionistic. When errorists by their adherence to their errors "cause divisions and offences" in the Church, we are told by the Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul in Romans 16:17 to avoid them. To say in the face of this clear instruction that we are to fellowship with such as have become manifest errorists, simply because we are still admonishing them, must be condemned as disobedience to God, as allowing false teachers to ravage the flock, as disregarding the concern expressed in the next verse of Rom. 16 (lest "by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple") — in short, as belittling the Word of God and the importance of all revealed teaching. It can only, as must all unionism, lead to indifference to doctrine and to insecurity for the Christian in matters of faith.*

*Concerning Church Fellowship—A Statement of Principle* (1961 edition, p. 28) — an official confession of the Church of the Lutheran Confession

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The above is but one of a number of paragraphs in CCF that, as we see it, would apply to the situation as it currently exists in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. — *Editor*

issue of July 19)

The newspaper reporter may be accurate in reporting that many of the delegates fondly hoped that the election result "puts an end" to the synodical in-fighting. From our perspective, it's only that—a fond hope. The sad and ugly reality is that the in-fighting in Missouri is being ratcheted up even further.

What's our basis for saying this? While we receive nothing from official LCMS headquarters, we do receive copies of "conservative" LCMS publications such as *Christian News* (whose editor has never been accepted as a clergy-member of LCMS) and *Affirm*—which, in turn, quote freely from papers put out by such LCMS liberal wing groups as *Daystar* and *Jesus First*. Thus, we believe, we have ample second-hand information. We could, in fact, fill pages of our *Spokesman* showing how the LCMS "right" exposes the sins—the false doctrines and unscriptural practices—of the synod's "left."

The language of the "right" is nigh unto being vitriolic, particularly as we read it in *Christian News*. CN repeatedly calls President Kieschnick a "pope" who is master of "the Bully Pulpit"; CN expresses "no regrets" for "spending so much time and money" in the past promoting a conservative ticket; in fact, coming off the recent Convention its editor has vowed to continue the in-fighting until the synod's next Convention. "Kieschnick is the real enemy," reports CN, "who must go in 2007, not some fellow conservative" (That is said in the context of CN telling conservative groups to stop their own internal squabbings). CN also criticizes synod liberals for lacking "real (biblical) scholarship" in addressing doctrinal issues dividing the synod—issues such as opposing positions on women suffrage, ordination of women into the ministry, closed (sic!) communion, Darwinian evolution, and church fellowship (witness the Benke case, which precipitated the current unrest). On and on and on goes CN's sad and ugly (hardly "new"!) campaign to expose and eventually replace, it hopes, the liberal presidium with a conservative one.

In all this, our sympathies are, of course, with the conservatives—Right? Wrong! We would say it a hundred times—wrong! The conservatives themselves are wrong in failing to apply the Bible's "separation" passages to those it has clearly marked as espousers and promoters of doctrinal error.

### **"The conservative crusade . . . has failed"**

As a spokesman for the LCMS "right" puts it (in an article titled "Our Beloved Synod is Dead", CN, July 19, '04, p. 1ff.), the fact is that . . . "The time has come to face these grim realities and admit that the conservative crusade to reclaim Missouri has failed. The church that Missouri once was, where doctrine reigned supreme and consistent unity in doctrine and practice was the Synod's foremost priority is no more. 'Unserer geliebte Synode ist tot.' Our beloved Synod is dead." The speaker (Dr. Laurence White, addressing a Free Conference in Texas in August, 2003) used many words to support his sad assertion, adding: "The LCMS is faltering today because it has traded its precious heritage as a confessional church where doctrine reigned supreme—which existed for the sole purpose of offering the good confession—for the worthless worldly porridge of



trendy, politically correct, modern denominationalism . . . " Even before Kieschnick's re-election, Dr. White contended that the synodical president " . . . is Missouri's first postmodern president. He is a deliberately non-theological individual."

One of their own has said it, and we would agree. The one-time orthodox Missouri Synod—the confessional synod of 1932 "Brief Statement" days—has died.

Furthermore, we believe Missouri's orthodox forefathers would long ago have applied the separation principle—contrary to what many on the LCMS "right" are advocating even now. Yes, even now following the Convention—which has been preceded by some thirty years of wrangling—CN pleads: "Please, No Rash Action, Work Together, Cooler Heads Should Prevail" (CN Editorial, July 19, 2004, p. 4).

If, for conscience' sake based on the Word, there are those within the synod who do not agree with its president and his majority of supporters—their collective teachings and their practice, or lack of it, consistent with those teachings—the recourse left to them is clear.

That recourse is what the Scripture teaches, namely: "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18, cf. also 2 John 10-11, 2 Cor. 6:14ff etc.).

In a word, allegiance to God and His Word deserves to come before allegiance to "our beloved synod" which has lawfully (re)elected a postmodern, liberal president. A few months back we wrote something on these pages about the scourge of synoditis, as well as about Missouri being "At Another Crossroads." Decisions were made at and by the stated Convention. Now some difficult decisions remain for conscientious objectors to the synod's chosen course.

Separation is not easy. We know it from personal experience. But we also know from experience that the Lord who directs such separation—and whose hand is not shortened—will also show the way to His faithful followers.

—Pastor Paul Fleischer



May '04, Resurrection Lutheran, Corpus Christi, completes some remodeling

# WE "CAN" HELP!!



**Teacher Hensel with Redeemer students and their haul!**

Beginning in January, 2004, the children of Redeemer Lutheran School, Cheyenne, Wyoming, started collecting aluminum cans as a special effort to contribute toward the future academic center at ILC. They went as a class the first Friday of each month to take the cans in to be recycled.

On April 30th, the school children hit the "jack pot" when one of the church members donated several sacks of aluminum cans. From January through the month of May, the children weighed in a total of 287 pounds, collecting a total of \$109.06!

Thanks to all in the congregation who helped the students with collecting.

*—Mrs. Judy Hensel, teacher, reporting*



**CLC Women's Retreat, Trego, Wisconsin, March 26-28, 2004.**



Some of the Trego Retreat speakers & mini-session leaders (l-r): Marie Meyer, Beth Sydow, Dotty Lillo, Jennifer Rademacher, Eunice Roehl, Patty Schwartz, Jennifer Schmidt, Cathy Augustine, Bea Gerbitz, Sandy Roehl, Tina Eichstadt

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## Announcements

### Great Lakes Pastoral Conference

**Date:** September 28-30 2003

**Place:** Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sister Lakes, Michigan

**Agenda:**

1. New Testament Exegesis—Romans 1:18ff—Pastor David Naumann
2. Old Testament Exegesis—Song of Solomon 1:1ff.—Pastor David Schaller
3. Study of terms in Isaiah 53—Pastor Mark Gullerud
4. Homiletics topic—Pastor Joel Fleischer
5. "Redeeming the time" in our ministries—Pastor Paul Tiefel
6. Scriptural Principles in giving offense—Professor John Reim
7. Church History, Luther the early years—Pastor Arthur Schulz
8. Addictive Behavior—Pastor Michael Schierenbeck
9. Book Review, Part I of *Ecumenical Endeavor—The Synodical Conference*—Pastor Michael Eichstadt
10. Book Review—Pastor Philip Matzke  
*Chaplain*—Pastor Walter Schaller  
*Communion Speaker*—Pastor Timothy Holland  
—*Pastor Mark Gullerud, Chairman*

### South Eastern Pastoral Conference

**Host:** Resurrection Lutheran Church — Corpus Christi, Tex.

**Dates:** October 5-7, 2004

**Assignments:**

- + Chaplain—Pastor Daniel Fleischer
- + Communion Service Preacher—Pastor Paul Larsen
- + New Testament Exegesis (Colossians 2:1ff)—Pastor Karl Stewart
- + Old Testament Exegesis (Genesis 1:8ff)—Pastor Luke Bernthal
- + Isagogical Study of Micah—Pastor Thomas Schuetz

- + To what extent did Christianity influence the founding fathers of the United States of America?—Pastor Todd Ohlmann
- + Study of the Old Testament word "Sheol"—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
- + Christian Hospitality—Pastor Dennis Rieken
- + What is the "mystery" (e.g. of the gospel) and to whom is it so? cf. Colossians 1:24-29, Ephesians 3, and Romans 11 etc.—Pastor Vance Fossum
- + What in Scripture is "historically conditioned" and what is universally applicable?—Pastor John Schierenbeck

—*Pastor Todd Ohlmann, Secretary*

### Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference

**Site:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Clarkston, Wash.

**Dates:** September 14-16, 2004

**Agenda:**

1. New Testament Exegesis—Pastor John Hein
2. Old Testament Exegesis—Pastor Paul Naumann
3. A Study of "Living God" and Other Related Phrases (both Hebrew and Greek)—Pastor David Povolny
4. Perspicuity—Background of Christian Doctrine, Abandoned by the Modern Church—Pastor Jay Hartmann
5. Book Review of Walther's *Law and Gospel*, These X.f.—Pastor Steven Karp
6. Ministering to the Bipolar—Pastor Terrel Kesterson
7. An Overview of the Allowed Activities of Satan—Pastor David Reim
8. Survey of Church Discipline—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer

*Conference Chaplain*—Pastor Delwyn Mass  
*Communion Service Speaker*—Pastor Warren Fanning

—*Pastor Terrel Kesterson, Secretary*

**Volume III of E. Schaller's  
SELECTED SERMONS**

Following upon the first volume of "festival half" sermons and a second volume of "Trinity Season" sermons (previously mentioned on these pages), there now appears a third volume of sermons by Pastor/Professor Egbert Schaller (1904-1971). Seeing to the reprinting and production of these exceptional examples of solid—true-to-the-text!—scriptural preaching are son-in-law and daughter of E.Schaller, Prof. em. Paul Koch and wife Anne of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

According to Prof. Koch, this third volume "has forty-two . . . sermons arranged in four series: two for Lent (mid-week and Sundays) and two Trinity series on Old Testament texts (2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, and Nehemiah)." With a total of 195 pages, this third volume—like the first two—is nicely bound with a sturdy plastic ring-binder. We have no doubt that readers of this series of sermon booklets will come away blessed by the Spirit through "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

The current price is \$6.00 per copy, plus postage. Contact Paul Koch at [parekoak@aol.com](mailto:parekoak@aol.com) or at 3425 Morgan Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701-7023.

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**NOMINATIONS**

The Board of Regents for Immanuel Lutheran College announces the following nominations to fill the professorship at Immanuel Lutheran College to be vacated by the impending retirement of Professor David Lau at the end of the 2004-05 school year:

James Albrecht, Mark Bernthal, Michael Eichstadt, Wayne Eichstadt, Vance Fossum, Mark Gullerud, John Hein, Steven Karp, Delwyn Maas, Philip Matzke, Bruce Naumann, Paul Naumann, Paul D. Nolting, David Reim, Walter Schaller, David Schierenbeck, John Schierenbeck, Paul Sullivan, Paul Tiefel Jr., John Ude.

The description of this position on the ILC Faculty announced in the July 2004 issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman* is as follows: "This position will involve teaching responsibilities primarily in the following areas: Systematic Theology (Dogmatics, Comparative Theology) and Practical Theology (Pastoral Theology, Missiology, Homiletics) in the Seminary; and a religion course in both the High School and College departments." Included in the published request for nominations was an appeal for information regarding the . . . "educational background and teaching and/or professional experience," of the nominee; as well as information as to how the nominee "might help our school in the area of administration, or/and supervising

extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, theatre, etc."

All comments from members of CLC congregations regarding these candidates should be in the hands of the undersigned no later than Sunday, September 19, 2004.

Pastor Ted Barthels  
2200 16th St. SW  
Austin, MN 55912

E-Mail: [6slehtrab@charter.net](mailto:6slehtrab@charter.net)



**Convention Preachers: D. Fuerstenau, T. Barthels, D. Povolny**