

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

"...THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN." — JOHN 10:35

# HE IS RISEN

E A S T E R   D E V O T I O N  
EASTER JOY AND PEACE

Pastor Theodore Barthels • Austin, Minnesota

**As we sing our “Hallelujahs” on Easter morning, we will be rejoicing with genuine joy from our hearts.**

We may think that feeling such a joy is only natural on the anniversary of the resurrection of our dear Lord Jesus. However, as we read the accounts of that first resurrection morning, we are reminded that the joy and peace of believing is anything but natural.

To find out what emotions would control our hearts without the Lord opening our understanding so that we might comprehend the Scriptures, we need only recall what emotions controlled the hearts of the disciples—including the devout women—on that first resurrection day (Luke 24:45).

Mary Magdalene jumped to the wrong conclusion—that not only had Jesus been crucified by His enemies but also that His body had been stolen! Only adding to the disciples’ misery, they were ready to believe this. When the rest of the women came back to the apostles and reported that they had seen the Lord, “their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them” (Luke 24:11).

There was grief and sadness. There was guilt and confusion. There was a lot of doubt, and not just from Thomas.

What was missing was the joy and peace that only the presence of a risen Savior could bring. The disciples needed the reminder delivered by the angels—the truth of the gospel which Jesus had repeatedly taught them, saying, “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again” (Luke 24:7).

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*And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*  
**Luke 24:45**

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*And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.*  
**Luke 24:11**

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*Jesus said:  
“The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”*  
**Luke 24:7**

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## Jesus Appeared to Them!

In their distress the disciples could not comprehend the amazing gospel truth of a crucified and risen Savior. Then Jesus, our risen Savior, appeared to them! He appeared first to the women and to Mary, then to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and later to the disciples in the inner room, demonstrating for all the reality of His resurrection.

“Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord” (John 20:20)!

Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed! And with that truth came the assurance of sins forgiven and the joy of their salvation.

Theirs, and ours! Jesus lives! Our Savior lives forevermore!

Our Easter joy and peace are wonderful gifts which the Holy Spirit has worked in our hearts as we hear the Easter gospel from the Scriptures. This is the joy and peace of believing!

We hear our Savior’s own words which He spoke to the disciples as He suddenly appeared in their midst on that first Easter evening: “Peace be with you” (John 20:19).

Some might say that this was a common greeting among the Jews, but when is a common greeting more than a greeting? — It is when Jesus speaks to us of our peace with God!

“[Jesus] was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 4:25-5:1).

God declared all of us to be justified by raising His Son from the dead. The debt of sin has been paid. The enmity has been taken out of the way. The Spirit has opened our hearts to believe this gospel of God’s love and forgiveness through a crucified and risen Savior.

And so we have peace, and from that peace comes a joy that cannot be taken away from us.

This coming Easter morn, let our “Hallelujahs” be enthusiastic expressions of genuine Easter joy and peace! 🌸

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*When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.*

**John 20:20**

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*Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”*

**John 20:19**

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*[Jesus] who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*  
**Romans 4:25-5:1**

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## The Resurrection of Jesus—Fact or Fiction?

Pastor Nathanael Mayhew • Atlanta (Lawrenceville), Georgia

**M**any theories and lies have been advanced throughout the centuries concerning the death and the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

Discovered tombs and ossuaries near Jerusalem are supposed to have contained the remains of the body of Jesus.

What is fact and what is fiction? With that question in mind, let's consider some of the facts of the resurrection on that first Easter morning.

### The Old Testament Fulfilled

The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is well known for its vivid and clear description of the suffering and death of the Messiah. Seldom is that section of Scripture thought of in connection with the resurrection—but the resurrection of Jesus is clearly promised by Isaiah in those verses.

For example, speaking of Jesus, the Suffering Servant, the LORD promises through Isaiah: "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days!"

Thus, for hundreds of years God had promised that Jesus would not only die on the cross "numbered with the transgressors" and give His soul as "an offering for sin" through death, but also that Jesus would also live again to see the results of His work!

Old Testament prophecy concerning the resurrection of Jesus confirms our confidence in the fact of the resurrection—both His and ours!

### The Words and Promise of Jesus

The resurrection of Jesus not only fulfilled Old Testament Bible prophecy

but also fulfilled the very words of Jesus Himself.

Throughout His earthly ministry Jesus spoke both to His disciples and even to the unbelieving Jews about His approaching death and coming resurrection.

He made it very clear to all people what His purpose was. When the Jews asked for a sign, Jesus compared Himself to the prophet Jonah, saying, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40).

The words of Jesus recorded in Scripture confirm for us the fact of the bodily resurrection. He promised that He would rise again. He assured them that He would be victorious over death.

### The Power of Jesus over Death

Perhaps the reason why there are so many theories surrounding Jesus' resurrection is because a resurrection from the dead defies human experience. Wherever we look, we see things dying, and none of us has witnessed a person rising from the dead.

Although resurrection to life just isn't logical, throughout Jesus' earthly life and ministry He proved that He had power over death.

Jesus crashed every funeral He attended.

He demonstrated His power over death by restoring life to the young daughter of a Jewish synagogue official named Jairus by simply *Continued on page 20*

## High Honor and Great Privilege

Pastor Mark Gullerud • Bowdle, South Dakota

**Whether it be in the festival or non-festival season of the church year, we enjoy the high honor and great privilege of hearing truly glorious events that took place in the life of Christ.**

Please do not pass over quickly or regard too lightly this "high honor and great privilege," because we are living in a day and age when people, especially in the Middle East and Far East, are being severely restricted in being able to hear and learn of Christ.

This is not unlike conditions during Jesus' earthly life and during the time of the early New Testament Church when authorities tried to prevent the good news of the Savior from getting out and being spread around.

Thanks be to God, we still live in a free land in which—whenever the wondrous news of the teachings, life, and work of Christ reaches our ears—our spirits are uplifted with great joy and gladness.

As we listen with renewed interest, who among us hasn't entertained the thought of being transported back in time to witness firsthand what we are reading and hearing about in the gospel accounts?!

What a joyous experience it must have been to have the high honor and great privilege...

...to see the newborn, incarnate Lord in Bethlehem of Judea;

...to walk and talk with the Light of the world during His ministry;

...to observe the almighty God-Man perform His many and sundry miracles;

...to gaze upon our victorious Savior on the day of His resurrection;

...to watch the Lord of glory ascend into the unseen realm of heaven!

As Christians we know that the culmination of Jesus' life's work as our Savior took place during Holy Week which began with Palm Sunday.

Think of the spiritual thrill it must have been to be numbered among the multitude of festival-goers who hailed and escorted Jesus into the city of Jerusalem on that momentous Sunday.

### An Even Higher Honor and Privilege!

Recognizing Jesus as messianic royalty, they rolled out the red carpet by paving the road with palm branches and their outer garments. The festival hymn (which the Jewish pilgrims would often use when coming to celebrate the Passover—Psalm 118) took on special meaning as they applied it to Jesus, crying out "Hosanna! [Save, I pray!] 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!" (John 12:13)

But now, when Jesus performed mighty deeds and was hailed in this way, listen to the objections raised by the religious officials—and then also hear Jesus' response. "But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, 'Hosanna to the

Son of David!', they were indignant and said to Him, 'Do You hear what these are saying?' And Jesus said to them, 'Yes. Have you never read, "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise"?' (Matthew 21:15-16)

Having been blessed with a childlike faith, we—unlike the disciples who didn't fully understand until later what Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday signified (John 12:16)—know that Jesus was making His way into the city to lay down His life on the cross to save us eternally.

And so when we sing our Hosannas to the Lord, it is a song of praise and thanksgiving over the accomplished fact of our salvation through Jesus Christ!

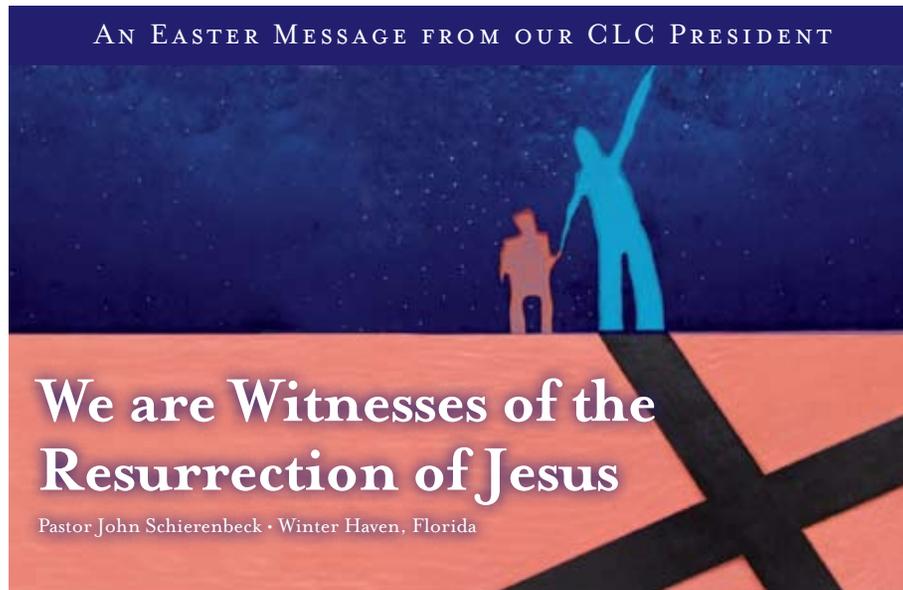
While we did not receive the high honor and great privilege to witness firsthand all the glorious events that took place in the life of Christ, nevertheless we shall have an even higher honor and greater privilege of experiencing in heaven the eternal fruits of Jesus' redemptive work.

In one of John's visions recorded in the book of Revelation, we find a picture that gives a glimpse of what that eternal day will be like. The apostle John reports, "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen'" (Revelation 7:9-12).

In eternity nothing and no one will hinder anyone from speaking of and singing the praises of our Savior God, for everyone in heaven will be glorifying Him forever and ever! Amen.



From March 11-20, the Tour Choir of Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wis., presented a series of sacred concerts at CLC congregations in the following cities: Hecla, Bowdle, and Lemmon, S.Dak.; Spokane, Clarkston, and Tacoma, Wash.; Bismarck and Jamestown, N.Dak.; Fridley, Minn.



Paul stated,  
**"I am determined  
not to know anything  
among you except  
Jesus Christ and  
Him crucified"**

(1 CORINTHIANS 2:2).

This preaching of the gospel included not only the fact of Jesus' death on the cross but the meaning of this sacrifice for the sins of the world. The power of the message of the early Church was based on the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the promise of life to come for all who believed in Jesus as their Savior.

The book of Acts illustrates the central importance of the resurrection in our preaching and witnessing.

Jesus' mandate to be His witnesses to the ends of the Earth was based on the reality of His resurrection victory over death and the grave. "To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

Peter's sermon on Pentecost emphasized not only that the Jews had crucified their Messiah, but that Jesus' body did not remain in the grave. "(David), foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:31-32).

After healing the lame man in the temple, Peter and John revealed that there is salvation in no other name than the name of the victorious, risen Jesus.

"But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14-15).

They repeated this message before the same Sanhedrin which had delivered Jesus to be crucified. "Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole" (Acts 4:10).

Peter was re-arrested and proclaimed the same message before the Jewish council. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:30-31).

### A Message of Life!

Later Peter witnessed this gospel to the Gentile Cornelius in Caesarea. "The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ; He is Lord of all; that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:36-38).

During his first missionary journey Paul's message was the death and victorious resurrection of Jesus. "Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those

who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people" (Acts 13:29-31).

At Thessalonica, Paul preached Jesus as the risen Messiah. "(Paul was) explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ'" (Acts 17:3).

Athens, the intellectual center of the world, would be judged by Jesus Christ risen from the dead. "He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, 'We will hear you again on this matter'" (Acts 17:31-32).

Paul defended his faith in the risen Savior before kings such as King Agrippa. "Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come; that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22-23).

Paul was ready to die because he was confident of his own resurrection victory. "Then Paul answered, 'What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus'" (Acts 21:13).

We are witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. This needs to be the content and emphasis of our simple message in these last days. We have a message of life for dying sinners.

## Worth More Than Many Sparrows

Pastor Em. Daniel Fleischer • Oakdale, Minnesota

When God created the Earth and the world and all that is in it, man was the crowning jewel of creation. Man was created and placed on the Earth as the unique expression of divine creation. Adam was created a special creature—formed from the dust of earth. Into his nostrils was breathed the breath of life "and man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7). It was "not good that man should be alone" (2:18), but there was none among all the animals God created that was a suitable mate for Adam. Consequently, God took of the rib of Adam and made of it woman, the perfect mate for Adam—spiritually, emotionally, sexually, and morally.

### "Environmentalists" But...

Created by God in His image, human beings are not lower than the beast of the field, nor are animals equal to humans; yet too frequently, in the corruption of the sinful heart, men and women act worse than animals!

As stewards of that which God has created, we are to appreciate His creation and take care of it. Bible-believers should be the most careful "environmentalists" of all. The passages we have quoted concerning mankind's relationship to other created beings does not give license or justification to abuse or misuse any creature or our environment. The reality is that purveyors of evolution are the worst abusers of the environment, for they worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25).

This writer remembers how traumatic

it was to give up an orphaned dog which the family raised and to which it had become attached. So we do not disparage those who enjoy their pets. Neither do we deny that pets can be—and are to many—good companions, thus serving our benefit in many ways. That was the Creator's intent.

### But they are still animals!

It is therefore a product of evolutionary foolishness when animals are accorded the same rights as people for whom Christ died. If there had been a mate for Adam among the four-legged beasts, we could conclude that there would have been no Eve.

We had recent reminders of the evolutionary influence. When the governor of Minnesota was inaugurated recently, it was reported in the news that one of his sick and dying dogs "lived long enough to see his inauguration." Are we to gather that the dog died in a happy state of mind?

Recently one large dog "murdered" a smaller dog. The murdering canine was quickly dispatched. This troubled Jacob, the dog's owner, who (speaking of himself) said, "We know that Jacob has it in his heart to forgive this dog. It is our belief that both dogs are in a better place, and perhaps in that existence, even they will be friends."

Frequently one reads how someone left an inheritance to dogs or cats whose names appear as survivors in obituary columns.

To each his own. But by what authority have animals been elevated to the level of human

*Continued on page 19*

# Christian Apologetics

James Arndt • Member at Peace Thru Christ Lutheran Church  
and School - Middleton, Wisconsin

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...”**

1 PETER 3:15

## What it is and is not

The word apologetics comes from the Greek word *apologia* which means defense. Just as the Lutheran Reformers wrote the *Apology to the Augsburg Confession* to defend what they wrote in the *Augsburg Confession*, so the Christian’s calling includes defending his belief in God and His Word. Even more so, the Lord wants His people to always be ready to do this important work.

So, if someone asked us to “prove” that God exists, would we, as Peter exhorts, be ready to do so?

While Christianity is growing in other parts of the world, it does seem to be under attack in our own country. This makes defending the faith as important as it has ever been, since we will very likely run into those who either reject Christianity or are downright hostile to the hope we have in us.

Consider the young Christian who has to attend a class where on the first day the university professor takes a Bible, kicks it across the classroom, and announces to the students that if anyone is offended by this, he should leave right now.

Consider the Christian who gets mocked and ridiculed for being illogical and unscientific or for believing in “some supposedly loving God” who yet allows evil in this world.

Is there a way for the Christian to defend the faith in a God-pleasing manner while still being logical, scientific, and philosophical?

The answer is a resounding “Yes!” This is what Christian apologetics is all about.

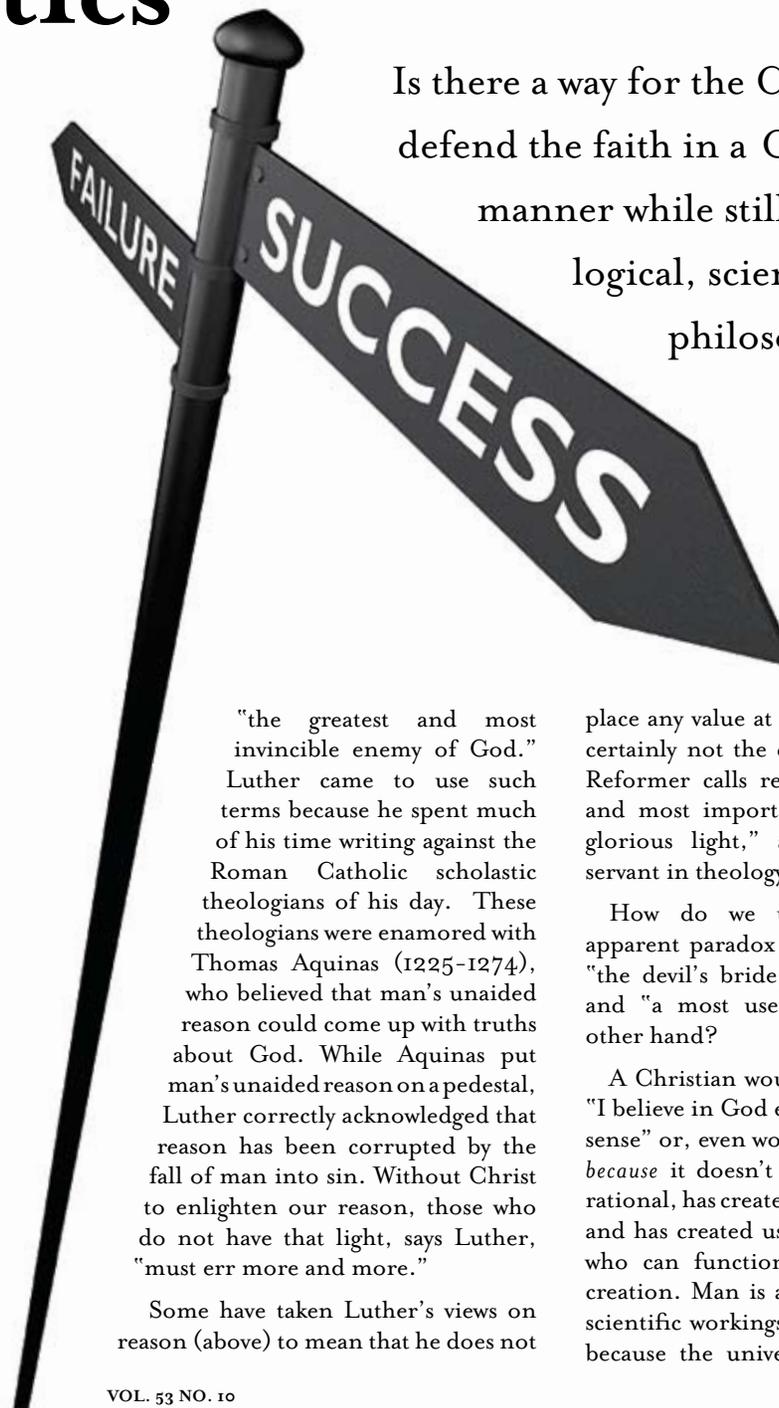
To begin with, it is very important to know what apologetics is not. Apologetics is not—I repeat, not—a way that someone becomes a believer. Unfortunately, many Christian apologists tend to rely solely on extra-biblical arguments in an attempt to change the minds of unbelievers. I submit that this comes from the false notion that if the unbeliever won’t accept God’s Word as the authority on all matters, then supposedly it is necessary to convince him by going outside of God’s Word, making one’s point by logic and evidence.

However, it is not logic and evidence that must be the heart of the Christian’s defense but God’s Word. This is what Peter meant when he told us to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” We rely on God’s Word not only for our theology but also for the foundation of a faithful and God-pleasing apologetic.

## On reason and philosophy

Luther has called reason “a big, red murderess,” “the devil’s bride,” and

Is there a way for the Christian to defend the faith in a God-pleasing manner while still being logical, scientific, and philosophical?



“the greatest and most invincible enemy of God.” Luther came to use such terms because he spent much of his time writing against the Roman Catholic scholastic theologians of his day. These theologians were enamored with Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who believed that man’s unaided reason could come up with truths about God. While Aquinas put man’s unaided reason on a pedestal, Luther correctly acknowledged that reason has been corrupted by the fall of man into sin. Without Christ to enlighten our reason, those who do not have that light, says Luther, “must err more and more.”

Some have taken Luther’s views on reason (above) to mean that he does not

place any value at all on reason. This is certainly not the case, as elsewhere the Reformer calls reason “God’s greatest and most important gift to man,” “a glorious light,” and “a most useful servant in theology.”

How do we understand Luther’s apparent paradox when he calls reason “the devil’s bride,” on the one hand, and “a most useful servant,” on the other hand?

A Christian would never want to say, “I believe in God even if it doesn’t make sense” or, even worse, “I believe in God because it doesn’t make sense.” God is rational, has created an orderly universe, and has created us as rational creatures who can function successfully in His creation. Man is able to figure out the scientific workings of the universe only because the universe reflects and our

minds are attuned to God's orderliness. We are able to arrange God's Word into doctrinal statements because we have an orderly God. While it is true that we are not able to fully *comprehend* all of what God has revealed through His Word, that does not mean that we are not able to *apprehend* it.

We use our reason to study the Bible, teach the Bible, and even write about the Bible, but this is most certainly not because of our own autonomous and self-authoritative reasoning. Many a philosopher (one who loves wisdom) throughout history has tried to explain the world around him without reference to the world's Creator. Paul warns us to "see to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

This does not mean that philosophy (the love of wisdom) is something that Christians are to avoid. We are to get wisdom and understanding even though it cost all we have. (Proverbs 4:7). Thankfully, God has told us where to start. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10).

So when Luther labels reason a blind guide or the enemy of faith, he is addressing the notion that man's autonomous reason is sufficient to find out truths of the universe. Those are the sort of "hollow and deceptive" philosophies that, according to the apostle, will rob us of the "treasures

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of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3) that are in Christ.

Since we are called upon to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, we will want to have a distinctly Christian approach toward philosophy and reason. It is

only Christ who can bring blessings out of our reasoning and philosophy in the first place. All knowledge is in Christ (Colossians 2:3) and the only way to know if we are thinking correctly is to consider whether our thoughts are reflecting God's thoughts as He has revealed them to us in His Word. Philosophy which rests on God's Word will teach us to be aware of—and beware of—the "fine-sounding arguments" (2:4) so prevalent in our culture today.

**Regarding Apologetical  
Encounters**

Since God has revealed Himself to us in His creation (Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:20), in our hearts (Romans 2:15), and through His Word (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16), all people know the existence of their Creator (whether it is saving knowledge or not). This is the point of contact that a believer has with the unbeliever. The Christian can use this natural knowledge of God's existence to show that, while the unbeliever lives in God's creation, he is not honoring his Creator as he ought.

In what might be called "our apologetical encounters," our calling as Christ's witnesses includes showing that only Christianity makes sense of anything. Yet...

How can it be shown that it is only the Christian worldview that can make sense of ethics?

How can it be shown that only God's existence can make sense of immaterial and universal laws of logic?

How can it be shown that only the Christian God can account for science being able to work?

As Christians there will be many opportunities for us to faithfully *preach*

the gospel and *teach* sound biblical doctrine. But are we ready to *defend* the hope that we have? God willing, in a series of articles we plan to effectively defend the hope that we have in us.

Thank the Lord that He has given us the one tool needed to *preach, teach, and defend* our faith...

**His Word!**



\* From the editor —

**Mr. James Arndt**, a graduate of Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, taught for some years in our Christian Day Schools. He and his wife Rachel

with their children Caleb and Audrey reside in Madison, Wisconsin, where they are members of our CLC congregation, Peace Thru Christ Lutheran Church and School, in Middleton, WI.

Perhaps our readers have noticed that within the wider "Christian" camp these days there appears to be an increasing interest in the subject of apologetics. For example, various seminars on "Christian Apologetics" have been advertised by other church denominations and have been and are being held across the land.

I think it's safe to say that most of us, including your editor, have rarely given much thought to this particular branch of theology. Yet we have thought much—and preached much—about how Jesus' disciples have the calling and privilege to witness to their Savior and His gospel, including defending the teachings of God's Word and their Christian faith based on that Word. Such "witness" and/or "defense" of the faith is a form of apologetics.

That said, religious encyclopedias, dictionaries, and the like have quite a bit more to say on the topic. Here are some excerpts from one such: "*Christian Apologetics is the scientific vindication of the truth and absoluteness of the Christian religion against unbelief...The term 'Apology' denotes an argument in defense of a doctrine that has been attacked...The philosophical approach vindicates such fundamentals of Christianity as the doctrine of God, of man's ethical obligation, and the like, on the basis of pure reason....*" (Lutheran Cyclopedia, p. 41f).

Indeed, it can be a challenging—and yes, spiritually dangerous—undertaking to defend the faith "on the basis of pure reason." However, a Bible-believing and thus Bible-based Christian apologet/defender of the faith recognizes the dangers and carefully steers clear of them.

As is clear in his accompanying first article, Mr. Arndt wants to lead us carefully through some of the finer points of a truly Christian approach toward apologetics. We thank him for his willingness to share these thought-provoking studies with us.

May God the Holy Spirit bless each of us with a more confident and thus an even more bold witness to and defense of our holy Christian faith.

## Civility and the January 8th and January 23rd Mass Murders

Pastor Paul Fleischer • Cheyenne, Wyoming

With regard to the January 8 Tucson tragedy we find it interesting that the nation—from the President on down—pretty much stopped in its tracks for a couple weeks to mark and decry the act of a deranged individual who killed six people and injured another fifteen or so, including an Arizona congresswoman.

Yes, we find it interesting—and distressing! What is beyond sad is that far fewer “stopped in their tracks” a couple weeks later to mark the on-going abortion holocaust happening in the nation.

January 23 is the anniversary of the infamous 1973 Supreme Court ruling which legitimized abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy. It is fitting that as concerned (Christian) citizens we take part in various endeavors for peaceful protest against a ruling that we find in conflict 1) with biblical principles, and 2) with the Constitution of the country which guarantees life (as well as liberty and the pursuit of happiness) to its citizenry—born and unborn.

At the Tucson memorial service the President called for a return to “civility” in the nation’s discourse, the implication being that political rhetoric along the lines of “targeting” or “having in the crosshairs” people of a different political persuasion lends itself to and/or is responsible for setting off the violence that can erupt from the mentally disturbed or other people with

evil agendas.

Yet the President’s words smack of hypocrisy when he himself—as well as the highest court of the land—holds to a position which condones murdering in-utero babies through all nine months of pregnancy. Talk about “civility”?!

While an appeal for an anti-inflammatory and/or civil mode of discourse is entirely good and proper, when that appeal implies that political correctness is the only way to go in discussing moral issues, we must object.

Our considered opinion is that the Constitution guarantees free expression of Bible-based principles of right and wrong by disciples of Jesus Christ living and expressing their faith-life.

### The Divine X-ray

We recognize and decry the sinful human heart as the root cause of incivility (and worse): “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies...” (Matthew 15:19).

Oh that people the world over would “read” aright this divinely given X-ray of the natural human heart and then find in the gospel of Jesus Christ the only solution to their sin-problem (repentance and a new birth).

No doubt the biased mainline media—and those who buy into its jaundiced views—will continue to label as “incendiary commentary” any outspoken defense of Bible-supported causes such as pro-life (vs. pro-abortion) and

pro-heterosexual (vs. pro-same-sex) marriage.

So be it. Being on the receiving end of such slander is unavoidable for those practicing their faith as God-fearing citizens within and before a watching world.

Regarding civil/uncivil discourse, surely those who are God’s “holy nation [within a nation!], His own special people” (1 Peter 2:9) will ever strive to use words “seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4:6), even as they go about “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). Yet they know that their saline, love-inspired words will rarely be well-received.



## THE DISCOURSES OF CHRIST



# “Worthless Worship”

Pastor Paul Krause • Markesan, Wisconsin

Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.” He answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God”— then he need not honor his father or mother. Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: *“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”* Matthew 15:1-9

These words of Jesus carry with them a stinging rebuke: “...In vain they worship Me...”

Worthless worship? What was it that these scribes and Pharisees were and/or weren’t doing?

The answer to that question is of interest to each of us as New Testament believers – for how we go about wor-

A confessing Christian’s comfort is found in the Beatitude, “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11f).

Fellow Christians, even as we uphold the dignity, sanctity, and value of human life “from womb to tomb”—and the divine institution of heterosexual marriage, as well—let us keep on being what we have been called and are privileged to be, namely, salt and light in a sin-darkened culture-of-death world.

shipping the Lord is something which holds a dear place in our hearts.

We treasure those moments which we spend—as did Martha’s sister Mary—at the feet of our Savior. As brothers and sisters in Christ we look forward to the opportunity to build each other up, as encouraged in the familiar words: “And let us consider one another in order

to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

So again, why did Jesus say that they worshiped Him “in vain”? And the answer is that they were “teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

Let’s consider a bit more carefully just what had happened. Over the years leading up to the time of Jesus, the Pharisees had gone astray in connection with worship. Their relationship with God had become something which centered around who they were – Abraham’s descendants – and what they thought they were doing in keeping the Law of Moses. They wouldn’t look at themselves in the mirror of the law to see their sin. For them the Law of Moses was simply something which they needed to keep and try to live by. And in their quest to keep those laws, they set up hundreds of other laws which in their minds helped to define just what they needed to do.

But now we hear from Jesus that their man-made laws, their “traditions,” became more important than God’s Word itself!

### Tradition—Good or Bad?

First we note how these scribes and Pharisees found fault with the disciples because “they transgressed the tradition of the elders.” It wasn’t cleanliness they were after either, but it was toeing the line according to a traditional elder-approved hand-washing ceremony!

Jesus also pointed out the way in which the Pharisees’ man-made traditions were, in fact, setting aside the Word of God. The Fourth Commandment makes

clear that we are to “honor our father and mother.” But according to the Pharisees’ “commandments of men,” a person could release himself from financial responsibility to his parents. All that had to be done was declare that any money which could have been used for the parents’ benefit was “a gift to God” – and as a result, it was untouchable for parental care. Thus they had made “the commandment of God of no effect by [their] tradition.”

There are many traditions also today in connection with worship of God. Our worship service liturgies, our special services – even the calendar we follow for the church year – is full of tradition.

Is the lesson to be learned here that all tradition is in and of itself bad and needing to be done away with? Not at all! But when we see what happened regarding the “commandments of men” and man-made traditions among the scribes and Pharisees, we do well to be on guard. All too easily customs and traditions, worthwhile as they may be, can take over the place that belongs to God’s Word itself.

Our prayer is that the Lord would ever keep us from “worthless worship” built upon the “commandments of men” – for our relationship with Him is not based on who we are or what we can do.

Rather, all true worship is alone because of, through, and for the sake of our Lord and Savior. Jesus said on another occasion, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23f).



*“Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name be the glory, because of Your love and faithfulness.”*

PSALM 115:1



Photo taken at Messiah’s 40th anniversary, in the year 2000, shows the pastors who served the congregation full-time: David Lau, Keith Olmanson, Arvid Gullerud, Lester Schierenbeck, Paul Tiefel, Mark Gullerud

## Fifty Years of God’s Grace

A “committee” of Messiah members contributed to this report. We thank them! – Ed.

**I**n December, 1960, God led members of Pinehurst and Ascension Lutheran congregations to apply the Lord’s directive (Romans 16:17-18) and leave that fellowship due to unionistic activities of the ELS synod. Under the leadership of Pastors Arvid Gullerud and Keith Olmanson a new congregation, Messiah Lutheran, was formed on December 18, 1960.

Messiah congregation has arrived at its 50th Anniversary of God’s grace, and during a four-week period (October/November 2010) the congregation was led by Pastors Paul Tiefel and Bruce Naumann to consider the blessings of His Word of Grace, His People of Grace, His Work of Grace, and A Future with His Grace.

Each of the four weekend services included a Bible Class with a theme related to the grace of God over the history of Messiah Lutheran Church.

The first Bible Class session, led by charter member Marlin Beekman, discussed the early years with special

emphasis on the guiding hand of God.

The second session was put together by Messiah Lutheran Christian Day School Principal Seth Schaller and Teacher Paul Tiefel III. Their presentations centered on Christian Education.

In the third session Dennis Oster reviewed Messiah's growth in both numbers and worship facilities.

Pastor Bruce Naumann completed these Bible Class presentations with assurance of God's guiding hand and grace for the future.

The congregation also received a video message from Pastor Arvid Gullerud (who in retirement now resides in Spokane, Washington).

The Bible Class presentations as well as Pastor Gullerud's message can be viewed by going to the Messiah Church website: [www.cclutheran.org/mlc/](http://www.cclutheran.org/mlc/), clicking on Ministries and Online Bible Classes.

Over fifty years of grace Messiah Lutheran Church has been blessed with nine full-time, part-time, assistant, and vacancy/interim shepherds. Arvid Gullerud (1960-1969), Keith Olmanson (1960-1962), Roland A. Gurgel (1969 and 1982 vacancies), L.W. Schierenbeck (1969-1982; assistant 1991-1995), David Lau (1982-1991), Paul Tiefel Jr. (1991-present), Mark Gullerud (1995-2009), Warren Fanning (2009 vacancy), and Bruce Naumann (2010-present).

## Messiah Lutheran School

In the fall of 1963 the Lord of the Church enabled Messiah to open its parochial school with an enrollment of twenty-four students. The first teacher,



Current Messiah pastors: Paul Tiefel, Jr., Bruce Naumann

Shirley Wendland, served until 1968; records show that Messiah congregation has been blessed with forty-seven full-time, part-time, and interim teachers in our Christian Day School. Current enrollment is 116 students with ten full/part-time teachers

sharing seven classrooms, library, and assembly hall.

The Lord has also blessed us with dedicated Sunday School teachers, organists, secretaries, assistants, and a host of other volunteers who contribute their talents through a wide spectrum of services.

## Building programs

The first sanctuary (1962) was enlarged and a classroom addition built in 1965; more classrooms were added in 1978. As enrollment grew, so did Messiah's facilities. The Fellowship Hall was added in 1989, and when our new sanctuary was erected in 2006, the former sanctuary was remodeled into classrooms and offices.

The first parsonage erected in 1970 has gone through remodeling and moving; a home for the second pastor was purchased in 1982—which became a teacherage after we built a second pastor's residence in 2010.

Through land purchase and site renovations, the parking lot and school playground areas have expanded regularly.

Our new and larger worship facility was erected in 2006 with enough seating capacity for our membership plus visitors at special services and concerts.

## Outreach Opportunities

The Lord of the Church has used

Messiah congregation in His outreach to others beyond our school and worship center at 2015 N. Hastings Way, Eau Claire.

For a number of years Messiah members near Fairchild, Wis., gathered around Word and sacraments provided by Messiah—until Gordon Radtke became their full-time pastor. Morning Star congregation of Fairchild is currently served by Pastor Richard Kanzenbach. We were also privileged to provide support for Peace With God congregation (Onalaska/LaCrosse area), currently served by Pastor David Lau.

During these fifty years, Messiah has been the church-home-away-from-home for students at Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary. We trust the Lord of the Church to bless our contribution to the spiritual welfare of hundreds of ILC students and their families.

For over thirty years the Lord of the Church has enabled Messiah congregation to conduct Sunday worship services at Dove Health Care, and during the past few years to do likewise at Oakwood Apartments and Dove Rehabilitation Facility.

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## Worth more than many Sparrows *Continued from Page 9*

beings? Such elevation is totally foreign to Holy Scripture and is an outgrowth of the humanistic evolutionary philosophy.

"To the divine honor and dignity of man belongs also this that the creation is subject unto him" (Stoekhardt). That man lost this honor and dignity when sin entered into the world does not alter the reality of the relationship of man and animals in God's creation. The fall of man into sin does not justify compounding the sin by degrading

Messiah congregation has sponsored the Traveling Vacation Bible School, Silent Sunday School, VBS (three sessions every summer) in Eau Claire, Bible Seminars, Bible camps, Bible Study at UWEC, an information booth at the annual Northern Wisconsin State Fair, Bible Study groups in neighboring communities, and exploratory services in Wausau.

Over fifty years the guiding hand of God is evidenced by significant membership growth at Messiah Lutheran Church. Messiah began with 89 baptized souls in 1960, and as of October, 2010, membership stands at 754.

During these fifty years of growth, 574 souls have been granted the grace of Christian baptism, 504 have affirmed the Christian faith at Confirmation, 232 weddings have been conducted, and the Lord has transferred 108 souls to heaven.

*Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to  
Your name be the glory because  
of Your love and faithfulness  
(Psalm 115:1).*



God's redeemed people to the level of dogs, cats, or beasts of the jungle.

Enjoy your pets and appreciate that they too are gifts of God who created them. But give no quarter to evolution and evolutionists who in dumbing you down to the level of your pet, thereby belittle Christ Jesus who "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), and in whose Person we see the glory of God and the smiling face of our Heavenly Father.



## Fact or Fiction? *continued from p. 4*

saying, "Little girl, arise." In the city of Nain He also raised to life a widow's only son. He also called His friend Lazarus forth from the grave after He had been dead for four days.

### Much, much more...

Is the bodily resurrection of Jesus fact or fiction?

### Consider the facts:

- We have the prophecy of the Old Testament Scriptures;
- We have the promise of Christ Himself;
- We have the fact that Jesus demonstrated His power over death.

### And there is more: there is...

- the declaration of angels (Luke 2:10-11);
- the empty tomb (John 20:1-10);
- the eyewitness testimony of many of the followers of Jesus who heard Him speak as none other could (Luke 24:13-35);
- and the confirmation of the disciples themselves who saw Him perform miracles that only He could (John 21:1-8).

The bodily resurrection of Jesus was confirmed to the disciples and it is confirmed for us.

**JESUS LIVES!**

**THIS SHALL BE MY CONFIDENCE!**

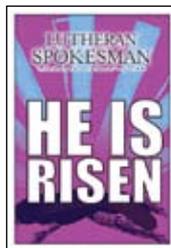


## Lutheran Spokesman

"...THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN." — JOHN 10:35

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Thank you, Nathan, for your contribution this month. Send your photos and art (in digital format) to [mschaser@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mschaser@sbcglobal.net) and we'll consider them for use in future editions of the *Lutheran Spokesman*.