

lutheran spokesman

November 1984
Vol. 27, No. 5
(ISSN 0024-7537)

Oh give thanks
unto the Lord.



CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

THANKSGIVING OR THANKSGETTING?

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35

For many people there is little real joy in life today. For many people things like literature, sports, politics have all become joyless. Children at a very young age are serious, worried, and very "adult." Yes, these days even we Christians seem to find it difficult to enjoy life and the gifts God has given us. Has this lack of joy found its way into our celebration of Thanksgiving? Has Thanksgiving Day become little more than a long weekend (at least it has not yet been moved to Monday) and a chance to watch some football games?

A strange paradox has developed in our nation's and our own thanksgiving. In days when things were tougher and people had little, thanksgiving was often more genuine and more fun. In our day, however, when people have so much, joy and thanksgiving are at a low ebb. Why

is there this perverse fact of human nature that the more "things" people have the less they seem to enjoy them and life? Jesus gives us the answer as he contrasts "giving" with "getting." Our thanks also will reflect this difference between thanks-giving and thanks-getting. What a difference this attitude makes!

Thanks-getting

This attitude emphasizes thanks strictly in terms of what *I* have and what *I* have accomplished. This attitude says: "it is more blessed to receive." The joy goes out of Thanksgiving Day when it becomes a time to merely count material blessings. Spiritually-speaking, this attitude of thanks-getting is seen in the hollow, self-centered thanks of the Pharisee: "God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as

Postmaster: Second Class postage paid at Lake Mills, IA 50450. Send address corrections (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford Street North, Roseville, MN 55113.

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

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Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Fleischer one month before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent Editor Fleischer.

Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. Individual subscriptions: \$5.00 for one year; \$9.00 for two years; \$13.00 for three years. Subscriptions sent in bulk to congregations: \$4.00.



this tax-collector.” (Lk. 18:11) The old adam, the “pharisee” also in us, uses thanksgiving as an opportunity to pat ourselves on the back because of what we have accomplished. Unless this “pharisee” in us is crucified, our thanksgiving can become so wrapped up with what *I* have done that any true thankfulness is killed.

This attitude of thanks-getting is especially seen in a cold enumeration of all the things we possess. How is it in our own country? Isn't the emphasis in our American Thanksgiving often on an overabundance of things, including our meal? If so, we sound like the man in Luke 12: “And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many things laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink and be merry.’” This attitude of thanks-getting looks forward to that time when we finally will have it made and then can enjoy life. But to those who adopt this attitude, God's judgment is to the point: “You fool.” The problem with thanks-getting is that he who lays up treasure for himself is not rich toward God.

There is a self-defeating trap built into the assumption that thanks is a matter of getting things. The more things we have, the less we tend to

give thanks. By any material standard, we in the United States should be the most thankful people the world has ever seen. But are we? Thankfulness which centers in what a man has or what he has done can only leave a bitter taste. Thanks-getting is a very short-sighted, unfulfilling way of life.

Thanks-giving

Thanks-giving, on the other hand, frees us from the trap that life consists in the abundance of one's possessions. Thanks-giving is an acknowledgement that everything we have is a gift from the Lord. Spiritually-speaking, we who like the tax-collector have nothing will rejoice in the mercy of a forgiving God. Only the penitent sinner can rejoice in the gift of God's forgiveness through Christ. As far as our material blessings are concerned, we should be like the Pilgrims who were so thankful for that meal because they had little or nothing.

It is sad that our Thanksgiving Day and our thanksgiving is often so shallow and so sterile. What may account for this? Do we have too much? Are we too concerned with getting that we forget about giving? Remember that it is more blessed to give. Only in giving do we receive. Like Solomon we need the wisdom to pray that God would not give us too much “lest I be full and deny You, and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’” (Prov. 30:9) The affluence of our day carries the danger of leading us to forget the Lord and all His benefits. Let us put less emphasis on getting

and more on giving—God’s giving to us. A reading of Psalm 103 will remind us of all God has given to us, beginning with the forgiveness of sins.

True thanksgiving is giving—giving of material blessings, giving of ourselves, giving of the spiritual blessings we have received. One way to restore joy to our thanks is to take seriously what Jesus says about the blessedness of giving. If we do that, we will discover the joy of giving to others. The paradox is that when people prosper, giving often becomes

more difficult. It is also true that the more we have the easier it becomes to ignore the needs of others. Wasn’t it so that when people had little, they tended to share it more readily?

When we remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive, then our natural tendency to thanksgiving will be turned into thanksgiving. Then our thanks will be joyful and full. *Thanks is giving!* “O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good.”

—John Schierenbeck

FOUR REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING IN THE CLC

A CRITICAL NEED: This issue of the *Spokesman* brings news of last spring’s four Immanuel Seminary graduates and their first calls into the ministry. It also reports on the retirement of one of our pastors. Such a “plus four-minus one” ratio of public servants of the Word is indeed cause for thanksgiving to the Lord from CLC Christians.

Yet it is well for us to note some sobering prospects for the future. Figures as they now stand (which we know can change for many reasons) are that there are five seminary students, while fourteen of our pastors will be reaching age 65 and possible retirement within the next five years. On the basis of those figures, the future ratio comes close to “minus three-plus one.”

In his report to last summer’s convention, President D. Fleischer called attention to what he called “a dearth of young men studying for the ministry.” By way of encouragement he added: “All of us will want to make this a matter of prayer. Encouragement from pastors and laypeople is called for. But the example of pastors and laypeople is also most important. Faithful pastors who exude a joy for their work, and laypeople who show respect to the pastoral office *will* make an impact . . .”

THEN HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, “THE HARVEST TRULY IS PLENTIFUL, BUT THE LABORERS ARE FEW. THEREFORE PRAY THE LORD OF THE HARVEST TO SEND OUT LABORERS INTO HIS HARVEST.” (MT. 9:37-38)

"O give thanks unto the Lord . . ."

Sioux Falls, South Dakota—June 3

June 3, 1984 will be remembered as one of the most important dates in the history of Berea Ev. Lutheran Church of Sioux Falls. It was on that date that this newest congregation in our CLC met to install their first resident pastor, Roland H. Gurgel. The members of Berea congregation have met for a number of years in this city of approximately 80,000 people which lies along the picturesque Big Sioux River. Pastors from Trinity congregation, Watertown, SD and St. John's congregation, Okabena, MN had combined to provide them with bi-weekly services. During the past year Berea made regular use of the new video services available through the CLC Board of Missions.



Pastor Roland H. Gurgel

It was in conjunction with the Board of Missions that Berea congregation requested that one of the 1984 graduates of our Immanuel Seminary be assigned to the Sioux Falls area. Roland H. Gurgel, son of ILC Seminary Professor Roland A. Gurgel, was chosen for the task.

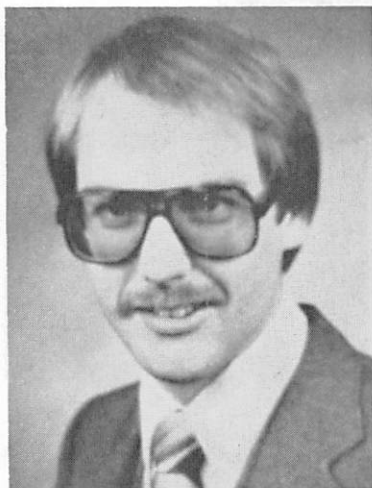
Prof. Gurgel installed his son at a 3:30 p.m. service, assisted by Pastor Paul Gurgel, another son of Prof. Gurgel and the new pastor of Trinity, Watertown. Members of Berea were joined by numerous visitors from area CLC congregations. Everyone present was encouraged on the basis of the words of Hosea chapter 1 to proclaim to the people of the Sioux Falls area, "Ye are the sons of the living God" through the blessed redemption of Jesus Christ.

At the present time Berea congregation numbers twenty-three souls. The congregation holds its services in the basement of the Valley National Bank on West 26th Street. Pastor Gurgel lives at 720 West 13th Street. Details about the work of Berea can be obtained by calling Pastor Gurgel at (605) 335-0926.

O blessed ministry Of reconciliation,
That shows the way to God And brings to us salvation!
By Thine evangel pure, Lord, Thou preserv'st Thy fold,
Dost call, enlighten, keep, Dost comfort and uphold.

"O give thanks unto the Lord . . ."

Mankato, Minnesota—June 10



Pastor Thomas Schuetze

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, has almost a thousand souls for the pastor to watch over and care for. To help with this task Pastor L. D. Redlin had the part-time assistance of Pastor Keith Olmanson from Faith Lutheran Church of Nicollet. This spring, however, Pastor Olmanson was moved to accept the call to serve Faith Lutheran Church of New Ulm in addition to his call in Nicollet.

This left Immanuel of Mankato without an assistant to Pastor Redlin. The congregation resolved in the fear of the Lord to extend a call for another full-time pastor. The

Lord recognized the need and filled the position in the person of Thomas R. Schuetze, a 1984 graduate of Immanuel Lutheran Seminary.

Thomas' father is the late Reverend Waldemar Schuetze who had served Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac, WI and Holy Truth Lutheran Church in Ketchikan, AK. Rev. Schuetze died in March of 1979 after serving more than 40 years in the ministry. Thomas' mother is Mrs. Harold (Erma) Riess of New Ulm. One of seven children, Thomas has two brothers who are also in the ministry: Pastor Daniel Fleischer, Fridley, MN and Pastor Paul Fleischer, Jamestown, ND.

Pastor Thomas Schuetze was ordained and installed at Immanuel by Pastor Redlin on June 10 of this year. Since that time, in addition to his pastoral work Pastor Schuetze has consented to help out in the high school department of Immanuel Lutheran School in Mankato. He teaches an Old Testament Introduction course to freshmen and sophomores, a job he finds both challenging and rewarding.

Immanuel of Mankato is indeed blessed and thankful to the Lord of harvest for sending Pastor Schuetze to labor among them at a time when "the harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

The servants Thou hast called
And to Thy Church art giving
Preserve in doctrine pure
And holiness of living.

Thy Spirit fill their hearts,
Endue their tongues with power;
What they should boldly speak,
Oh, give them in that hour!

—*The Lutheran Hymnal* 485:3 & 5

"O give thanks unto the Lord . . ."

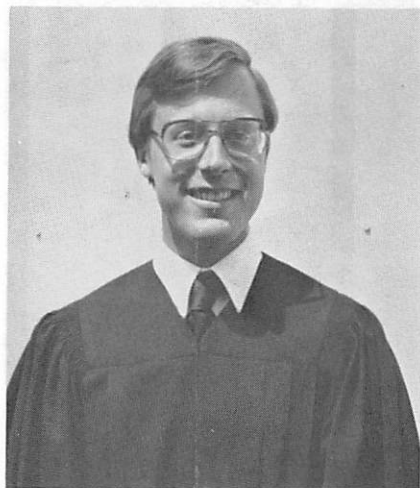
Cheyenne, Wyoming—June 17

The summer of 1984 has seen changes at Redeemer Ev. Lutheran Church in Cheyenne. When Redeemer's former pastor and teacher were led by the Spirit to accept calls to other parishes, the congregation in turn was blessed by the arrival first of a new pastor, Michael Eichstadt, and then of a new teacher, Kathleen Gilbertson.

Michael, a native of Austin, MN and a lifetime member of St. Paul's congregation there, was graduated from Immanuel Seminary in Eau Claire in May of this year. He is the son of Melvin and Irene Eichstadt.

Michael was ordained and installed as pastor of Redeemer by Pastor Robert Reim of Loveland, CO. A special service was held during the afternoon of June 17th. Pastor Helmuth Rutz, now retired from the active ministry and a member of Redeemer congregation, assisted with the service. Pastor Reim addressed the assembled congregation and its new pastor on the basis of Isaiah 6:1-8, assuring them that they could go forward with confidence to proclaim the gospel of salvation for: "It is God Himself Who Makes Spokesmen of Us!" The new pastor and visitors from sister congregations were treated to a reception following the service.

The city of Cheyenne, where Redeemer congregation is located, is the capital and largest city in Wyoming. For many years the congregation has operated a Christian Day School. Pastor Eichstadt will, therefore, not only be able to be the Lord's "spokesman" within this large and growing community, but will also be able to be His "spokesman" within the classroom, nurturing both the minds and the hearts of the congregation's children.



Pastor Michael Eichstadt

Dear Lord to Thy true servants give	When all their labor seems in vain,
The grace to Thee alone to live.	Revive their sinking hopes again;
Once bound by sin, but saved by	And when success crowns what they
Thee,	do,
They go to set the pris'ners free,	Oh, keep them humble, Lord, and
The Gospel message to proclaim	true
That men may call upon Thy name.	Until before Thy judgment seat
	They lay their trophies at Thy feet.

—*The Lutheran Hymnal* 482:1 & 3

"O give thanks unto the Lord . . ."

Lamar, Colorado—July 15



Pastor & Mrs. David Reim

Shortly after our church body met in convention and celebrated twenty-five years of fellowship, Mt. Olive congregation of Lamar met their new pastor, David Reim, and celebrated the beginning of what everyone present hoped will be many years of Christian fellowship.

David, a 1984 graduate of our Immanuel Seminary, was installed as pastor of Mt. Olive on July 15th at a 4:00 p.m. service. Pastor Robert Reim, David's uncle, performed the rite of installation, while Pastor Norbert Reim, David's father from Phoenix, AZ addressed both his son and the congregation on the basis of

Rev. 3:7-13. He urged them to enter "the open door set before them" with the precious gospel of forgiveness and life in Christ.

The new pastor brought with him his new bride, Julie Redlin Reim. The couple had exchanged vows in June of this year in a ceremony performed at Immanuel Church of Mankato, MN. Julie, whose father serves as pastor of Immanuel, had also served Immanuel as a teacher in their Christian Day School.

Mt. Olive congregation has a membership of about 100 souls. Lamar, a town of about 7,000 in southeastern Colorado, will not be the only field for David's ministry. The congregation also serves isolated members in Oklahoma, Arizona, the Texas panhandle, and a nucleus of people in Colorado Springs.

"AND (CHRIST) HIMSELF GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES, SOME PROPHETS, SOME EVANGELISTS, AND SOME PASTORS AND TEACHERS, FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, TILL WE ALL COME TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, TO A PERFECT MAN, TO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST." (EPH. 4:11-13)

Carl Thurow Retirement

July 29, 1984 was a special day at St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Austin, MN. It was the day of Pastor Carl Thurow's farewell as pastor of St. Paul's. It was also the day of his retirement from the public ministry. As far as he and his wife Dorothea knew, the service would be followed by the congregation joining in a pot-luck noon meal.

That was not exactly what followed. Unknown to the Thurows, invitations had been sent to all the surrounding sister congregations and to members of the Thurow family. Many joined the congregation members to wish the Thurows well and to enjoy the program that was presented. CLC President Daniel Fleischer delivered a devotion. Several skits were presented and a history of Pastor Thurow's ministry was read. The Thurows received as a memento a quilt to which each family of the congregation contributed a personalized block.

Pastor Thurow served almost 42 years in the public ministry. After completing his seminary training at the Thiensville Seminary in Wisconsin, he had to wait for over a year before he received his first call. He served at De Pere, WI for 13 years during which a Lutheran Day School was begun. From De Pere he was called to Two Rivers, WI where he served for three and one-half years during which time a church was built.

Lamar, CO was Pastor Thurow's next place of service. It was here that



Pastor & Mrs. Carl Thurow

he became a member of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. In 1965 he accepted a call to Grace Lutheran Church of Fridley, MN where he remained until 1970 when he was called to Austin, MN.

From 1970 to 1978 Pastor Thurow served as a member of the CLC Board of Missions. During this time he accompanied Pastor Norbert Reim on a trip to Nigeria. Pastor Thurow also wrote a column in the *Lutheran Spokesman* concerned with recordings of religious music.

Pastor and Mrs. Thurow were blessed with five children. They are: Mrs. James Pelzl (Carla), Eau Claire, WI; Mrs. Paul Schaller (Nona), Clarkston, WA; Theodore, Jamestown, ND; Martin, St. Paul, MN; and Paula, Eau Claire.

The Thurows now live at 3545 Rudolph Road, Eau Claire. When asked for a thought which he had drawn from his ministry, Pastor Thurow said that it is very clear that the Lord controls all things in a pastor's ministry. It is the Holy Spirit who does the real work.

—Keith Olmanson
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(Last month we editorialized on the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Our comments this month show that this fundamental doctrine is one that dare not be taken for granted by us; that it is now as much as ever under attack; that the need for upholding this doctrine is as timely and urgent as ever.)

WHY A NEW LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SIOUX FALLS?

Berea Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD is our newest CLC congregation. It was accepted into membership at this past summer's convention. Not long after this Berea became the subject of an article in the Sioux Falls daily newspaper. It seems there was much curiosity on the part of a certain reporter as to just what this new church in Sioux Falls stood for. In short, there was interest in finding out "Why Another Lutheran Church?"

First of all this reporter had a two-hour interview with the new congregation's pastor. Next he attended one of Berea's worship services as an observer. After that service he interviewed at least two of its members, seeking to determine the reasons behind the establishment of this "church in the bank" (which is where our mission congregation currently conducts its services). In the subsequent newspaper article which appeared, the conclusion arrived at was that there is a difference among Lutheran churches as to how the Bible is to be approached.

Berea congregation's representatives had called attention to their position that the Bible is the divinely-inspired and inerrant Word of God. The reporter, who had also interviewed an American Lutheran Church (ALC) pastor in the city, reported: "Many Lutheran churches share that view (of inerrancy) . . ." The article about Berea congregation contained the following quotation of the ALC pastor: "It (the Bible) is all true. It's all God's Word. We believe in its authority."

Identical Words, Different Meanings

We have here a good example of how easily words can take, and have taken, a meaning far different from their one-time generally-accepted sense. Though using the identical words, Bible conservatives and Bible liberals can be polls apart as to the meaning of those words. Conservatives say the Bible is God's Word, and often so do also the liberals. Conservatives say they believe in the inspiration of the Bible, and so do the liberals. Conservatives say they believe in scriptural inerrancy, and so do the liberals. Conservatives say the Bible is authoritative, and so do the liberals. On the surface there would seem to be no reason for the CLC to begin another Lutheran Church in a city which no doubt already has many of them.

But more was said by the newspaper reporter, and more needs to be said by us. After reporting that many Lutheran churches "share the view of

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inerrancy,” the reporter added a tell-tale explanation: “. . . but disagreement arises in deciding how literally to interpret the Bible.” As an illustration of the difference in interpretation which prevails among Lutheran churches, the reporter adds (under prompting from the ALC pastor?): “The importance of Jonah might only be a symbolic parable, and the importance of Genesis 1 is that God created the earth, not how it was done.”

These were the only two examples given in the Sioux Falls paper, but they are indeed sufficient to spell out the differences between Lutherans in their respective approaches toward the Bible. On our part, we find no reason to take (to “interpret”) the story of Jonah or the Genesis account of creation in any other way than literal and actual historical occurrences. To be sure, there is figurative language in the Bible. There are parables in the Bible and there is symbolism there. But great care must be taken when determining what is figurative and what is not. The Bible certainly needs interpreting, but great care must be taken that such interpretation is not according to one’s “private” ideas (See II Peter 1:19-21).

Scripture Interprets Scripture

The classic rule for Bible interpretation has always been that “the Scripture interprets Scripture.” Another rule is that the words of the Bible should be taken in their literal sense unless the Scripture itself (the Holy Spirit!) makes clear that it is to be interpreted otherwise: “No violence should be done the words of God, neither by a man nor by an angel; but as far as possible we should retain them in their simplest meaning and take them in their grammatical and literal sense, unless an obvious circumstance plainly forbids it, lest we give our adversaries occasion to make a mockery of all Scripture.” (Luther)

The ALC (soon to be part of the “New Lutheran Church”) has long permitted if not encouraged the view that the Genesis account of creation is a poetic myth which only teaches that God was involved to a greater or lesser extent in the origin of this world. Liberal Lutherans likewise “demythologize” the book of Jonah, taking it as a parable although there is no evidence in the book itself or in the entire Bible that it should be so regarded.

None other than the Lord Jesus makes clear that He accepted the literal and *non-figurative* understanding (“interpretation”) of the Jonah and Creation accounts. Indeed, the Lord refers to both of these in support of Christian teaching, leaving no hint that those accounts are to be taken in any way other than literal (See Mt. 12:38ff, 19:4ff). In other words, to take the story of Jonah or the account of Genesis 1 as figurative flies into the face of

the teaching of Jesus Himself.

Caution is called for!

We live in a time when words (also “god-words”—those used in the church and its theology) need to be carefully defined in order to determine just what is being said. Many twist and turn words to mean something different from what we have always understood them to mean. When this is done in the language of the church it leads to false teachings which “deceive the hearts of the simple.” (Rom. 16:18) Let there be no mistake about it that Bible conservatives and Bible liberals in general, and the CLC and the ALC in particular, do not “share the view of inerrancy” but are rather polls apart. Let there be no mistake about it that the CLC does not “speak the same thing” as the liberal Lutherans, and therefore we cannot share religious fellowship with them. (See I Cor. 1:10)

Our conclusion (and we hope also the conclusion of the Sioux Falls newspaper reporter) is that there is not only room for, but a valid need for “the church in the bank” in the southeastern South Dakota area of Sioux Falls. And we rejoice with the members of Berea congregation that they now have a church—and a pastor—who share their convictions on an inerrant Bible. Furthermore, we pray that the Lord will graciously preserve unto them, and unto all our CLC congregations, that “view of inerrancy” which assures the proclamation of the only-saving Gospel as it is found in the pure and unadulterated Word of our Savior-God!

—Paul Fleischer

THE MINISTRY OF THE KEYS

THIS, THE FIFTH CHIEF PART IN OUR CATECHISM, ALSO CALLED THE OFFICE OF THE KEYS, OFTEN DOES NOT RECEIVE THE ATTENTION IT DESERVES AND IS PERHAPS THE LEAST UNDERSTOOD BY LUTHERAN CHRISTIANS. THIS LACK OF UNDERSTANDING MAY DEPRIVE BELIEVERS OF THE WONDERFUL COMFORT IT OFFERS AND MAY ALSO LEAVE THEM UNAWARE OF THE EARNEST WARNING CONTAINED IN IT. WHEN NOT UNDERSTOOD CORRECTLY, IT MAY EVEN SEEM TO SOME TO BE A REMNANT OF CATHOLICISM THAT HAS CREPT BACK INTO THE LUTHERAN CHURCH. WE KNOW THAT THE POPE OF ROME CLAIMS THAT THE KEYS TO HEAVEN AND TO HELL HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY CHRIST TO HIM ALONE, AND THAT HE, IN TURN, HAS ENTRUSTED THEM TO THE PRIESTS OF HIS CHURCH. SUCH IS BY NO MEANS THE CASE, AS WE SHALL SEE FROM SCRIPTURE.

The Names

“Ministry” here is used in the sense of power or authority to administer or to employ certain spiritual means entrusted by Jesus to His Church. The word “office” is employed in the same sense of power or authority entrusted by a higher one to underlings, even as we, for example, choose certain persons to carry out designated functions for us in our government.

“Keys” here is used in a figurative sense and has reference to something spiritual. As keys are used to open and close doors in buildings here on earth, so the keys spoken of here are the means whereby the door to heaven and eternal life is opened or closed to certain individuals as the Lord Himself has specified.

What Are These Keys?

The Keys are the means through which the forgiveness of sins is dispensed to, or withheld from, sinners. This must be done most carefully, according to the instructions which our Savior has given.

There is, first of all, the authority to preach the Gospel. This Gospel is the Good News that God, for the sake of Jesus’ sinless life and innocent suffering and death as the substitute for all men, has out of pure grace acquitted sinners and accounted them righteous. The Gospel proclaims to all who believe this wonderful news that they have forgiveness of sin, and that thus the door of heaven is open to them.

At the same time, however, those who in impenitence and unbelief

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refuse to believe this Good News are to be told that, though forgiveness is there also for them, they are rejecting and depriving themselves of it. Through their unbelief they are guilty of closing the door of heaven to themselves.

The Ministry of the Keys also includes the authority to administer the Sacraments. Those who desire the seal of God’s forgiveness for themselves and for their children in Holy Baptism are to be baptized, and thus the door of heaven is opened to them. Such, however, who in impenitence and unbelief despise and reject this Sacrament, are to be informed that heaven’s door is closed to them.

The same applies to Holy Communion. To such who repent of their sins and believe the Gospel God’s forgiveness is to be sealed with the Savior’s own body and blood, thereby opening the door of heaven to them. On the other hand, from such who are impenitent and unbelieving this seal of God’s forgiveness is to be withheld as a declaration to them that the door of heaven remains closed to them so long as they do not repent.

The Author of This Power

The author of this power is none other than our Savior Himself. At His first appearance after His resurrection, His first words to His chosen apostles, who through the Holy Spirit's work believed in Him as the God-sent Savior from sin, were: "Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you . . . whose soever sins ye remit (forgive), they are remitted (forgiven) unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain (withholding forgiveness), they are retained (forgiveness is withheld)." (Jn. 20:21, 23)

When Jesus had secured forgiveness of sins and righteousness for all sinners, He commissioned all those who believed in Him as their Savior: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mk. 16:15f)

Shortly before His ascension into heaven the Savior gave the following great command to those same believing disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Mt. 28:19) In connection with the Holy Supper instituted by Him, the Lord gave them these instructions: "This do in remembrance of me." (Lk. 22:19) The author, therefore, of this awesome power to forgive and retain sins in His name is none other than God's own Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Who Is To Administer These Keys?

From what has been said it is evi-

dent that this special power has been given by Jesus only to His Church, all His believers, and to no earthly government or agency. Therefore, government-sponsored military chaplaincies and public school-sponsored prayer are not according to His will. On the other hand, each of us believers, wherever and whenever we have the opportunity, is authorized to tell our fellowman of the forgiveness of sins which Jesus has secured. Each believer is authorized to invite others to believe, to accept God's gracious gift, and to enter the open heaven. If a person refuses to acknowledge his sins and need of God's forgiveness, it is our duty to warn him that with his impenitence he is closing heaven's door to himself. Please note carefully that *this is the private activity of every believer.* (See I Peter 2:9)

However, when a number of believers united in the faith are found in one locality, it is the will of God that they make provision for the *public* preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. This we learn from the practice of the divinely-inspired apostles. When they had gathered a number of believers in a certain place, they instructed them to choose a man with the proper qualifications for this work of publicly preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. Thus the Ministry of the Keys, the forgiving and retaining of sins, was carried on in the name of Jesus and in the name and for the benefit of the whole group. *These congregations called pastors, to*

whom were entrusted the public administration of the Keys. (As individuals they still retained for themselves the private use of the Keys where that was called for.)

How These Keys Are To Be Used

Though the Lord Jesus has secured forgiveness for all sins and God in His heart has forgiven every sinner his sins, this forgiveness is to be imparted only to the penitent. Penitent sinners are those who admit their sins, are sorry they have offended God, and long for His forgiveness. Such will accept God's gracious gift, rejoicing and finding their comfort in it.

There are also impenitent sinners. Impenitent sinners are those who will

not admit their sins, show no sorrow over them, and want to continue in them. Of such it must be stated that by their impenitence they are forfeiting God's forgiveness. It can only be hoped that, by the Spirit of God working through the Word, they will eventually repent of their sins, believe in Jesus, and have the sincere desire to amend their wicked ways.

May we always hold in holy reverence this awesome heavenly gift of the Ministry of the Keys which Jesus has entrusted to His Church! More needs to be said on this matter which we hope to do in a future article which will discuss "Confession and Absolution."

—H. C. Duehlmeier

HEY, WHAT'S HAPPENING?

- * Each month three million students in high school are victims of in-school crimes.
- * About a quarter of a million students suffered physical attacks each month.
- * Each month 6,000 teachers were robbed and 125,000 were threatened with physical abuse.

These items from the National Institute of Education are already six years old. It's the last time anyone did a survey of the behavioral problems in the nation's public schools. We've also heard of school administrators being forced to lock their buildings to keep people who didn't belong there out. They put in place elaborate security practices comparable to those used in top-secret installations—pictured ID's, electronic metal detectors, and high-visibility security guards.

The Last 40 Years

There have been quite a few changes over the last forty years. In November of 1982 Gabler's Educational Research Newsletter compared the concerns of teachers in the years 1940 and 1982. Topping the list of problems in schools in 1940 was talking. This was followed in order by chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, getting out of line, wearing improper clothing, not putting paper in wastebaskets. Oh, to have such problems!

In 1982 the list of problems was headed by rape; then came robbery, assault, burglary, arson, bombings, murder, suicide, absenteeism, vandalism, extortion, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, gang warfare, pregnancies, abortions, and venereal disease.

No question about it: problems have become serious. It's not quite right that in some violence-prone schools the average attendance is only 53 percent. President Reagan has noted these difficulties and suggested that schools "need tougher standards, more homework, . . . discipline, and parents back in charge." He wants to "restore order to . . . classroom(s)."

As the types of problems have changed over the last forty years, so has the effectiveness of the instruction. More and more parents and educators are worried about poor educational performance and declining scores on standardized tests.

A Predictable Crop

As people sow, they reap (Gal. 6:7). I believe we are seeing the harvest of a crop sowed in the early part of this century. The values of biblical Christianity were more and more replaced by the social structures of the theory of evolution. Instead of people honoring God, they began to exalt human beings. Instead of describing behavior according to God's standards, they began to talk about doing what they felt was right for the situation ("doing your own thing"). There's been too much inattention to God

and His Word and too much attention paid to these statements of secular humanism and situation ethics.

Solutions

Here's what a humanist suggests as the solution to our public school nightmare: "I am convinced that the battle for humankind must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as proselytizers of a new faith . . . to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level—preschool day care or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between . . . Christianity and the new faith of humanism. (1983 statement of one John Dunphy, University of Illinois, quoted in *The Humanist*.)

That's quite an interesting solution. He merely advocates more and more of what has produced the problem in the first place! Humanism is a teaching and attitude which exalts the ideas and accomplishments of human beings, intentionally avoiding and discrediting God and His ideas and accomplishments.

What follows is God's description of His educational method and objective: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them

when you sit in your house, when you
walk by the way, when you lie down,
and when you rise up.” (Deut. 6:4-7,

NKJV)

Tell it God’s way all the time.

—M. Sydow

(Source material is from *Presidential Biblical Scoreboard*, 1984 Quadrennial Issue)

“*The Race of Our Lives*”

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

With all the interest and excitement over the Olympics, the Apostle Paul would remind us of a very striking parallel. We have been called upon to compete in God’s spiritual Olympics. We are running the race of our lives—in fact, the race for our lives.

It would be futile for an athlete to enter a race without knowing or caring why he was there. Imagine a runner in the Olympic dashes heading elsewhere than the finish line or casually strolling instead of running full speed.

Tragically, that is precisely what is happening to many who neither know nor care they are running the race of their lives. They are in a spiritual daze. They have ignored their soul-needs, the Scriptures, their Savior, and even their own consciences. Instead of their being concerned about these all-important matters, other “races” for earthly crowns have taken priority. Wealth, security, pleasure, power, fame, and prestige (as fickle and fleeting as

these are) become obsessions in their lives. Yet to what avail when all stand before the throne of the Heavenly Judge? “For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul?” (Mk. 8:36) These words of our Lord are no overstatement!

A Long Hard Race

As we watched the Olympic athletes, we marvelled at their speed, strength, agility, skill, and endurance. What was not so immediately obvious were the weeks, months, and years of rigorous training, self-denial, and discipline necessary to condition and prepare for this moment.

The race of our lives is even more strenuous and demanding. Never is it pictured as a leisurely walk or stroll. It is a race! It requires the highest kind of spiritual training, discipline, and motivation supplied only by the Holy Spirit. There is no room for laziness, half-heartedness, pampering of oneself, or fatigue.

Only those with life-long endurance in this spiritual marathon will finish. Only those whose faith can survive the trials and temptations so much a part of this race will gain the victory.

Are you satisfied with the race you have been running? Admittedly, there has been lagging when the commitment wasn't there, when our spiritual inertia was slowed by our own weaknesses and failings. We have stumbled, and even fallen flat on our faces. We have struggled under the weight of sin-burdens and crosses. At times we have felt we cannot continue, having reached our spiritual fatigue point.

Yet at just such times, Someone was there to help us, to pick us up with His forgiving love, to support us with His almighty presence, and to strengthen us with His precious promises. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has gained the eternal victory—for Himself and for all who trust in Him. He is the key to victory in the race of our lives, as Scripture reminds us: "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:1-2)

The Victory Prize

Run for your life—eternal life! This crown of glory in heaven meant everything to the Apostle Paul. He knew it would never tarnish, fade, or lose its value. It kept him going. It made life worth living and death worth dying. And as his earthly race neared its end, his heart was filled with joy, confidence, and hope. He said: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

As spiritual Olympians called upon to carry the torch of faith to eternal victory, may we look alone to Jesus, running with Spirit-given strength and endurance the race that is set before us—the race of our lives!

Run the straight race thro' God's good grace;
Lift up thine eyes and seek His face.
Life with its way before us lies;
Christ is the Path and Christ the Prize
(TLH, #447:2)

—David Schierenbeck

Editor's note: This is Pastor Schierenbeck's condensation of his closing devotion delivered to CLC young people at the "Roughrider Youth Camp" near Jamestown, ND, July, 1984.

Daily Devotions

FOR DECEMBER 1984

"COME, YOUR HEARTS AND VOICES RAISING"

Let us raise our voices in songs of expectation and gladness as we journey through Advent on our way to Bethlehem's manger. Even if you don't usually make the singing of hymns a part of your de-



votions, try doing it this month. Whether a Christian considers himself a good singer or not, at Christmas he sings. Each of us has favorite songs and carols—many of which we know by heart and love to sing over and over. There seems to be no end of beautiful Christmas hymns which proclaim the true glory of this joyous season. This is reflected in the fact that in the suggestions below there are few repeats. However, you will want to sing your favorites on many a day.

SCRIPTURE READING	CHRISTMAS HYMN	CLOSING PRAYER
	"Since first the world was made, so many hearts have watched and prayed. The Patriarchs' and Prophets' throng for Him have hoped and waited' long."	
December 1	Genesis 3:9-15	73:5
2	Genesis 22:15-18	65:6
3	Genesis 49:10	106:7
4	Numbers 24:17	55:4
5	II Samuel 7:12-17	82:3
6	Isaiah 7:14	647:4
7	Isaiah 9:1-7	645:5
8	Isaiah 11:1-10	82:3
9	Isaiah 61:1-3	65:6
10	Jeremiah 23:5-6	55:2
11	Ezekiel 34:20-24	89:5
12	Haggai 2:7	94:4
13	Micah 5:2	69:6
14	Malachi 4:1-6	88:4
	"Repent, the kingdom draweth nigh, The herald of the Lord doth cry."	
December 15	Isaiah 40:1-8	75:4
16	Luke 1:5-25	106:7
17	Luke 1:57-66	94:4
18	Luke 1:67-79	75:4
19	John 1:6-8, 15-18	88:4
20	Psalms 24	55:4
	"Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free; From our fears and sins release us, Let us find our rest in Thee."	
December 21	Luke 1:26-38	85:13
22	Luke 1:39-56	55:2
23	Matthew 1:18-25	86:5-6
24	Luke 2:1-14	85:13
25	Luke 2:15-20	89:5
26	John 1:1-5, 14	645:5
27	Psalms 98	90:8
28	Galatians 4:1-7	647:4
29	Philippians 2:6-7 2 Corinthians 8:9	69:6
30	Romans 5:1-11	90:8
31	Titus 2:11-14	96:4

—W. V. Schaller

Call For Nominations

The Board of Missions is seeking nominations from CLC members for the position of missionary to India. The individual should be theologically-trained, mission-minded, with cultural and language adaptability, and no special health problems. Nominations should be in the hands of the Board of Missions chairman by November 30, 1984:

Pastor David Schierenbeck
9308 Rich Valley Blvd.
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55075

Installation

President Daniel Fleischer approved the installation of Marie Olmanson as a teacher in Faith Lutheran School, Markesan, WI on August 19, 1984.

—Mike Sydow, Pastor

Changes of Address

Pastor Thomas Schuetze
110 Country Manor
Eagle Lake, MN 56024
Phone: (507) 257-3432

Timothy Cox
110 Country Manor
Eagle Lake, MN 56024
Phone: (507) 257-3432

New Preaching Station

Worship services are now being held in the greater Orlando, FL area at 9:00 a.m. Sundays. The facility presently in use is the Garden Chapel at the intersection of the East-West Expressway and Hwy. 435. The address is 430 N. Kirkman. (For tourists that's 15 minutes north of Disney World.) For directions and details call (813) 293-5554.

—John Reim

Winter Preaching Station

Members of CLC congregations who are spending the winter months in South Texas are invited to worship at divine services held at Mission, Texas. For further information regarding service time please contact the Rev. Paul Larsen of Corpus Christi, TX, or call (512) 581-1503 at Mission, TX.

—Paul F. Larsen

M. Taylor
Box 76
Pierce, ID 83546

Notice

Pastor Eugene Rutz has left the fellowship of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. He is "no longer in agreement with the CLC." His disagreement relates to the question of how to help CLC members disengage themselves from membership in the AAL.

—Daniel Fleischer, President

A Book of Reprints

Articles which have been published in the *Lutheran Spokesman* and the *Journal of Theology* over the by-line of Martin Galstad are now available in book form. First written when the author was a contributing editor of the publications, these materials have been gathered by him in a soft cover book of 172 pages entitled *Findings*, with subtitle "Explorations in Christian Life and Learning." They may be ordered at \$8.00 per copy, postpaid, from: The CLC Bookhouse, Immanuel Lutheran College, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI. Zip 54701.

Editor's Note: The data and story regarding Pastor Thomas Schuetze was compiled by Daniel Ohlmann. Pastor Paul D. Nolting compiled the stories on the other three new pastors. We thank the writers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The cover design this month is by Greg Schroeder, a member of Immanuel congregation, Winter Haven, FL.