

Lutheran Spokesman



THE WORD OF THE LORD STANDS FOREVER

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CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

“THE CHURCH PARTURIENT”

We'll have to admit right here at the start that Martin Luther never even heard of the term. He would have talked, as we do now, of “the Church Militant” and “the Church Triumphant.” But “the Church Part— —”—what?

Biblical Concept

“The Church Parturient.” It may well be impossible to coin a new phrase, but it is not impossible to take an idea of very long standing and look at it afresh. After all, “the Church Parturient” is a sound biblical concept. Consult your dictionary for the meaning if you wish—but let's consult our Bibles first.

In the Scriptures we find a vast amount of family imagery, when it speaks of the nature and work of God and His Church. Here God is seen as Husband, as Bridegroom, as Father. And His Church is seen as Wife and Bride and Mother. Here you also read of a love between them, of a betrothal,

a marriage, obedience, submission, labour, travail, and births. Then offspring!—children, sons and daughters of the living God, brethren together believing in Christ as members of God's family.

The term “the Church Parturient” would focus our view on the reproductive activity of this family of God, and would give us a fresh view of our life, mission, and growth in the world.

Lutheran Concept

All that is biblical is truly Lutheran, even if Martin Luther did not happen to make some comment on it. However, it so happens that Luther did have the idea of “the Church Parturient” in mind when he wrote his comments on Galatians 4:26. Read this:

“Sarah, or Jerusalem, is our free mother, the Church, the bride of Christ, of whom all of us are born. This mother gives birth to children

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without ceasing, to the end of the world, by exercising the office of the Word, that is, by teaching and spreading the Gospel; for thus she bears children... The Church should do nothing but preach and teach the Gospel properly and purely and thus give birth to children. Thus all of us are one to another fathers and children; I, having been begotten by others through the Gospel, do not beget others, which in turn shall beget others hereafter, and so this begetting shall continue to the end of the world...The office of the free woman, therefore, is to bear children for God, her Husband, without ceasing: that is to say, such children as know that they are justified by faith and not by the Law."

A Mother

There you have it. People who trust in Christ as their Savior are seen collectively as a Woman. This woman bears children. She knows how to do it. She desires to do it. She is able to do it. And she does it.

There is the mission of "the Church Parturient," namely, to produce and reproduce, again and again and again, until the end of time. "Go ye therefore

and teach all nations, baptizing them..." is the command given her to do just that. And so she keeps on giving birth, by water and the Spirit, to such as may thereafter be called the sons and daughters of God. "The Church Parturient" is the Mother of these sons and daughters.

We believe in her. She is the "holy Christian Church" we confess in the Apostles' Creed. We believe in her because "we are assured by the Scriptures that the Holy Ghost at all times gathers and preserves a congregation of believers." We believe that this Woman can, and therefore must, continuously beget children for God. We also believe that our Lutheran Church, and each of our congregations, shares in the reproductive mission of this Woman, for by faith in Jesus Christ we belong to her, and all that she stands for.

You and I are members of "the Church Parturient."

Barren Or Bearing?

Looking back over the history of the Christian Church, you will find that at times her ability to reproduce seemed to diminish, even to disappear. This was true throughout much of the Old Testament; and as we know, the same has often been the case in New Testament times, even now.

The Church's barrenness, whenever it occurs, is a reminder that she must ever remain close to her Man, her Husband and Maker, and close to His Word. Her barren times are those when some, while professing to be a part of her, desert God and play the faithless wife, the adulteress, harlot, and whore, running after other gods,

spawning illegitimate and faithless children. See how the prophets of old pinpoint the problem!

And see how at least one prophet solves it! Isaiah the prophet comes out with a beautiful prediction of the Church's productivity in chapter fifty-four: "*Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord...For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles...Fear not; thou shalt not...remember the reproach of thy widowhood any longer. For thy Maker is thine Husband...For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies*

will I gather thee...And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord."

All this follows on Isaiah's fifty-third chapter, so as to remind us that our growth is inseparably linked with the message of the cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God's Church believes the Gospel. She trusts it, she declares it, she thrives by it, she bears children by it.

Pregnant!

So even Isaiah knew about "the Church Parturient." And if this new phrase hasn't caught on by this time, then perhaps we ought to come right out with it and say that what we've really been talking about is "the Church PREGNANT!"

I'm sure you'll bear with me.

—Pastor Warren Fanning



STRENGTHENING THE STAKES

As a youngster growing up in Milwaukee, I vividly recall my parents taking us downtown for the annual Circus Parade. There were the marching bands and the clowns, the giant draft horses and the famous "Forty-Horse Hitch." At the end of the day's pageantry came the circus itself, with its lion tamers and acrobats.

It's funny, though, the things that stick in the mind of a child. The one thing I remember most clearly about that day were the *stakes* that were used to hold up the giant circus tent. The stakes were huge, as big around as fence posts, with splayed tops where workmen with sledgehammers had driven them deep into the ground. With childlike curiosity I stood staring

at them for a long time, marveling at their strength and immovability. Surely even the massive Big Top was safe from collapse, with the strength of these giant stakes to support it!

Stakes Of Pure Doctrine

That's why, many years later, this was the image which leaped immediately to mind when one of my seminary professors mentioned tent stakes during a lecture about Christian doctrine. "You must strengthen the stakes," he said, "and then lengthen the cords." He was driving home the point that you can't expand the tent of the church unless you have strong stakes of pure Christian doctrine to support it.

In the centuries preceding the Lutheran Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church had practiced the opposite policy. The physical boundaries of the Pope's kingdom were continually expanding, but its doctrinal underpinnings were becoming increasingly corrupt. While the church got larger and richer, the ideas and traditions of men were being substituted for the pure teachings of God's Word in its theology. By the time of Luther the Catholic Church had become a very big tent with very weak stakes.

Martin Luther, along with other faithful men of God, wielded the hammer of the Word to once again drive deep the stakes of pure, biblical doctrine. The Reformer said: "The Word is so completely above criticism that there is not one iota of a mistake in the Law and in the divine promises. Therefore we are to yield to no sect; nor are we to yield in any point of Scripture, however much men clamor and slander, saying that we are violating love by adhering so strictly to the words; for the beginning of all love is that the 'right scepter' remain." Luther, as we know, was subjected to no end of clamor and slander for his efforts to restore the biblical foundation of the Christian faith.

Sadly, pure doctrine is no more popular now than it was in the sixteenth century. Confessional Lutherans like ourselves—people who not only cling to the true teachings of the Bible but reject every false teaching—are continually criticized as being too strict. "You're always crying 'Pure doctrine! Pure doctrine!'" they tell us. "That can only lead to dead orthodoxy. Stop worrying

so much about doctrine, and pay more attention to a good Christian life!" Responding to this historic criticism, Dr. C. F. W. Walther says, aptly: "That is exactly like telling a farmer: 'Do not worry about the quality of your seed; worry about getting a good harvest!'" Viewed from another angle, it's like ordering someone to erect a huge tent . . . *without driving any stakes!*

Why So Careful?

Why are we so careful about doctrine? Because *every* doctrine of the church relates to and bears upon the *chief* doctrine of the church: justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone. Sins are freely remitted for Jesus' sake—that is the precious gemstone of our Christian faith. No threat, no morsel of the leaven of false doctrine, may be allowed to endanger this greatest of all treasures.

We will continue to steadfastly maintain the pure doctrine of the Reformation, for we know the whole structure of Christianity depends upon this solid, Bible-based foundation. The fruits of our preaching and teaching we leave to the Lord. Those fruits will come; for it is the Lord Himself who exhorts us, through the prophet Isaiah: "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; lengthen your cords, and *strengthen your stakes.*"

—Pastor Paul Naumann



LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

Genesis Chapter Eleven

A DISPERSION TO FULFILL THE PROMISE AND PRESERVE THE HOPE

The great Flood of Promise - Flood of Hope was still a vivid memory to Noah and his sons when the incident of dishonor and honor took place in the tent of Noah (Gen. 9:18-27). Son Ham, who dishonored his father, received a curse causing him and his descendants to be lowly slaves to his brothers.

Son Shem, who showed honor to his father, was given the blessing: “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem!” Son Japheth’s blessing (he also had honored his father) was extended for him “to dwell in the tents of Shem,” and both Shem and Japheth would be served by Ham.

Noah lived 350 years after the flood, altogether a long life of 950 years, and he died.

In Genesis chapter ten God records the national and social records of the Japhethites, the Hamites, and the Shemites: “These were the families of Noah’s sons according to their descent among the nations. And from these the nations branched out in the world after the flood.”

God Dealt With The Sin Of Pride

However, as soon as men multiplied after the flood, their sin grew in like manner. One particularly destructive sin was pride. Genesis eleven is the record of how God dealt with the growing sinful pride of

humanity. He would not give the sinners up to lifting their haughty eyes above the things of God: above the still, small word from God; above the lonely prophet; above the lowly manger of His Son; above the lowly cross of His death to give us life; above the message of the empty Easter tomb; above the lovely good Shepherd Who is ever with us; above the Savior coming again to receive us unto Himself that, where He is, we may be also!

God was very much aware of the faith-destroying pride of mankind. In our text He quotes the headlines of the day: “The whole world talked one language with the same words. As people traveled in the east, they found a plain in the country of Babylonia and lived there. ‘Come,’ they said to one another, ‘let us make bricks and let us burn them hard.’ They used bricks for stones and asphalt for mortar. Then they said, ‘Come, let us build a city for ourselves and a tower with its top in the sky, and let’s make

ourselves famous to keep from getting scattered all over the earth” (11:1-4).

This unbelieving nature in mankind did not cause God to turn from them and leave them rushing headlong into the wages of sin. God who is love, and who revealed His mercy and grace to lost sinners that they might have hope, made a decision by divine wisdom for an action that would promptly stop their project and direct them along His ways: “. . . Come, let Us (note once again the Old Testament reference by God to the Trinity!) go down and there confuse their language, so that nobody can understand what the other one is saying” (11:5-9).

God, without effort, simply caused the confusion of tongues. It would stop their ego-structure and send them out into all the world. There God would address His faith-working Word and Spirit to them in their times of frustration and need, lest they die. His was a word of forgiveness, life, and joy everlasting!

God Comes DOWN To Us

It is interesting to note that in our brief text both the sinners and God are quoted using the same imperative word: “Come!” Sinners said, “Come, let us BUILD UP a tower that reaches to the heavens” (a skyscraper). God said, “Come, let Us go DOWN. . . .” Our gracious Savior-God comes DOWN to us poor sinners as we struggle by ourselves—to achieve, to succeed, to rise above ourselves, to ascend to new heights, only to GO DOWN into the grave!

Our God comes DOWN to us (“From heaven above to earth I come

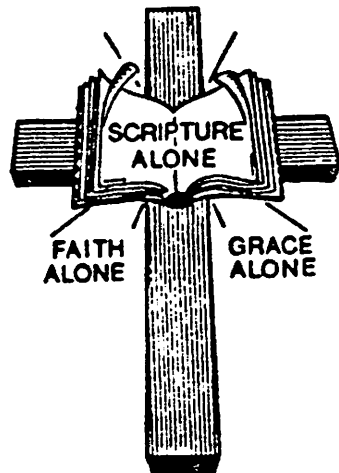
. . .”) to bring us the glad news of His victory over all our enemies: sin, death, and the devil; the glad news that we will truly ascend on high to be with Him in His home; the glad news that where He is, there we shall be also!

Oh, how our flesh struggles daily to build our little skyscrapers for our ego. And how quickly our towers tumble down, not unlike our early childhood experiences with building blocks. How much we need His Word to lower our eyes and ears and heart to where He is . . . with us (Immanuel — God with us)!

And His Word gives us a real hope, a lasting hope of life with Him forever.

Now our text immediately picks up on the promise of the Savior-Seed by tracing anew the ancestors of the Promised One. The account quickly takes us from the affairs of Shem to Terah and his son Abram (Abraham). So the words from God to us for our learning carry us on day by day in hope. We thank You, Lord, that You are our Hope!

—Prof. Gordon Radtke



THE MONSTER OF UNCERTAINTY

“Dinosaur” is a Greek word meaning “terrible lizard.” Dinosaur skeletons indicate that some, like the Brontosaurus (thunder lizard), were 70 feet long. These creatures roamed our earth, not millions of years ago as the “goo-to-zoo-to-you” people claim, but about 6,000 years ago. They probably died out during Noah’s flood.

However, one beast which hatched from Satan’s clutch of eggs in the Garden of Eden did not become extinct. It is the “Adaylosaurus”—the uncertainty lizard. Its Latin name is “Monstrum Incertitudinis.”

This monster of uncertainty is not a plant or flesh eater, but feeds on human souls by making them uncertain about God’s saving love for them.

A Dragon Of Doubt

The natural habitat for this dragon-of-doubt ranges throughout all heathen religions. This is so because all these religions in one way or another teach that people must do something in order to appease angry gods (wash in the Ganges River, sacrifice a chicken, spin a prayer wheel, or visit Mecca). Followers of heathen religions can never be certain that they have done enough to placate their gods.

Centuries ago, the uncertainty monster stomped into Christianity’s village and there fed on many Roman Catholics whose leader taught that Christians should never be certain that God’s gracious love includes them.

Martin Luther opposed this error in

his lectures on Galatians 4:6. He said: “A Christian must utterly repudiate the wicked idea of the pope that a Christian must be uncertain about the grace of God toward him. If that opinion stands then Christ is completely useless....Thank God we have been delivered from this monster of uncertainty....God, who cannot lie, says, ‘I am giving My own Son into death so that by His blood He might redeem you from sin and death.’ Here I cannot have any doubts unless I want to deny God altogether.”

The lizard of uncertainty also claims its victims among various Protestant churches which teach that God never intended to save everyone and that some people are more deserving of heaven than others. Embracing such errors forces one to ask, “Who knows whether God intended to save ME? Who knows if I am deserving enough to be in heaven?”

The cruel teeth of Monstrum Incertitudinis also sink into Lutheran Christians whenever they mistakenly think: “Since we do the believing in Jesus, we also produce the ability to believe.” They forget that although faith in Jesus is a human *action*, it is not a human *product*.

According to Ephesians 2:1, we humans are by nature spiritually dead and can no more produce living faith in ourselves than Lazarus, who had been dead four days, could make himself alive. God Himself, through the Gospel, creates and nourishes saving faith in us. Ephesians 1:19



475th Anniversary Of The Leipzig Debate

"A simple layman armed with Scripture is to be believed above pope or council without it." *This quotation by Martin Luther was the dramatic highlight in a re-enactment of the Leipzig Debate (A.D.1519), hosted by the Dakota congregations of the West Central Conference of the CLC on October 31, 1993.*

Zion Lutheran Church of Ipswich, South Dakota was the site. Pastor Mike Sydow portrayed the Roman Catholic representative, Dr. John Eck. Prof. Paul Nolting was Martin Luther. One of the area pastors dressed as the archbishop. Some of Prof. Nolting's sophomore history students had other roles in the presentation. The nearly 200 worshippers enjoyed the heritage fellowship meal which followed.

teaches: "...(We) believe according to the working of His mighty power."

Saving faith is both active (something we do) and passive (something done for us). On the one hand *we* do the believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and are saved (Acts 16:31). On the other hand, saving faith is a *gift from God*, not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

Rely on Christ

Romans 3:28 declares: "A man is justified by faith." But these words do NOT teach that the good qualities of faith add any value to the justification which Christ earned for us. It is of utmost importance to insist that faith's

only function is to apply the righteousness that Christ merited for us. Faith is only a *receiving* mechanism. Just as God enables us to chew and swallow His life-giving earthly food, so He also enables us to accept and trust His soul-saving good news of forgiveness through Jesus.

This children's hymn says it well:

God is my Friend, He tells me in His Word,
All my sins were paid by Jesus Christ the Lord.
He died for all and shed His precious blood,
That is what the Bible means by faith in God.

We Christians become *uncertain* about our salvation whenever we rely on our faith instead of relying on Christ. Instead of searching our hearts

to see if we have a feeling called faith, we should look away from ourselves and fix our gaze upon the cross of Calvary. There, according to Scripture, the God-Man Jesus paid for all sins of the entire human race. This fact leads to the wonderful conclusion that as surely as *we* are members of the human race, so surely have all *our* sins been forgiven.

Luther writes: "I am accustomed, for the better understanding of this point, to divest myself of the idea that there is a quality in my heart at all, call it either faith or love, but in their place I put Christ and say, 'He is my

Righteousness.'"

Ask yourself this question: "If I died at this instant would I go to heaven?" If your heart answers, "I think so," then the monster of uncertainty has you in his jaws. Instead, on the basis of the Scripture truth that the life-blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed you from all sin, declare: "If I died at this instant I would *absolutely* go to heaven." Then you have slain that Monstrum Incertitudinis with the sword of the Spirit, namely, the powerful Word of God.

—Pastor Robert Mackensen

The View From The Pew

"Thank God For Martin Luther!" (Part I)

I recently became pastor in a small city (population: 3,700) in southern Minnesota where, I was told, the "tracks" have long been a general dividing line between Roman Catholics and Protestants.

I soon found it to be quite literally true. The twin-spired Catholic cathedral with its sizeable elementary and high school facility is the focal point on the north side of the railroad tracks. All Protestant church buildings, including our own, are south of the tracks. And it's not just church buildings which are north-south oriented. Residential visits to members of our congregation are predominantly on the Protestant south side.

Inevitably, the twain will meet and even mix to some degree. There are, of course, business dealings and social



functions between Catholic and Protestant. Then too there are weddings and funerals, where there are

bound to be in attendance friends, acquaintances, and even extended family members “from the other side of the tracks.”

It happens frequently—with interesting and telltale observations and reactions! (Please do not interpret this as a condoning of worship with those outside our confessional fellowship. When our members on occasion attend Catholic weddings and funerals there is, we trust, no active participation.)

But now for some of those telltale observations and reactions—the view from the pew” on the part of people from both sides of the tracks.

View From The Catholic Side

“I didn’t like your pastor’s sermon. He didn’t say enough about (the dead person)...”—That, I was told, was an actual comment by one of our Catholic neighbors who had attended a funeral in our church. I took it as a compliment. Christ crucified and risen again, not the good deeds of the deceased, was the focal point.

“I have to go to church or it’s a sin...”—That, I was told, was the straightforward comment of a young Catholic man recently visiting in one of our homes.

“I’ll say this much, you people read the Bible; we don’t...”—My Catholic barber, one day when we were discussing religion while he was cutting my hair.

“I’m reading a page a day from my book on the saints”—same barber, quite proudly. (I wish I had an audio tape of our friendly twenty-five minute discussion of our religious differences.)

Doubtless, as time goes on this list

will grow.

View From The Orthodox Lutheran Side

“Now that Grandma has died, you can pray to her”—One of my members told me the priest said this in a funeral sermon she attended! I said: “You must have heard him say ‘...for her,’ not ‘to her.’” “No!” I was told. “The priest said ‘to her!’ Please comment on this in your catechism class, because one of your students, a grandson of mine, was present!” (Note: Lest I be misunderstood: “for her” is as bad as “to her” when we are speaking of the deceased!)

“Some people say there are myths in the Bible. Well, there are myths in the Bible, but they are teaching devices . . . like the story of Adam and Eve”—Actual comment in a “homily” by the priest in a Catholic marriage I attended (in a different city. Though I had seen portions of Catholic funerals and weddings on television over the years, this was the first I had ever attended in person.)

“Our reading is from the book of Tobit...”—spoken by a lady deaconess about to read from a book of the apocrypha in the the same Catholic wedding service.

An Expanded View

The marriage service I attended (audited) was an uninterrupted 80-minute high mass with all the traditional Roman Catholic pomp and circumstance. There were two priests and at least three altar boys. There were all the other Roman Catholic trappings: the holy water, the copious signings of the cross, the incense-wafting, a reading from the apocrypha

The View Of The Reformer

For about the intercession, adoration, and prayer to departed saints there is nothing in scripture. No one can deny that by such saint worship we have now come to the point where we have actually made utter idols of the Mother of God and the saints, and that because of the service we have rendered and the works we have performed in their honor we have sought comfort more with them than with Christ Himself. Thereby faith in Christ has been destroyed.



It was exceedingly bitter for me to tear myself away from the worship of the saints, for I was completely steeped and drowned in it. But the light of the Gospel is now so clear that henceforth no one has any excuse if he remains in darkness.



Prayer in Popedom is mere tongue-threshing; not prayer, but a work of obedience.... From this great torment we are now delivered by the gospel. Though I had done no more but only freed people from that torment, they might well give me thanks for it.



When I first began to celebrate mass in Popedom, and to make such crossings with marvellous twistings of the fingers, and could not rightly hit the way, I said: "Mary, God's mother, how am I plagued with the mass, and especially with the crossings." Ah, Lord God! we were in those times poor plagued people, and yet it was nothing but mere idolatry.



They that do not hold the sacrament as Christ instituted it, have no sacrament. All papists do not, therefore they have no sacrament; for they receive not the sacrament, but offer it. Moreover, they administer but one kind, contrary to Christ's institution and command. The sacrament is God's work and ordinance, and not man's. The papists err in attributing to the sacrament, that it justifies, ex opere operato, when the work is fulfilled.



Where God's word is purely taught, there is also the upright and true church; for the true church is supported by the Holy Ghost, not by succession of inheritance. It does not follow, though St. Peter had been bishop of Rome, and at the same time Christian communion had been at Rome, that therefore, the pope and the Romish church are true; for if that should be of value or conclusive, then they must confess that Caiaphas, Annas, and the Sadducees were also the true church; for they boasted that they were descended from Aaron.



(Quotes taken from *What Luther Says*, Vol. II, p. 1082; Vol. III, p. 1254; *The Table Talk of Martin Luther*, Thomas Kepler, Baker Bookhouse 1952, pp. 204, 223, 225, 227)

(and one from the Bible), the praying to saints, the Ave Maria, the "sacrifice" of the mass, the bell-ringing, the partaking of just "one kind" (communicants receiving only the bread, not the wine) and so on. (I must say the music, as such, was beautiful.)

We endured it, and in spite of all I was glad for the experience. More than anything I was glad for the opportunity to testify (by our obvious non-participation) that we indeed were "protestants."

But what a show! What a production! Speaking for myself, one felt like a spectator in some sort of superstitious religious drama rather than a participant in a worship service! When it all finally ended, other non-Catholics and I myself breathed a collective sigh. To a fellow Lutheran I remarked: "What refined paganism! What superstition! Thank God for Martin Luther!"

(to be continued)

—Pastor Paul Fleischer

"What We Should And Shouldn't Learn From Martin Luther" *

As we again approach what is often considered the birthday of the 16th century Reformation of the Christian Church—the eve of All Saints Day, October 31—we once more hear of a specific writing of Luther from 1543 entitled *On The Jews And Their Lies*. In my library of *Luther's Works* this writing occupies 170 pages of Volume 47.

Though this article is 450 years old it is referred to in newspapers as though this is the find of the century. Newspaper headings scream out, "Lutherans Apologize For Founder's Words On Jews," "The Word of Luther Isn't All Gospel To Lutherans," "Luther Didn't Mince Words in Urging Assault On Jews," "Was Luther Anti-Semitic?"

At the outset we must say that we feel no compulsion whatever to defend Luther when and if he has written something that is unscriptural or otherwise unacceptable. We do not make an infallible pope out of Martin Luther. Yet at the same time we want to be fair. That means that we will need to take several matters into consideration when we analyze his writings. First of all, 450 years ago reaches back into another time, another culture, another environment—religiously and socially.

Secondly, and most importantly, we need to realize how deeply Luther loved his Savior and Lord. The many volumes of *Luther's Works* center on Scripture and the blessings of salvation in the Christ. Back in the 16th century and for many years to follow his words were like precious jewels amidst an avalanche of worthless gravel. He spoke to the heart of the common people. His love

* (Taken, by permission, from the October 1993 Immanuel Home Messenger, a publication of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota; written by Pastor L. D. Redlin.)

for his Savior poured forth unmistakably from his voluminous writings.

The Bible Says: "...Hate Evil"

But it shall ever be true. If we truly love we will also need to hate. The psalmist writes very simply, "*You who love the LORD hate evil*" (Ps. 97:10). Solomon is inspired to write by inspiration: "*The fear of the LORD is to hate evil*" (Prov. 8:13). Our children learn this passage and we talk about that word "hate" as it is used here. It may sound rather harsh but it is true nevertheless: *One simply cannot honor, respect, and love God unless one has learned to hate evil—that which opposes God.*

Luther's love for Christ was everywhere in his writings and in his life. When antichristian forces arose he recognized it as a threat to the kingdom of his Lord and a threat to

"...Luther's love for Christ was everywhere in his writings and in his life. When antichristian forces arose, he recognized it as a threat to the kingdom of his Lord and a threat to his life. He prized his life in Christ more than anything else in this world..."

his life. He prized his life in Christ more than anything else in this world because he knew what it was to be without life—without Christ—without peace with God—without the hope of heaven.

Today the greatest share of Christ-

ianity is floundering under the curse which it has brought on itself—the curse of syncretistic liberalism (the desire to join together for the sake of outward peace and harmony regardless of what is taught or believed by the parties involved). Should one dare to expose the error of false teachings which oppose our Lord and His Word one is condemned by most of Christianity and castigated as a narrow-minded bigot of some sort. "Don't make waves," we are urged. "Accentuate the positive. Let's forget about error and all work together."

There was no question about Luther's love and dedication to Christ and the Truth of God in Holy Scripture. There was no question about Luther's hatred of the antichristian, man-made, false religions. He could not be silent while they slayed the souls of people by drawing them away from the one true God into the bondage and prisonhouse of Satan.

So what is often termed anti-Semitism in our day cannot be equated with what Luther was saying. Anti-Semitism today is marked by racism. Luther's primary point was religious and centered upon the fact that the Jews openly opposed the Christ and the disciples of Christ at every opportunity. They lived and enjoyed the blessings of God but openly cursed the Lord God of the people among whom they lived and worked. (*Here the writer gives a longer quotation on the subject from one of Luther's writings—Ed.*)

Luther Didn't Mince Words

We in our day are removed from the scene described by Luther by 450 years. From our vantage point we may

judge that Luther was rather harsh in advocating various acts of violence against the Jews because of their continued blasphemy against the Lord Jesus, our Savior. But the very ones who are often most critical of Luther are those who want the freedom to drag the Word of God in the gutter throughout Christianity. Today God's name is blasphemed in the midst of the Christian churches as His sacred Word is denied. And most who profess to be Christians don't give it a second thought as long as they have their comfortable churches to go to and all the luxuries and niceties of this world. Generally, the pastors in the pulpit and the people in the pew don't seem to care. They let false teaching eat like cancer as long as they have an outward peace.

Luther was condemning false teaching and the false teachers with unmistakable language. Today people are so used to mealy-mouthed preachers who have all the weasel words down pat and can smooth talk their way through and around anything. Christianity could learn much from Luther in this regard. He didn't mince words!

Luther's mistake was that he was trying to deal with a problem in the New Testament era with Old Testament procedures. He writes, for example: *"In Deuteronomy 13 Moses writes that any city that is given to idolatry shall be totally destroyed by fire, and nothing of it shall be preserved. If he were alive today, he would be the first to set fire to the synagogues and houses of the Jews."* (p. 269)

Luther was wrong in what he prescribed as a solution to deal with the idolatrous religion of the Jews. Much of the church today is wrong because it won't lift a finger in favor of Truth and against error. Which is worse?

May the Lord God help us and keep us from reactions which are not Godly on the right hand and on the left. May the Lord strengthen us to, on the one hand, always speak the truth in love without shame and, on the other hand, avoid the ditch of over-reaction leading us into the quicksand of seeking physical solutions to spiritual struggles. As Luther himself wrote:

With might of ours can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected;
But for us fights the Valiant One,
Whom God Himself elected.
Ask ye, Who is this? Jesus Christ it is,
Of Sabaoth Lord,
And there's none other God;
He holds the field forever.

Tho' devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill,
They shall not overpower us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none,
He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.

The Word they still shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With His good gifts and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Let these all be gone,
They yet have nothing won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

Looking Back in the *Lutheran Spokesman*

From October 1964

CROOKED STICKS AT AUGSBURG A.D. 1530. *The Hidden Crook.* In the Roman Church simple Christians had for many generations received the bread alone in the Lord's Supper and no wine. They did not see the crook in this stick. It was hidden beneath the customs, traditions, and false teaching of Rome. Luther asked that the crook be removed. According to Christ's institution both bread and wine should be given the communicant. The papists came back with a serious charge against him. Luther mentions it when he writes in his *Reflections to the Diet*: "They claim that we would condemn the whole of Christendom which has used one form considering it to be right."

Luther emphatically rejects the charge that he is summarily damning all Christendom that has lived with the abuse of one kind. "This," he writes, "is not the fault of Christendom, but of the tyrants and false teachers who have held Christendom in captivity under such sacrilege, oppressed it with this abuse, established it without the consent and knowledge of Christendom, and introduced it by force."

He goes on to show that it is unthinkable to him that Christendom

was damned in times past when it ignorantly lived in this abuse. For just as individual Christians are not without imperfections, so it is also with Christendom as a whole. It must ever pray: "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults" (Psalm 19:12). Such faults come from the flesh. So the first church erred at Jerusalem and the church has erred since. Yet Christendom is holy through the forgiveness of sins in spite of its spots and wrinkles.

....Just as emphatically as (Luther) rejects the thought that he would condemn all Christendom because of a hidden crook, just so emphatically does he refuse to make any compromise with a crook that has been brought out of hiding. He writes in his *Reflections*: "But after such failings and errors of Christendom are revealed, they should not be approved of nor defended as articles of faith. That would be resisting the Holy Spirit who reveals such things, and would be no longer a Christian or venial sin, but a hardened and devilish delusion." The Word must rule. So when the papists tried to defend the use of one kind as right because the church had established it and practiced it so long, Luther answered: "Christendom is not a rule or measure above God's Word, but God's Word is a rule and measure above Christendom. Christendom does not make God's Word but God's Word makes Christendom."

Christians should ever be open to self-criticism and ever humbly bow to the Word when it reveals a crook in any stick and not try to defend it. Now should they have fellowship

with those who carry sticks with crooks in them unless they straighten them out or throw them away. The fact that we recognize that there are Christians in church bodies who hold errors does not mean that we can unite with them. The confessional principle forbids that. So we'll meet people in heaven from whom we must stand separate here on earth.

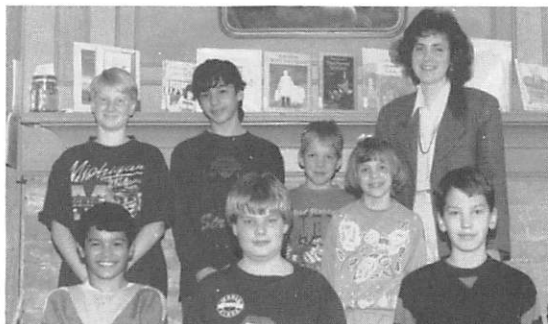
Luther says in a sermon on Ephesians 4:1-6 that we are not concerned "about dissimilarity and difference in the outward bodily life or external ordinances, customs, and ceremonies." But we are concerned "that there be *one pure and unadulterated doctrine of the Gospel and uniform outward confession of the same.*" He goes on to say that those "who do not hold this unity of doctrine and faith but cause divisions

and offenses beside it as St. Paul says Romans 16:17" must be avoided. He then applies this passage to the papacy and adds: "Therefore everyone is in duty bound by God's command to contradict them, yes to avoid and flee from them."

Only a short time before Augsburg Luther had applied this also to the Swiss and Strassburgers. That was in 1529 at Marburg. Here Zwingli, Bucer, and others denied the real presence of the body and blood in the Lord's Supper. Luther and his followers separated from them. So they stood apart as a confessional group at Augsburg, separated not only from Rome but also from the Swiss and other protestant sects.

God give us the courage to stand for the truth even when we have to stand alone!

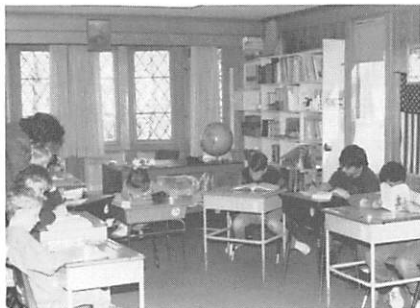
(Otto J. Eckert)



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL AUSTIN, MINNESOTA

It was during the year 1972 that a most blessed event occurred. St. Paul's Lutheran School of Austin, Minn. decided to open a Christian Day School. That fall, after the remodeling of the church basement and the construction of a new entrance, twenty-nine children entered their new school. Shirley Wendland and Carla Thurow began the work of equipping these young soldiers of Christ for the good fight of faith.

In 1978 a destructive flood ruined the church basement. As the congregation was deciding on the next step, the children continued their studies in rented



facilities. The decision was then made to remodel the parsonage for use as a school. (The pastor was given a housing allowance with which he built a home.)

For twenty-two years the Lord has blessed St. Paul's Lutheran School with able and devoted Christian teachers: Shirley Wendland, Carla Thurow, Diane Lietz, Mary Schuetze, Luella Gilbertson, Leif Olmanson, Irene Eichstadt, Quinn Sprengeler, Barbara Pfeiffer, Desirae Ohlmann, Wendy Greve, Margaret Bester, and presently Carolyn Gerbitz. Through their proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, He has blessed the souls of many children. We pray that He continue to do so for years to come.



Vacation Bible Schools



← Immanuel Lutheran Church, Winter Haven, Florida, June 1994.

Living Word Lutheran Church, Hendersonville, No. Car., August 1994; Teachers: Sharon Kurtzahn, Jan Summerville, Pastor Steve Kurtzahn, Lani Blythe. →



Grace Lutheran Church, Fridley, Minn. July 1994.



Announcements

Anniversary In Ballwin

Faith Lutheran Church of Ballwin, Missouri will celebrate its 40th anniversary on Sunday, November 13th. A service of thanksgiving and praise to God for His abiding grace will be held at 10:00 a.m., followed by a fellowship meal. The Rev. Vance Fossum will serve as guest speaker. Members and friends of the CLC are cordially invited to attend. Any correspondence and prayers by the brethren would be appreciated.

—Mark Gullerud, Pastor



Video Tape Ministry Transfer

The undersigned has retired from operating the Video Tape Ministry. Therefore, effective immediately, arrangements have been made that requests for taped services, correspondence, returns of tape to the VTM Library, etc. will be taken care of by:

Marilyn Maxvold
7508 Sunrise Ridge
Loveland, Colorado 80538
Phone: (303) 669-5802

—Harvey H. Callies



Installations

On August 14, 1994 as authorized by President Daniel Fleischer, I installed Ross Roehl as principal and upper grade teacher at Luther Memorial Church and School, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

—Pastor John H. Johannes

As authorized by President Fleischer, I, the undersigned, installed Daniel Barthels as the principal and upper grade teacher of Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran School of Saginaw, Michigan on August 14, 1994.

—Pastor Mark H. Bernthal



Phone Change

Pastor & Mrs. John Ude of Hales Corners, Wis. have a new phone number. It is (414) 427-9303. Messiah Lutheran Church is still (414) 427-9337.

Used Hymnals

Anyone interested in used copies of the red "The Lutheran Hymnal" is asked to contact Pastor Bernthal of Gethsemane Ev. Lutheran Church in Saginaw, Michigan. The cost will be free plus the cost of shipping. The address: 3460 Crestmont Drive, Saginaw, MI 48603. Phone (517) 792-9390.



Wintering in South Texas?

Resurrection congregation of Corpus Christi and its pastor encourage all CLC members who plan to winter in South Texas to contact Pastor Andrew Schaller so he can arrange times and places for fellowship, devotions, and communion services.

Pastors, please remind any of your southward-bound members to do this. Also, pastors, if you know of CLC people stationed at military bases in the Corpus Christi or San Antonio areas, let Pastor Schaller know about them. They could be included in his ministries to the South Texas diaspora.

Pastor Andrew Schaller's address is 201 Princess Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78410. His phone number is (512) 241-5147.



Joint Reformation Service

The Minnesota Conference of the CLC invites area congregations to attend its joint Reformation service at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 30, 1994 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato.

—Rick R. Grams, Secretary



Minnesota Pastoral Conference

Date: Nov. 2-3, 1994, beginning at 10:00 a.m.
Host: St. John's Lutheran Church, Okabena, MN

Chaplain: Pastor Keith Olmanson

Agenda:

- * NT Exegesis of Jude (vv. 8ff) - Wayne Mielke
- * OT Study of Psalm 8 - Daniel Avery
- * Homiletical Study - L. Dale Redlin
- * Isagogical Study of Esther - Daniel Fleischer
- * A Comparison of Excommunication and Termination of Membership - John Pfeiffer
- * How Should a Christian View the State-Sponsored Lottery?
- * A Scouting Update - Paul Fleischer

—Rick R. Grams, Secretary

1994 CLC Teachers' Conference
Trinity Lutheran School
Watertown, So. Dakota
October 12-14, 1994

Agenda (Assigned Topics):
Wednesday, October 12

- * What Does Scripture Say About Encouragement (Of Children)?—Pastor Paul Krause
- * How To Deal With Parents Who Overhelp Their Children—Theodore Quade
- * Book Review: *New Dare To Discipline*—Robert Snell
- * Title Fives: Daniel Barthels, David Bernthal, Sara Nolting, Prof. Robert Rehm
- * Vocabulary Improvement Methods—Mark Kranz

Thursday, October 13

- * Outcome-Based Education—James & Elizabeth Sydow
- * Helping the Slower Reader—Candice Ohlmann
- * Alternatives to Worksheets—Carolyn Gerbitz
- * Textbook Review—Elizabeth Avery & Deborah Johannes

Friday, October 14

- * Developing Thinking Skills—Carla Pelzl

GETHEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH
E. 11315 BROADWAY
SPOKANE, WA. 99206

Change Of Address

Mr. & Mrs. Ross Roehl
134 21st Street
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
Phone (414) 924-9237

put SOUL INTO YOUR WORK,
AND JOY AND HEALTH
WILL BE YOURS

Martin Luther