

Lutheran Spokesman

Colossians

3:12-19

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

“ . . . All that mushy, early marriage talk about being a ‘beautiful princess’ and a ‘prince charming’ becomes a wonderful reality when married people, for Christ’s sake, begin to treat one another like royalty.”

The Marriage Mindset: “I Am Third!”

Does anyone remember Gale Sayers? Chicago Bears fans know the name well. Sayers was a speedy running back who played for their team during the 1960’s. For many, however, Gale Sayers is most remembered for the statement: “The Lord is first, my friends are second, and I am third!”

I can’t remember offhand what Sayers’ religious background is, but his statement is certainly one we Christians would applaud. It fits with what Christ teaches in the law about one’s relationship with God and neighbor.

It also fits with what Christ teaches about marriage. There are three individuals involved in your marriage. There is you, your spouse, and the Lord. In which order should each

appear? Who should be first in importance? Who second? Who third?

Submitting To Christ

The Bible teaches mutual submission in marriage. “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ,” says St. Paul in Ephesians 5:21. Reverence for Christ implies that married people submit to Him first, and then, secondly, to their spouses. The apostle’s divinely inspired pecking order for marriage would go like this: Christ first, spouse second, you third. Scripture advocates an “I am third” mindset for marriage!

The world and our flesh, of course, protest against such a notion: What kind of wacko talk is that? Everyone knows you have to look out for num-

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ber one, especially in marriage. Everyone knows you've got to stand up for your rights. Everyone knows one's personal happiness should take priority.

The "I am first" mindset pushes aside love for God and love for spouse in favor of its own priorities. It will not sacrifice its personal success at work, its enjoyment of some hobby, or anything for the sake of God or mate. It will not listen to God, but will go ahead and get a divorce—if that's what it takes—to protect its own interests and happiness.

How sad when two individuals live under the same roof, but yet share so little of one another's lives because they're too wrapped up in themselves. Does this kind of living make for happy and healthy marriages? No way! Is that what God had in mind when He described marriage as a "joining together"? Of course not! Is it any wonder that with this kind of mindset, marriages today have so many problems?

As a pastor counseling couples in troubled marriages, I can't tell you how frustrating it is when married people won't see that it's often their own self-centeredness which is the cause of their problems. Pastors or not, we've all heard the oft-repeated phrases: "If only he would listen to me! . . . It's not me! She's the one who needs to change! . . . What about my happiness?!" And on and on it goes. What miserable marriages when these are the prevailing attitudes!

The Holy Spirit's Work

Unfortunately the sinful flesh just can't see the damage this kind of thinking brings to marriage. More



than that, it doesn't want to be second, let alone third, to anyone. It's altogether proud and self-absorbed.

Does your marriage suffer because of your selfishness? Mine does! Whose doesn't? What must happen to make things better? Repentance must happen! Repentance is the Holy Spirit's work to change our hearts and lives. In repentance the Spirit, by God's Word, leads us to bring our selfishness (and all other sins) to Jesus' cross for forgiveness. In repentance the Spirit replaces sinful pride with Christlike love—with love that puts God first and others before self.

Through repentance God works a radical readjustment in married people. He works to put God first in their hearts, spouse second, and self last. God knows that's how marriage works. He knows that if we try to reverse His order we end up with all sorts of marital unhappiness. Self-centered people are never happy. Marriages in which husbands and wives are self-centered are never happy either.

But with the self-sacrificing love of Christ pulsating through their souls, married people learn to see themselves as humble servants of both Christ and their spouse. All that mushy, early marriage talk about being a "beautiful princess" and a "prince charming" becomes a wonderful reality when married people, for Christ's sake, begin to treat one

another like royalty. Hearts captured by the Gospel just don't worry about self that much anymore. This Spirit-created mindset makes marriage a truly blessed union—a union held together and made joyful by Christ.

However, as every Christian couple knows, it's a daily battle to keep things in the right order. Our flesh is constantly pushing self toward the front. That's one reason why Christian couples keep Jesus' cross close at hand. They know their marriages stand in constant need of true repentance; of Christ's healing; of the

Spirit's transformation. They know that only God can keep the "I am third" mindset alive and active in their marriages. They know that such a mindset makes for a healthy and happy marriage—a truly Christian marriage!

Except Thou build it, Father,
The house is built in vain;
Except Thou, Savior, bless it,
The joy will turn to pain.
But naught can break the marriage
Of hearts in Thee made one,
And love Thy Spirit hallows
Is endless love begun. Amen! (TLH 621:4)

—Pastor Michael Wilke



FAITH AND PRAYER

May 1 has been designated as a national day of prayer. The last few years have seen a resurgence of interest in prayer and an increased emphasis on a national day of prayer. The conditions of present society have highlighted the need for a spiritual renewal in our country. Sometimes, however, it seems that people almost make prayer a means of grace even more important than the preaching of the cross. Prayer can become separated from Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice at the cross. It almost becomes, as Jesus described it, a feeling that "they will be heard for their much speaking." Prayer is a very private response to the mercy and grace of God by God's children in their need.

It is important that we realize the connection between faith and prayer. Prayer is a response of faith. Prayer is the voice of the believer who has been rescued from sin and death by Jesus.

Prayer is our communication by thought and word with our heavenly Father. The apostle John in his letter describes the link between faith and prayer: "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (1 Jn. 5:14-15).

This is the confidence or faith we have in God because of Jesus Christ. In the verse preceding, John speaks of this confidence of faith. "I have written these things . . . that you might know that you have eternal life and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God" (1 Jn. 5:13). This faith in Jesus Christ produces the confidence that God hears us. Prayer is not the last-ditch attempt of a person who has tried everything else and for whom there is nothing left. Prayer flows out of the confi-



dence of sins forgiven and the knowledge of the love of our Father. Faith believes that God hears us according to His promises. This faith that can move mountains believes Jesus when He says: "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Mt. 21:22).

It is important to note that John speaks of asking according to "His will." It would not take much faith to believe in the power of prayer if God immediately granted our every wish. The proof of the power of prayer would be seen in our new cars, our 200 MMX computers, our empty hospitals and bankrupt funeral homes. It would be easy to believe in prayer if prayer were simply a credit card to be used for whatever we wanted.

With Confidence

It is much more difficult to pray asking God to give us according to His will. Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Nevertheless not as I will. . . ." Jesus accepted the cross as God's will for Him. I remember a person who was a quadriplegic as a result of an accident. This person was told that she was not healed because her faith was not great enough. What is not realized is that it took more faith

to pray in a way that was willing to accept God's will even if it meant continued confinement to a wheelchair. Faith puts itself in the hands of God and prays in such a way that it is willing to accept God's will no matter how dark it might seem. This is truly a prayer of faith.

We tend to pray "My will be done." Jesus teaches us to pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Faith enables us to pray without dictating to God the when or the how. Someone said, "Be careful what you pray for, you might get it." It could also be said, "Be careful for what you pray, you might not get it." It is a gift of faith to pray with the confidence of leaving the outcome to God's direction.

At the same time, true prayer is offered with the confidence that God not only hears our prayers but also answers those petitions. This seems a contradiction. Based on the cross and what we have learned about God, we know that if God hears our prayers, "We have the requests we have asked from Him." This is the confidence of faith that prompts us to go to God with all of our requests and needs. Faith believes that God hears and answers all our prayers. James assures us that "the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (Jms. 5:16). It is strange that we need to be encouraged to make use of prayer in view of its power and its promise. Prayer is a function of faith.

John reminds us that faith produces prayer. Our prayer life is not by sight but by faith. In faith we pray according to God's will, confident that He grants these requests. This also means that the Gospel in the Word and the Sacraments

is the power that produces and preserves the faith that prays. Our prayer life is nurtured and sustained by the hearing of God's Word and the regular participation in the Lord's Supper. People, whose sins have been forgiven through the cross pray. Let us highly

treasure this gift of faith that God has given to us His children in prayer. Our Father loves to answer our prayers for Jesus' sake. Faith believes this even when it does not seem possible.

—Pastor John Schierenbeck



Father's Day Thoughts—

It's All Daddy's Fault

Scripture teaches us to say: "Our Father, who art in heaven," and to confess that there is "one God and Father of all." Some people blame Him for all the world's troubles. They got the wrong daddy.

There is another one. He has children, and is called the father of lies. But if you state the constant claim and blame—"the devil made me do it!"—you still have the wrong daddy.

There is a third. We all have this one as our father. The Bible puts a lot of blame on him: "In Adam all die" . . . "By one man sin came into the world." But there is still *another* daddy, and yet another!

Some of our churches have crucifixes, a good reminder of what Adam deserved, but an even better picture of what the second Adam got (Hymn 369:4), to bear Adam's sin and ours. Jesus is another "daddy" in that the Scriptures describe Him as "Father" and "Author" of our salvation (Isaiah 9, Hebrews 12). He takes the blame, as though to receive into Himself the accusation: "It's all Daddy's fault!" Indeed, "God made Him to be sin for us."

Every Christian ought to have a crucifix. For the sake of a fifth daddy. You know him, the head of the house, the one St. Paul refers to: "Husbands, love

your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself" That kind of love means pain, the pain of blame as well as the pain of responsibility, a good pain, the best kind there is, better than any alternative.

To be married is good. A family—with father, mother, children—has many advantages over other life styles, with many earthly benefits. There is usually more income. Children are better balanced. Overall health is better, and generally with more happiness and satisfaction. For daddy particularly the family is a civilizing force, an antidote to self-centeredness, a place where responsibility cannot be denied, where deviant or socially irresponsible behavior has to be abandoned, where a good example has to be set, where you just have to be helpful, do helpful things, connect with other people, develop stable work habits, even make painful sacrifices for others.

Even the Christian home has its share of fighting, screaming, sulking silences, blaming, slamming of doors.

There are heavy duties and chores. Homework, boredom. Lots of tasks, less and less time, commitment and compromise living side by side. And even then, many unhappinesses receive the condemning refrain: "It's all daddy's fault!" Every Christian home hears that cry.

One man recently wrote: "Without doubt, the most terrifying and fulfilling part of my life is being a father. The terror is that somehow I am failing my children in ways that will become clear only in retrospect. The joys defy words."

The Christian husband and father experiences the joys and the terror. The terror due, for abdication and neglect of fatherly duty. The joy received, by love and forgiveness which comes from Word and Sacrament, and so often, through mother and children. And also the joy that comes from our heavenly Father and His Son, and the Spirit, these Three Who, through Confession and Absolution, direct daddies to bring up their children in *Their* nurture and admonition.

—Pastor Warren Fanning



The Devil Seeks Our Fall

"Hit the enemy where he is weakest!" That is good military strategy. It provides the best expectation of success with the least casualties. Yet there are times when the attacking force is so powerful that even the strong defenses fail.

This is not news to the devil. He will attack the strong even at their strong points and overcome them.

Scriptural Examples

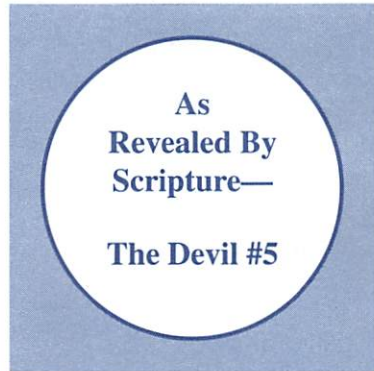
Consider some examples from Scripture. "Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). At Meribah, using impatience and anger, the devil goaded him into disobeying God.

Instead of only speaking to the rock to bring forth water, he struck the rock with the rod and said: "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" (Num. 20:10-12). Moses also failed to give God the credit for the miracle.

God called David " . . . a man after

My own heart, who will do all My will" (Acts 13:22). Yet the devil was able to lead him through the desires of his flesh to commit adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11). As was the case with Moses, David repented and escaped from the grasp of the devil.

It seems that the devil was more successful with Solomon. "God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding. . . . For he was wiser than all men" (1 Kgs. 4:29ff). Yet the devil led him into the foolishness of worshipping heathen gods.



God had warned the Israelites: “You shall not intermarry with them (foreigners), nor they with you. For surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon had hundreds of wives, many of them foreign. The said result: “It was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods” (1 Kgs. 11). The devil led the wisest man into the deepest folly.

There was Job, a man who “was blameless and upright, and who feared God and shunned evil” (Job 1:1). The devil used physical affliction to lead him to the sin of resentment against God. Here too repentance and forgiveness freed the devil’s victim.

Judas was one of the twelve original disciples. He was blessed with the opportunity to sit at the Lord’s feet and learn of the riches of eternal life. The devil blinded him to those riches and led him to seek those few pieces of silver instead. He fell into despair and eternal damnation.

We Too Are Tempted

The devil seeks our fall as well. He may tempt us to hear the Word without heeding it. And how easily that can happen when we allow ourselves

to be caught up in the “busyness” of this world.

How effectively the devil uses the physical cares and pleasures of this life to accomplish his evil purposes. We see on all sides those who are frantically engaged in the pursuit of the “good things” of this life while they ignore the more important matters of eternal life. The devil encourages us to do the same.

He may tempt us to expect earthly joys and physical comfort because we are believers in Jesus. When they elude us, resentment can arise as in the case of Job. Then the devil does all he can to lead the person to take the next step—into unbelief.

The dangers are there—a powerful and cunning foe and strong and attractive temptations. By ourselves we would surely fall into sin, be stripped of faith and perish eternally. But our gracious Lord does not abandon us. Through His Word He guides, comforts, strengthens, and encourages us so that we may continue in faith in Him for the forgiveness of sins unto eternal life. We have His promise: “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mt. 28:20).

—Keith Olmanson



LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

Exodus Chapters Five Through Fifteen

THE TEN PLAGUES

When was the first time you remember hearing the Bible story of the Ten Plagues? Perhaps you were a youngster sitting around the dinner

table for a family devotion or listening in amazement with fellow classmates in Sunday school. Do you remember trying to picture in your mind what it would have been like to be living in Egypt at that time? Perhaps you squirmed at the thought of all those frogs, and flies, and locusts, and lice.

As you grew older and heard the story repeated, perhaps you wondered how Pharaoh's magicians could perform some of the same feats as Moses, or how it was possible for it to be totally dark in Egypt and light as normal where the Israelites lived. You probably wondered how Pharaoh could be so stupid as to stubbornly refuse to let the Israelites go while his empire was being destroyed.

Hopefully with each retelling of the story you were newly amazed and full of more questions. However, sometimes familiarity with a story can be dangerous, as we lose that fresh perspective we had upon first hearing it. Let us then take a fresh look at the biblical account of the Ten Plagues and explore the lessons God would have us learn from it.

God's Power And Faithfulness

One lesson from this account which was impressed upon us as children was the *power* of our God. Sometimes man denies God's almighty power by attempting to explain the miracles of the Bible as some rare natural phenomenon. Perhaps you have seen television shows devoted to explaining the Bible in this way. By faith, we know our creator God can accomplish anything, including the miracles involved in the Ten Plagues. Let us not become trapped into thinking that the only miracles to

be believed in the Bible are those which can be "scientifically" explained.

What about the power of the devil in the world? Was it not through the power of the devil that Pharaoh's magicians were able to perform some of the same feats as Moses? Let us not underestimate the "prince of the world." He seeks to imitate the power of God today just as he did in the time of Moses. Because of Jesus' victory we have the power to fight the devil. "Resist the devil and he will depart from you" (Jms. 4:7).

Another important lesson for us to learn is that God is *faithful*—He fulfills His promises. God fulfilled His promise to deliver the Israelites out of the hand of the Egyptians. He kept His promise to return them to the Promised Land. He kept His promise to have a Savior born in Bethlehem. He kept His promise to "crush the head of the serpent" on Calvary. Likewise, He is faithful to the promises He has made to us.

Our faithful God in this Old Testament account provides us with a wonderful picture of our Savior. The tenth and final plague was the plague of



death. In order to escape this plague a spotless lamb had to be sacrificed and its blood spread on the doorposts of each house. The Lord passed over these houses; but in the houses of those who did not have blood on their doorposts, death came to every first-born. This spotless lamb served as a picture of the Lamb of God who was to come. It is through Jesus' blood that we are spared from eternal death. "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29).

The Justice Of God

This account also provides us with an important lesson about the *justice* of God. Those who reject the Word of God will be damned. In our "feel good" world of today many would have us believe that it does not matter what the object of your faith is, we will all end up on the same place when we die anyway. Pharaoh, believing himself to be God, boasted to Moses, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" Do we not hear these words echoed in our society today? The secular humanist, like Pharaoh, places himself above God. In his pride man believes that through his own efforts he can live a life worthy of salvation. In society's effort to offend no one for their religion, or lack thereof, they put all beliefs on an equal plane. But our holy God is a just

God. He requires payment for sins committed. There is no salvation apart from Jesus, for He said, "No one can come to the Father but by me." Those who die in unbelief today face the same condemnation.

We should also learn from the example of Pharaoh the dangers of resisting the Holy Spirit. During the first several plagues the Scripture speaks of Pharaoh "hardening his heart" and refusing to let the Israelites go. But starting with the sixth plague the Bible says that "the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh." This should serve to alert us to listen to God's Word when it is spoken. A heart that continuously resists the Holy Spirit cannot be saved, for the Holy Spirit working through the Word is the means by which faith is created and preserved in us.

Just as we were amazed when we were children at hearing the story of the Ten Plagues, let us pray that we continue to grow in a knowledge of our powerful, faithful, and just God.

Paschal Lamb, by God appointed,
 All our sins on Thee were laid;
 By almighty love anointed
 Thou hast full atonement made.
 Every sin may be forgiven
 Thro' the virtue of Thy blood;
 Open is the gate of heaven,
 Peace is made 'twixt man and God.
 (TLH 367:2)

—Prof. Joseph Lau



SMORGASBORD

● IN OUR VIEW: A SAD ANNIVERSARY

Those in the know in the world of Lutheranism are aware that the

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS) is celebrating its 150th anniversary in 1997. No history of Lutheranism in America could ignore

CFW Walther
1811-1887



Theologian, Pioneer, Author

the significant role played by the LC-MS. Indeed, that synod was used by God to establish conservative, orthodox Lutheranism in the United States.

The synod organized in Chicago in 1847 with Dr. C. F. W. Walther (1811-1887) as its first President. Walther,

often called the “American Luther,” was determined to resist the trends of the liberal “General Synod” centered for the most part in Pennsylvania, and to lead the newly organized church body along a path of genuine Lutheran orthodoxy.

A staunch and unwavering upholder of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, Walther “was raised up by God at a time when the majority of the theologians throughout the world were laboring to tear the Church from her moorings and set her adrift on the treacherous sea of human opinion and human authority. He was one of the few prophets of his day who raised the cry ‘To the Law and to the Testimony!’ Is. 8:20. . . .” (*Walther And The Church*, CPH, 1938, p. 11). The trumpet call for scriptural truth and ortho-

WALTHER ON REFUTING FALSE DOCTRINE:

“... To reprove or refute false doctrine also belongs to the correct application of God’s Word. The apostle says that explicitly in 2 Tim. 3:16. We see it in the example of all prophets and apostles and of our Lord Jesus Himself. As often as we see them and the Lord Himself occupied with doctrines, so often we see them add defense, not only against coarse errors (1 Cor. 15:12ff), but also against more subtle ones (Gal. 5:9); not only in a friendly way (Gal. 4:10-12) but also in a serious, vehement way (Gal. 1:8-9, Phil. 3:2); not only with reference to the false teachings, but also with reference to the false teachers, with or without naming them and their sects (1 John 4:1, Gal. 5:10, Matt. 16:6, Rev. 2:15, 2 Tim. 2:17. . .). . . He who presents pure doctrine, but does not refute the contrary false doctrine, does not warn against wolves in sheep’s clothing, against false prophets (Matt. 7:15), is not a faithful steward of God’s mysteries (1 Cor. 4:1), no faithful shepherd of the sheep entrusted to him, no faithful watchman on the walls of Zion. According to God’s Word, he is an unfaithful servant, a silent watchdog, a traitor.

“It is only too clear how many souls are lost and what harm the church suffers because doctrinal reproof is not practiced. The correct doctrine is often correctly grasped only when the opposite is made clear at the same time. . . .”

—Pastoral Theology, C. F. W. Walther; Translated from the original by J. Drickhamer, for Lutheran News, Inc. New Haven, Missouri, 1995, pp. 65f.

doxy sounded loud and clear in *Lehre und Wehre*, a long-time Missouri church magazine of which Walther was the first editor and to which he was for many years the chief contributor. Walther's soundly biblical theology is nowhere better on display than in his classic book *Law And Gospel*. *Law And Gospel* should be on the book shelves, and the annual reading list, of every pastor who would call himself an heir of Luther and Reformation theology.

But back to the anniversary celebration. According to *Christian News*, Missouri is producing a set of videos of its storied history. The video guide begins: "In the spring of 1847, 12 pastors from 14 congregations signed a constitution to form . . ." the synod. It adds: "Could they have imagined a Synod with 6,175 congregations, 8,500 pastors, 14,822 commissioned and lay teachers, and 2.6 million members? Did they imagine mission activities in more than 50 countries? . . ." We haven't seen the video set. Obviously it has an inspiring story to tell.

Notice that the video guide talks about what the founding fathers might have "imagined"—referring then to the synod's impressive statistical growth. What we would here wonder out loud is what the same fathers might have imagined beyond the mere numbers.

For example, could Missouri's founding fathers, including Dr. Walther, have imagined a synod university using a textbook promoting homosexuality and attacking Christianity (calling God a "Black Jewish Lesbian" and Jesus a "Drag Queen")? Could the founding fathers, including Dr. Walther, have imagined a school

in the synod's university system allowing 4,000 Muslims (celebrating the hajj, a Muslim pilgrimage) to gather and worship on its campus? Could the founding fathers, including Dr. Walther, have imagined the synod's Women's Missionary League inviting as speaker to this year's Convention a woman who supports the ordination of women and rejects the inerrancy of the Bible?

The information for our "imaginings" comes from front-page feature stories in the April 28, 1997 *Christian News*, the same issue whose lead headline promotes the anniversary videos. In other words, our "imaginings" are actual occurrences. Oh, but aren't they the exception, you ask? Sadly, such evidences of Missouri having lost her scriptural and orthodox Lutheran moorings can be multiplied almost weekly from news stories in such publications as *Christian News* and *Affirm*.

It is sad, almost beyond words. This 150th year of Missouri's history we would suggest the question for her and her people is not: How far have you come? It is rather: Missouri, where have you gone?

And we have no doubt that Missouri's founding fathers, including Dr. Walther, would pose the same question, with bitter tears.



Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, March 22, 1997—
ILC Tour Choir packing it in.

Pastor John Hein, Our Redeemer's, Red Wing, Minn. gives a shortened version of a sermon he preached to his congregation while the ILC Tour Choir was among the worshippers.

“Oh, Sing to the LORD a New Song!” —Psalm 98

It is a most impressive experience to be able to hear the ocean roar. One is amazed at the substantial power behind the ocean waves as they lap upon the seashore and as their white-caps spray into the air. At the same time it can be so relaxing to sit by the sea, close one's eyes, and listen to the melodic drifting of the waves and perhaps the distant calling of the sea gulls. Sounds of nature such as those of the seaside, of singing birds, of falling rain, and of electrifying thunderstorms, can bring sweet music to our ears. They have chords which express both power and tranquillity. To hear sounds of this sort puts us in touch with God's wonderful creation and the beauty of it all.

But what about sounds and chords that accomplished our salvation? Not long ago we pondered the season of Lent, the suffering and death of our Savior Jesus Christ. Did you hear the grand symphony of this particular season? How about the loud CRACK and SNAP of the whip upon our Savior's back as He was scourged by Roman soldiers? How about the dull THUD

of the hammer as it drove nails into our Savior's hands and feet?

But what about the most eerie and most devastating musical phrase of the entire Passion? How about the loud cry of our Savior which rang out into the dark sky as He was crucified—that painful and chilling solo of our Savior as He suffered the just judgment of God upon our sin—that cry “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” An eerie solo indeed. And yet a powerful solo. For in connection with that grimacing resonance, the Lord's right hand obtained the victory, the victory over sin and the power of the devil. As the Psalm declares: “Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory” (Ps. 98:1).

From year to year a new song resounds within the walls of many of our congregations. They declare to us the comforting Gospel in the words and music that they bring to us. They do not sing these songs only to bring sweet melodies to our ears or to bring



Choir members at ease; Chippewa Trails bus driver, Ken Seefeldt (r), has driven the tour for nine years.



Phoenix or bust! Boxes contain sack lunches provided by the Sleepy Eye congregation.

attention to themselves. But they sing unto the Lord a new song because He has done marvelous things. He has saved us! And so the Tour Choir members bring jubilant praises to the Lord.

Such praises are far grander than any harmonious sound we may hear in nature. The sound of birds singing is replaced with the sound of gracious soprano voices. The sound of the booming waves of the ocean is replaced with the low vibrato of the bass section. The sound of the electrifying thunderstorm is replaced with the sounds of organ, brass, and percussion instruments. We may not hear the soothing and powerful sounds of nature as we gather together in our churches. Nevertheless, the music we hear from the Tour Choir has an even greater and more elegant effect. It soothes and it moves our troubled and guilty hearts. To hear the melodic harmonies and the powerful sounds of

sacred music puts us in touch—not with nature, but with the beauty and power of God’s grace in Christ. He has truly done marvelous things!

We certainly benefit when we are blessed with the ability to hear sounds. But we are all the more blessed when all the elements of sound are selected, manipulated, and organized so that we have what is called music. What a gift such music is! With music a phenomenal power affects the hearts, the emotions, and the minds of people. There is the Biblical story of David refreshing King Saul’s troubled heart by the music of the harp. There is the crying infant who receives serenity as its mother or father sings a lullaby. There is the joy of learning as a child sings the ABC’s. There is the ease of memorizing words to hymns as the melodies persist in our heads. Therefore, with the remarkable impact that music has on us, there is no better way for people

1997 Immanuel Lutheran College Tour Choir



The choir is shown here after it had presented its inspiring program *Volumes Of Praise* at Holy Cross, Phoenix. Director John Reim at right. “The church was full, with visitors even from San Francisco.”

*Martin Luther:
"Next to the Word of God,
music deserves the high-
est praise. The gift of lan-
guage combined with the
gift of song was given to
man that he should pro-
claim the Word of God
through music."*

to learn from God or to make praises to God.



**Vacation Bible School
Faith Lutheran Churches
Nicollet & New Ulm, Minnesota**



Faith churches held a 1996 program which featured the life of Martin Luther. (l-r) Rachel Vorwerk, David Vorwerk, Sarah Spoor (music), Azzizeh Haddad, Joe Haddad

SOWER AND SEED PARABLE COMES TO LIFE. Pastor Gregory Jackson gave each student five sunflower seeds in spring. When they were fully grown and mature, the children brought them in. The sermon for that Sunday was The Sower and the Seed (Matthew 13). Although some seeds were lost before planting and some did not grow at all, the seeds which flourished more than made up for the ones which did not. The parable of Jesus illustrates why we should trust in the power of the Word to bring

The melodic rhythm and harmony of the ocean waves upon the seashore can indeed be soothing and powerful. But music connected with the revitalizing message of the Gospel of Christ can be far more soothing and powerful, for it can comfort the human heart troubled with sin, and move the sluggish human heart to praise the Lord. May we express such power and tranquillity in all our sacred music as we are put in touch with the gracious yet powerful right hand of God. Oh, let us all sing a new song unto the Lord, for He has done marvelous things!

the increase we desire.

Pictured with two of the largest seedheads are Rachel and David Vorwerk, children of John and Phyllis Vorwerk of Faith, New Ulm.



In Our CLC Classrooms— Meet: Philip Strike



Philip Strike began teaching at Holy Cross Lutheran School of Phoenix, Arizona in the fall of 1996. Philip, an alumnus of Immanuel Lutheran High School and Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wis., graduated in 1995 with his degree in Elementary Education.

Being dismayed with the direction many public schools in our country are taking, Philip felt teaching in one of our Christian schools was God's plan for him to make a difference in children's lives.

Philip's favorite subjects to teach are math and science. Outside of the classroom he enjoys spending time with his wife Lana (nee Romberg) and son Carl. His hobbies include basketball and biking.

May the Lord of the Church continue to bless his efforts in our synod's classrooms. ●

Announcements

Minnesota Delegate Conference

Date: Sunday, June 22, 1997

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Grace Ev. Lutheran Church, Sleepy Eye

Agenda:

- * The Role of a Congregational Board of Education—Mr. Mark Rehm
- * Encouraging Family Devotions and Bible Study—Pastor John Hein
- * Business Meeting

—Pastor Rick R. Grams, Secretary

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Gebhardt
811 S. Union Road
Spokane, WA 99206

The Lord Your God Will Help You

*The Lord your God will help you
In everything you ask.
He'll help you in your pleasure,
And in each daily task.*

*The Lord your God will help you
In every passing hour;
He'll guard and guide your footsteps
With His almighty power.*

*The Lord your God will help you,
So pray to Him and say:
"My Maker and Redeemer—
Help me, Oh Lord, today!"*
(poem by Teacher Alvin Sieg)

Installation

In accord with our usage and order, David J. Reim, who was called by St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Church of British Columbia, Canada to be its pastor was installed on May 4, 1997.

—Pastor Bertram J. Naumann

Change Of Address

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