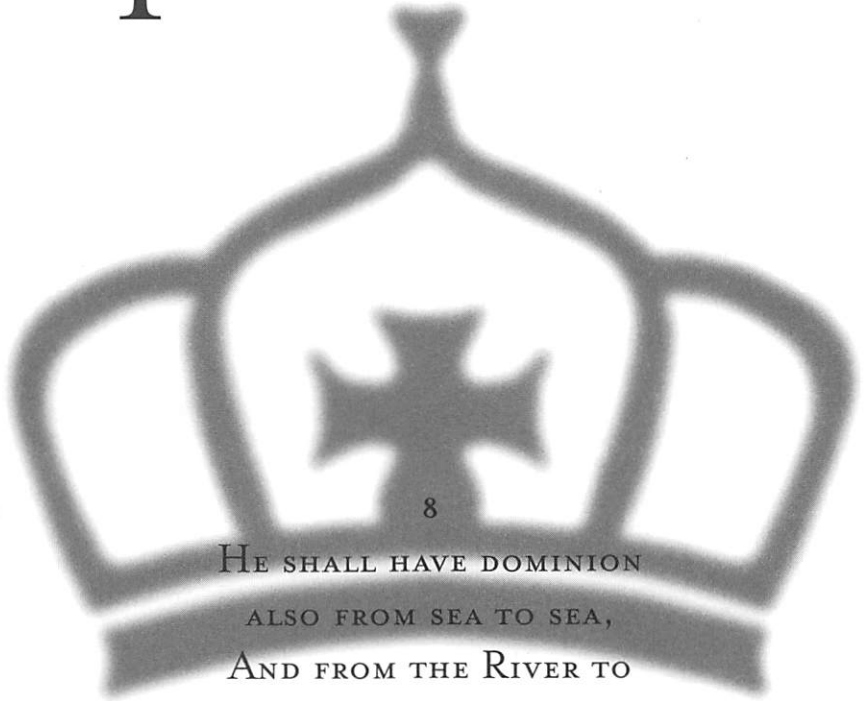


Lutheran Spokesman



8

HE SHALL HAVE DOMINION
ALSO FROM SEA TO SEA,
AND FROM THE RIVER TO
THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

I I

YES, ALL KINGS SHALL FALL
DOWN BEFORE HIM;
ALL NATIONS SHALL
SERVE HIM.

P s a l m 7 2

A Universal King Of Lasting Peace

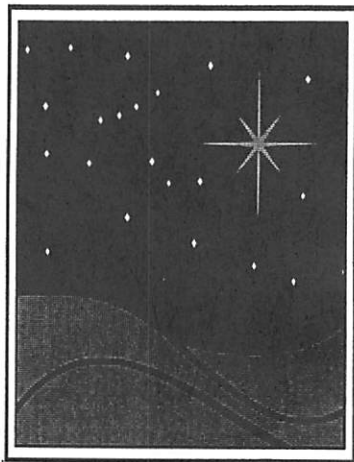
Having seen His star in the East, certain Magi came to pay special homage to an infant King in the little town of Bethlehem.

There are important questions concerning this King that need to be properly answered in order for people the world over to be blessed by His reign: what kind of a king was He to be? what kind of a kingdom would He establish?

In that day, King Herod presumed that the little King was of the political variety and therefore regarded Him as a threat to his throne. However, the spiritually wise men beheld the little One through eyes of faith as the divine Savior-King. They “fell down and worshiped Him” and brought offerings to Him, as believers are accustomed to do in thanksgiving to their Lord and God.

The evangelist Matthew, who alone records this worshipful encounter, went to great lengths to identify this

King as the promised Messiah who had been foretold in Old Testament



Scriptures.

In those ancient pages of Holy Writ, the Spirit of God beautifully revealed concerning the promised Christ what manner of King He would be, as well as the nature of His kingdom.

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During the Christmas season, the Christian church oftentimes reads from Isaiah chapter 9 where the promised King is referred to as the Mighty God who would establish an everlasting kingdom of peace.

Psalms 72 made known that the Messianic kingdom would be a universal one. It declared concerning the promised King: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. . . . Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him" (vv. 8,11).

Welcome News

The message of a universal kingdom of peace that will last forever is welcome news to sinful man, who is plagued with inner struggles, anxieties, unrest, and with outer conflicts and strife in the home and in the world at large.

The question is, what kind of kingdom can actually bring this inner and outer peace? It is not the utopian dream of a new world order where all the earth's population will live peaceably together under the rule of one secular government. Due to the sinful, depraved nature that will continue to persist in mankind, there will always be wars and rumors of wars until the very end of time.

Neither will there be a kingdom of peace according to the millennialist's scheme of thinking. They have Jesus returning to this earth to usher in a golden age of Christianity. According to this thinking Christianity will be a dominant force throughout the world for a thousand years. One of many scriptural reasons why this will not be is Jesus' clear statement that His kingdom is not of this world (Jn. 18:36).

What then is the nature of Jesus' kingdom that will bring peace extending across the face of this earth? Jesus testified concerning this kingly reign: "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, See here! or See there! For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you" (Lk. 17:20-21). His is a spiritual reign in the hearts of believers, governing and blessing them with His grace, mercy, and love.

The Lord Jesus imparts to us who are His subjects by faith that inner and outer peace because of what is revealed in 2 Corinthians, where we are told: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them" (5:19).

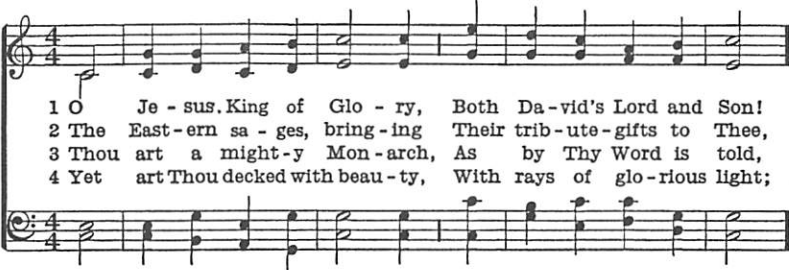
On account of Jesus' redemptive work on the cross, we experience an inner peace with God in the heart-felt knowledge of God's all-encompassing forgiveness. And with the redeeming love of our Savior-King being a governing force in our hearts, we are enabled to live peaceably with one another (1 Jn. 4:7-11).

O Jesus, King of Glory,
Both David's Lord and Son!
Thy realm endures forever,
In heav'n is fixed Thy throne.
Help that in earth's dominions,
Thro'-out from pole to pole,
Thy reign may spread salvation
To each benighted soul. (TLH 130:1)

—Pastor Mark Gullerud



Appreciating Our Lutheran Hymns



1 O Je - sus, King of Glo - ry, Both Da - vid's Lord and Son!
2 The East - ern sa - ges, bring - ing Their trib - ute - gifts to Thee,
3 Thou art a might - y Mon - arch, As by Thy Word is told,
4 Yet art Thou decked with beau - ty, With rays of glo - rious light;

O Jesus, King Of Glory

An Epiphany Hymn

#130 in The Lutheran Hymnal

Many fine hymns have been written during times of great trial, for such times turn us to the Lord's Word for comfort and strength, with the result that we grow in knowledge and faith. It is not surprising that hymnwriters have been moved in times of trial to compose expressions of devotion and praise.

One hymnwriter who labored during difficult times was Martin Behm (1557-1622), author of three hymns in *The Lutheran Hymnal*: "Lord Jesus Christ, My Life, My Light" (#148), one of many that he wrote on our Lord's passion; "O Blessed, Holy Trinity" (#541); and the Epiphany hymn, "O Jesus, King of Glory." Behm was a Lutheran pastor in Lauban, Silesia, where he served during times of famine (1590), pestilence (1616), and war (1619).

"O Jesus, King of Glory" is based on the Gospel for Epiphany, Matthew 2:1-12, the account of the coming of the Magi from the East to worship the child Jesus. This hymn beautifully expresses what was revealed to the Magi, that concealed in the humanity of the child Jesus is the glory of the Son of God, the world's Savior. Just as the star came and stood over where the young child was, so also the prophetic Word points to Jesus, leading us to hail Him joyously as our King and Savior.

This great Epiphany hymn is a source of strength and comfort, even in times of trial, for it sets before us our Savior in His glory and beauty. It leads us who are weak and poor to call upon Him in faith. *"I pray Thee, guide and keep me Safe from my bitter foes, From sin and death and Satan; Free me from all my woes."*

—Pastor John Klatt



He Shall Reign Forever And Ever!

The year 1999 brings us close to the end of both a century and a millennium. The approach of the year 2000 has caused much excitement, with people expecting great changes in our world. Some are hoping for great new things to happen in the next millennium. Others are forecasting fearful things.

But as we survey the world scene at the beginning of this new year, what we see is a world in which the passage of time changes things very little.

One feature of the world scene that does not really change is the constant struggle for power. The mighty of this world—and those who want to be mighty—are vying with one another for power. This was so a thousand years ago, and it is safe to say that this situation will not change as long as the world stands. There will always be struggles for power, by legitimate and illegitimate means. The mighty of this world will rise, and they will fall.

There is really only one significant and lasting change in power that has taken place in this world. It happened with the coming of the Son of God as the world's Savior, an event that established the Christian era.

This great change was announced by John the Baptist when he proclaimed: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The Son of God had come to wrest power from Satan who had gained power over mankind when he successfully tempted Eve and then Adam. And Jesus did defeat Satan and robbed him of his power over mankind. He took upon Himself our sins, the source of Satan's power over us, so that Satan can no longer accuse us or force us to follow him and be condemned with him.

King Of Kings

It is important for us as we begin this new year to remember that it doesn't matter so much who occupies the seats of power in this world. What matters is that there is One who is above them all, whose throne is forever: Jesus Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

It is to Him that we owe allegiance above all others in authority, for He alone is worthy "to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Rev. 5:12). It is to Him that we



can look at all times for salvation and for help in every need, for He is the one who "by Himself purged our sins, (and) sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3).

This same Jesus who died for us and rose again, who is Lord and King even now and reigns at the right hand of God, will come again and reveal His kingdom before all.

Now much of mankind denies the kingship of Jesus. They do not

acknowledge Him as their Lord or as their Savior. This is true even of many who speak well of Him as a good man and as a fine example of how people ought to live; they still don't regard Him as their Lord or think they need Him as their Savior.

But the day will come when He will appear again, this time in glory as the Judge of all. Then every eye will see Him in His glory as King of kings and Lord of lords. Then every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

When He arrives it will be too late for those who have denied Him now in this life. They will be forced to admit His Lordship to their own condemna-

tion.

What a blessed privilege it is for us to know Him and believe in Him as Lord and Savior now in this our time of grace. To us the kingship of Jesus is a great comfort. Jesus in whom we trust is Lord. He died for us to redeem us from sin and condemnation. He lives to bring us safely to the end of our days and to take us to be with Him. When He comes again in glory it will be to welcome us into the eternal mansions that He has prepared for those who love Him.

May Jesus our Savior and King bring us all safely to that day.

—Pastor John Klatt

Psalm 120

“Lord, save me from the lying lips of my enemies.”

A Prayer Psalm

The psalmist prays that the Lord would deliver him from his adversaries, especially from persecution in the form of slander.

No doubt the Israelites were made to undergo this difficult trial on many an occasion while they languished as captives in Babylon. How often their enemies must have tried to “pick a fight” with them. How often the words must have pierced like an arrow into their soul: “Who is Jehovah? What a weak and helpless God that He would allow you to be deported as slaves from your homeland! Shame on you for believing in Him!”

After the return from exile, they were faced with bitter opposition from the side of the Samaritans. Recall the

Psalm 120

In my distress I cried to the LORD, and He heard me. Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue.

What shall be given to you, or what shall be done to you, you false tongue? Sharp arrows of the warrior, with coals of the broom tree!

Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar! My soul has dwelt too long with one who hates peace. I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.

treachery of Sanballat (and others) spoken of in Nehemiah 6.

How natural, then, for the Jewish pilgrims—as they made their way up to Jerusalem to worship Jehovah—to pray that He “deliver their souls from lying

From the Editor:

Last September Pastor Thomas Schuetze, St. Matthew's, Dallas, had an essay assignment called: "A Study of Psalms 120-134 and Their Correlation as 'Songs of Ascents'." The Conference recommended these psalm studies to the Spokesman for devotional purposes.

While the original essay contained some Hebrew technicalities and other general observations, space considerations permit printing the devotional portions only. In behalf of our readers, we thank Pastor Schuetze for these psalm studies which will appear also in coming months.

We print here a brief introductory paragraph from the essay.

"(Speak) to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." So did Paul exhort the readers of his epistle to the Ephesians (5:19). It is one of several New Testament passages which shows (as we might have expected) that singing the praises of the Lord Jesus played a prominent role in the worship lives of early Christians. It is also an indication that the "hymnal" of the Old Testament (just like our hymnal) had more than one "section" in it, one of which was a "Psalms Section." This too comes as no surprise. After all, the Book of Psalms—the best-loved book in the Old Testament, which is quoted in the New Testament more frequently than any other (116 times out of a total of 283 times, according to Halley's Commentary)—served for many years as the hymnbook for Old Testament believers. Most, if not all, of the psalms were written with the intention that they be sung. . . .

lips" and the "deceitful tongue" and that He bless them with His peace.

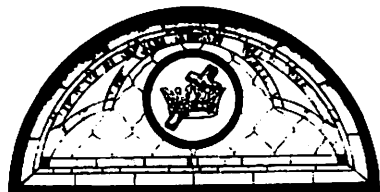
This psalm is a fitting prayer for God's people of all times. We too are confronted by enemies. Our most formidable foe, of course, is the devil (= slanderer), whom Jesus called the "father of lies" (Jn. 8:44). He likes to whisper in our ear (especially in times of trouble): "Put your trust in Jehovah? What good will that do? He can't help you!" Or: "You are a child of God? Why then is He permitting you to suffer? What kind of a God would allow this? Certainly not a loving God!"

Then there is the ungodly world which, egged on by Satan, likes to poke fun at Christians and ridicule their beliefs (as Jesus predicted, Mt. 10:25).

Truly, as we continue our journey

to the New Jerusalem, we also need the Lord God to bless us with His peace—the peace which flows from the confidence that He is our Savior-God in whom our sins find perfect cleansing; a peace which flows from the confidence that He is controlling the events of our lives for our good (even when it doesn't seem like it).

Eventually, for His mercy's sake, He will deliver us from every evil work and bless us with the perfect peace of heaven. ●



Studies In Galatians

Standing Fast In The Liberty By Which Christ Has Made Us Free (See 5:1)

Chapter 6: 1-10

So this is how you fulfill the law of Christ!

In the constitutions of our churches there is a list of what members covenant to be and do for one another. Among other things of significance, they declare their willingness to *be admonished* if they become ensnared in some sinful practice. Usually a board of elders is asked to do this in behalf of the church, since they are deemed “spiritual”—mature in Christian understanding and imbued with an evangelical spirit.

What a challenging task this is!

How important that it be done in accord with “the law of *Christ*” and not in the manner of the Law of Moses, from which Christ has set us free (5:1)! Sinai was driven by carrot and stick; the purposes of Jesus are constrained by love (2 Corinthians 5:14).

In the concluding chapter of Galatians we have a fine handbook for our elders (and for any Christian who is minded to be the Lord’s instrument in “doing good” {6:9}). One board developed an approach that attempts to implement the principles we find here. Let’s see if you agree that it does.

Visiting A Brother/Sister “Caught in a Sin”

If, for example, a member has

stopped worshiping and communing with the congregation, these elders start by saying how confident they are that this person would *want* to be functioning in these ways.

Something is preventing this. There is some obstacle. They have come to help identify it (some offense taken or given in pulpit or pew; physical or emotional ill health; financial embarrassment; poor motivation etc.).

Having done this, the elders talk about what might be done either to remove the obstacle or surmount it. Somewhat like the Minnesota farmer who refused to stop his plowing when he came to a large boulder. If he couldn’t move it, he would just plow around it. So they affirm their eagerness to share the burden of that person’s restoration. In manner they try to be kindly, gentle, modest and non-judgmental, yet—persuasive.

Imagine a pilgrim band making its way on a perilous path. One of the group slips off the road and into the ditch, spraining an ankle as he slides. According to the law of Christ one might expect that some faith-sibling would risk his own safety to reach, restore, and then take on the burden of that person’s backpack along with his

own.

Such is beyond duty, and moved by a love which “seeks and saves.”

According to the Law of Christ

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load” (6:1-5 NIV).

In Due Season

True “doing good” is governed by the “law of Christ.” Therefore it . . .

1) gives priority to the needs of *instruction in the word (6:1)*, funding the work of the gospel at home and abroad;

2) has a big heart, welcoming each *opportunity to do good* to anyone and everyone, yet giving special attention to the *family of believers (6:10)*;

3) trusts that one will never suffer loss—long term—for charity done to *please the Spirit (6:8)*;

4) dares to be generous, knowing that liberal *sowing* will be followed by a bountiful *harvest (6:9)*.

To His Glory

The Law of Moses required acts of mercy and charity, yet gave one neither heart nor hands for cheerful doing. Paul shows that the law of Christ, which is Spirit-given love, leads to a level of service far beyond the requirements of duty or some legal code.

What good deeds we do willingly in faith are the sort which will—as Jesus said—cause those who see them to *praise your Father in heaven (Mt. 5:16)*.

What an incentive for true “*doing good*”! Glory be to Jesus!

—Pastor Rollin A. Reim



In this “human interest” snapshot from last summer’s convention, Wallace and Beryl Crozier of Resurrection Lutheran, Corpus Christi, Texas pose with their current pastor, Daniel Fleischer (right), and two of their former pastors, Pastor Arvid Gullerud (left, Spokane, WA) and Pastor Andrew Schaller (Watertown, SD). Missing at the time was another former shepherd of the Croziers’: Pastor Paul Larsen (Live Oak, FL).

Christian Marriage: A Heaven-sent Blessing

In our November *Spokesman* we spoke of *God's Wonderful Marriage Math Equation*: $1 + 1 = 1$. Even though our amoral society and our own sin-nature would emphasize other "new math" marriage equations: $1 + 1 = 2$ (independence) or $1 + 2 = 3$ (extra-marital relationships) we do well to implement the design of the Master Marriage Architect and Counselor, our Lord Himself.

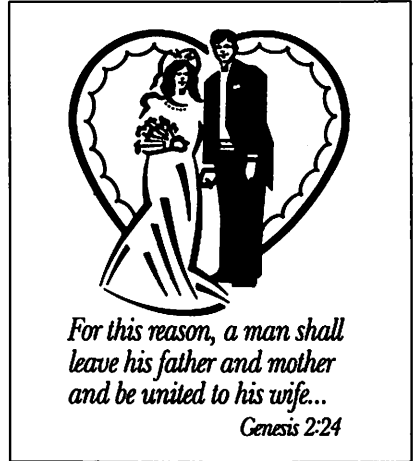
Our Lord created, defines, and regulates marriage, and has provided for us a marvelous model love-relationship to emulate: Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:22f). Through His Gospel He provides Christian marriages with their essential "agape-love" ingredients: nourishing and cherishing, sacrifice, commitment, and forgiveness.

Everything God planned for and has given to man is for his well-being and happiness. "Every good and perfect gift is from above . . ." (Jms. 1:17). Marriage is surely a part of this bundle of blessings God has graciously heaped upon us.

The World's View

From evidence around us one might easily conclude that marriage has caused countless problems and heartaches.

Those looking for a "better way" would point to our high divorce rate and all its life-shattering consequences: broken hearts and homes, single-parent families, adulteries, as well as considerable other social and emotional fallout. These, they say, prove



that marriage is simply not working in today's society. Yet to blame marriage itself for all these problems is like blaming the doctor or pharmacist when we aren't helped by the medical prescription we neglected to take.

The problems are not with marriage, but rather with those who sinfully disregard God's plan and therefore not only deprive themselves of its blessings, but bring upon themselves countless problems in its place.

The Christian View

Marriage was instituted and designed by God as a timeless blessing for man. "Marriage is honorable in all" (Heb. 13:4). And each of its three purposes remain wonderful blessings today: companionship (Gen. 2:18); sexual love (Heb. 13:4b); and children (Ps. 127:3-5).

These blessings were given to man and woman in order to enhance and enrich their lives. Luther well said:

“The world says of marriage: a short joy and long displeasure. But he who understands it finds in it delight, love, and joy without ceasing.”

Yet when God speaks of marriage as a blessing, His intent goes even further than the afore-mentioned earthly gifts. His ultimate hope is that marriage will provide a unique and wonderful environment for the sharing of His greatest blessing—the Savior Himself.

Through their respective callings—husbands and wives, parents and children—all within the Christian family have opportunities to influence, encourage, nurture, and build up one another in the faith.

Such a family heritage bears spiri-

tual and eternal dividends in God-fearing children as well as in spiritual blessings for generations yet unborn.

Marriage is part of God’s plan not simply for the propagation of the human family on earth, but for the very filling of heaven itself. It is His hope that husband and wife not just live together in love, but “dwell together as heirs of the grace of life” (1 Pet. 3:7).

What more could we pray for than that those who loved their Lord and one another here on earth might bask in God’s love together forever in heaven?

To that end, may all of us regard, treasure, and live our Christian marriages as one of life’s great heaven-sent blessings.

—Pastor David Schierenbeck

**“Holy Father . . . Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”
(Jesus in John 17:17)**

Your Word Is Truth

The ancient scribes who hand-copied the Old Testament Scriptures showed great reverence for the Word by the strict rules that they followed in their work.

For example, they focused on one letter at a time, lest their eyes confuse similar words; they even counted the letters in each book that they had copied to see if there were too few or too many.

These and many other rules that they followed would be fanatical if applied to any writings other than the Scriptures. But those men labored so carefully and meticulously because they believed that the words before them were God’s own.

It is right that we also should view

the Scriptures with reverence, treasuring every word of the sacred text, for the Scriptures themselves teach that God the Holy Spirit is the Author of the books of the Bible in this way that He moved the “holy men of God” to write what they did (2 Pet. 1:21).

Paul describes the Scriptures as “given by inspiration of God”—literally “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16). The Spirit’s inspiration extends to each word of the original text. The “holy men of God” who wrote the books of the Bible spoke “as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21); they uttered words and recorded them verbatim. Therefore we believe and teach the doctrine of *verbal inspiration*—that every word of the Scriptures is inspired.

This is evident also from the way the New Testament writers often cite the Old Testament Scriptures, making a point based on a single word.

For example, the writer of Hebrews speaks of the new covenant of the Gospel, quoting a passage from Jeremiah. His point is based on the single word "new." He says of the Lord: "In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete" (Heb. 8:8, 13). Jesus also quotes the Old Testament Scriptures in this way, arguing with His enemies that David in Psalm 110 called the Messiah his Lord. The basis of the Lord's argument was a single word, which silenced the Pharisees (Mt. 22:41-46).

Paul even goes so far as to make a point from the Old Testament based not just on one word but on the fact that a singular form is used rather than a plural. "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is

Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

Clearly the New Testament writers and our Lord Himself regarded every word of Scripture as chosen and put there by God.

The New Testament Scriptures are likewise inspired by the Holy Spirit, for Jesus promised His apostles that the Spirit would teach them all things and cause them to remember what Jesus had taught them (Jn. 14:26).

Paul also said that he and the other apostles taught "not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches" (1 Cor. 2:13).

This teaching of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is comforting to us, for it assures us that we may be certain of what the Scriptures teach. And the Scriptures make known to us the love of God in Christ and the eternal salvation that He has won for us.

We are right to believe the Scriptures and to place our trust in the Savior who is revealed there.

—Pastor John Klatt

Looking Back in the *Lutheran Spokesman*

From January 1969—

WHAT IS TRUTH?

One of the purposes of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, according to its constitution, is "to protect this fellowship against the encroachment of

error and unionism through united testimony and doctrinal discipline."

This statement is surely out of tune with the times. Today most people in the churches are not worried about error and false teaching. They are used to hearing many different opinions on every subject including religion. Nobody wants to be so arrogant as to say his religious opinion is right and all others are wrong. As the September 1967 *Lutheran Spokesman* pointed out, some Episcopalians have gone so far as to declare that "the word 'heresy' should be abandoned."

If people are not concerned about

religious error, they are even less concerned about unionism, the religious fellowship of individuals and churches not completely agreed in doctrine. It is not a rare thing today to find Christians worshipping with non-Christians, to say nothing of Lutherans, Catholics, and Protestants of every shade joining in religious fellowship. When a person condemns church mergers and joint worship services as sinful unionism, he is regarded as being completely out of date.

But when we turn to Paul's letter to his assistant Titus in the New Testament, what do we find? We find the standard by which we Christians can judge what is true and what is false. We are told to hold fast to the true and rebuke the false. We are told to stop the mouths of false teachers and reject heretics.

What is the standard for judging doctrine? Not private interpretation of Holy Scriptures, not the decision of church councils or synods, not church tradition or papal infallibility, but divine infallibility. "God cannot lie."

Where does this infallible God speak? Where else but in the writings of Moses and the prophets, the evangelists and the apostles? Since God cannot lie, neither can the writers of the Old Testament and New Testament lie when God Himself breathed the words they wrote, when the Holy Spirit moved them and taught them what to write. The Holy Scriptures cannot lie, for they are the words of God Himself, who cannot lie. Therefore these writings remain to this day the absolute religious authority, the only ultimate source and standard of Christian doctrine and practice.

When we believe that in the Holy

Scriptures our infallible God speaks infallibly, how can we respect convictions contrary to Scripture? How can we worship in any outward union with those who teach contrary to God's infallible Word?

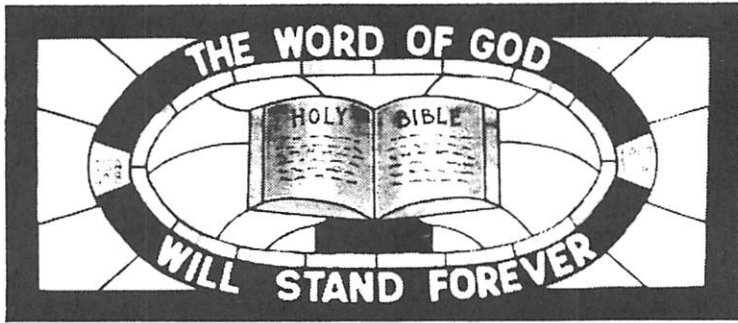
Paul couldn't respect false teaching. In his letter to Titus Paul tells him: "There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. . . . Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. . . . A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject."

In this battle against false teaching it is the overseer, the pastor, whose foremost duty it is to keep the true and reject the false. Paul tells Titus: "A bishop must be" a man "holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers (those who contradict)."

Pastors should know God's Word well for two reasons; 1) to teach and train others in the true teaching of God's Word; 2) to expose and correct and criticize those who teach false doctrine.

Even if pastors don't have to be heresy hunters, they surely ought to be heresy detectors. In fact every Christian should beware of false prophets, as Jesus commanded. Every Christian should continually test everything he hears to determine whether it is in agreement with God's Word or not.

Obviously we can't prevent false



teaching from making its appearance in this world. God does not want us to persecute false teachers or to stop their mouths with physical force. We must, however, rebuke them and refute them and refuse their fellowship. We can't silence all teaching contrary to the Christian faith, but we can prevent false teachers from preaching in our pulpits and teaching in our schools. We can separate ourselves from all churches and religious organizations that tolerate false teaching. We can testify boldly against that which is wrong. We can refuse to be partakers of the errors of others. In short, we can protect our fellowship against the encroachment of error and unionism through united testimony and doctrinal discipline.

Martin Luther was accused of arrogance when he stood firm on God's Word against the errors of Catholics, Anabaptists, Zwinglians, Calvinists, and some would-be Lutherans. We can imagine how he felt when a secretary at the Diet of Worms told him: "You wish holy Scripture to be understood according to your judgment and the workings of your mind. . . . Do not claim for yourself that you are the one and only man who has knowledge of the Bible, who has the true understanding of Holy Scripture. . . . Do not place your judgment ahead of that of so many distin-

guished men. Do not regard yourselves as wiser than all others." (L.W., Vol. 32, p. 129)

Luther was tempted to give in when he was accused of arrogance for clinging to the naked words of Scripture against the false teachings of the church. We are tempted to give in when we are told that all churches accept the Bible but merely interpret it in different ways. We are told the Bible is not really so clear that we can distinguish the truth from all error and therefore we shouldn't condemn interpretations of Scripture different from our own.

This is Satan's plot to make all truth doubtful and all error tolerable. For if we no longer know what is the truth, we can't condemn the false either. It was a great day in history when Luther said at the Diet of Worms: "I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. . . . I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me." (L.W., Vol. 32, p. 112)

It is not arrogance but humility when a grown man accepts Holy Scriptures in childlike simplicity, when a grown man wants to be a sheep following the voice of his Shepherd and will not listen to the voice of strangers.

There is such a thing as truth. God's Word is truth. If we continue in

Jesus' words, we shall know this truth. We have Jesus' promise to that effect. If we really want to do God's will, we shall know whether a teaching is true or false. Jesus told us this. I ask you: how can Jesus expect us Christians to beware of false prophets if it's impossible to determine what is true or false? God's Word is a lamp for our feet. Its teachings are clear and certain. We can know the truth. We can and must condemn what is false.

We must be concerned not only about doctrinal errors that crop up in churches. We must be concerned about doctrinal errors taught in the public or private schools we or our children attend, the doctrinal errors to which we and our children are exposed on television, in movies, on radio programs, in newspapers and magazines, and everywhere on this earth. There are many false prophets, and we ought to be on guard. Pastors particularly have to be aware of what's going on, continually testing all opinions, holding fast the faithful Word, refuting and rebuking all false teachings. We live in a world where God's Word is not respected as the final answer.

In a book of humanist philosophy published in 1961 ("The Humanist

Frame") one of the authors writes: "Nothing perhaps separates this century so sharply from its immediate predecessor as the loss amongst educated men and women of conviction of the literal truth of the basic dogmas of the Christian religion." Again: "Undoubtedly the growth of toleration is the expression of weakening conviction and a declining belief in the importance of what is tolerated. No one is tolerant in what he believes to be both true and vital. No one who really believed that eternal hellfire was the price of unbelief would allow his child to be exposed to agnostic propaganda. Both in opinion and in behavior we are only tolerant, either in areas in which we suspect that we could be wrong, or in those which we do not think matter very much—only tolerant of what is not felt as a serious threat."

The Christian should be concerned about error and unionism. We know that doctrine is the most important thing of all. We know that God's doctrines are true and contrary doctrines are false. We know that false doctrines can lead to eternal death, both ours and our children's. We dare never be tolerant of false doctrine. May God help us.

(—D. Lau)

SMORGASBORD

● POSTMODERNISM (NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN)

This, our first issue of a new year, is addressing the subject of postmodernism. What is that, you ask? It is the new and latest cultural worldview.

I was first introduced to the term back in 1994 when *Christian News* carried a review of the book

"Postmodern Times—A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture" by Gene Edward Veith. I proceeded to order the book. Its back cover says: "Current Issues: Postmodernism—The Worldview That Denies All Worldviews." It further explains: "Just what is postmodernism? The average person would be

shocked by its creed: Truth, meaning, and individual identity do not exist. These are social constructs. Human life has no special significance, no more value than animal or plant life. . . .”

Those comments alone are enough to disturb. As far as a conservative Lutheran church and/or synod like ours is concerned, flares erupt at these most basic premises: truth does not exist and human life has no special significance.

Let’s back up a minute. Postmodernism succeeds modernism, the secular worldview in vogue when I first entered the ministry in the ‘60’s. Modernism too was antichristian. Modernism, however, did not quite deny that truth existed; rather, it said that truth was what could be proven by reason and/or by scientific experimentation. Subsequently, according to the modernist (secular or religious), the Bible had to be “demythologized.”

Where else did the worldview of modernism lead? To this: man was said to be the measure of all things, supreme and inherently good, a product of progressive evolution; not surprisingly, according to the modernist, the only moral standards were those commonly accepted out in the world.

Familiar thinking? It is, if you are one of the “over 30” crowd.

Now, however, modernism is dead.

Good, right? Not so fast. Satan has succeeded in foisting an “updated” worldview on our society and culture. Modernism’s new sister, postmodernism, says that truth doesn’t exist, period.

That’s right; there are no absolutes; there is no such thing as truth at all. That means one religion is as good as another; whatever works is true; what you want and choose for yourself is

true. In the area of morals, there aren’t any. There are no rules, standards, God’s or man’s (which means, for one thing, sin doesn’t exist). The new catchword is “tolerance”; the postmodern password is *whatever*—the ultimate in tolerance.

As for man, under modernism “humanists used to think man is the measure of all things—now man isn’t worth anything at all” (Gene Edward Veith, quoted in an article titled “*Secular anti-humanism*,” *WORLD* magazine, Aug. 15, 1998). Follow that through, and where does it lead? Certain ethicists are becoming “more and more explicitly pro-death. Abortion, euthanasia, eugenics, and other ‘compassionate ways of weeding out people’ are held up as the highest moral principles” (*WORLD*).

While we call it new, postmodernism—like modernism—is in the final analysis as old as the hills. It’s only a new twist 1) on Satan’s “Has-God-indeed-said?” ploy in the Garden of Eden which got Eve and Adam to question God’s truth (Gen. 3:1); 2) on Pilate’s sarcastic rejoinder “What-is-truth?” in answer to our Savior’s comment about those being of the truth who hear His voice (Jn. 18:37f).

How can or should those who wish to live in and for the Christian faith in a postmodern society respond? See the article “What Is Truth?” in this issue of the *Spokesman*. It was written thirty years ago by—then pastor, now Professor—David Lau of our Immanuel Lutheran Seminary faculty. Though the professor’s analysis and comments were originally written to call attention to the inroads and dangers of modernism, his good words apply equally today to modernism’s

ugly and equally dangerous new sister, postmodernism.

Also in this issue find Pastor Klatt's article "Your Word Is Truth." The writer takes us back to biblical basics—the best response to any and every antichristian worldview Satan would foist upon the world.

● **ON LETTERS TO THE EDITOR & (LACK OF) RESPONSE**

Dear reader, we have a story to tell—and an alarm button to push—and hope you will follow us through.

A number of articles supportive of biblical creation and critical of the evolutionary hypothesis have appeared on these pages from the pen of Dr. David N. Menton, an associate professor of anatomy at Washington University, St. Louis, and a member of our CLC's Faith Lutheran Church, Ballwin, Mo.

Dr. Menton is eminently competent in his field. He lectures nationwide—

even worldwide (he was a speaker in Turkey a year or so ago)—on the subject of creation/evolution. He is on the board of more than one creation society in this country. His writings have appeared in a variety of secular and religious magazines and newspapers nationwide.

The Lutheran Witness, official organ of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, carried an article by Dr. Menton called "Is God an Evolutionist?" in its July 1998 issue. The lengthy article—more a scholarly essay—was, in fact, featured on the magazine cover and was the lead story. For ten pages Dr. Menton went on. He set forth, in his scholarly manner with which *Spokesman* readers are familiar, how true science and the biblical doctrine of creation need not and do not clash. (Unfortunately, the article is too long to print in its entirety; see the box for a flavor of the article, and its conclusion.)

From "Is God an Evolutionist?"

... *The Scriptures tell us that "by sin, death came into the world," and that "the wages of sin is death." Evolutionists, however, vigorously deny that sin has anything to do with death, but rather that death is natural. Life, they insist, would be impossible without death.*

Certainly, evolution would be impossible without death. Death, in fact, has been called the "engine" of evolution. Carl Sagan said: "Only through the deaths of an immense number of slightly maladapted organisms are we, brains and all, here today."

Evolutionism inevitably breaks the relationship between sin and death, thus negating the need for a Savior who would save us from sin, death and the power of the devil.

Finally, when the Lord returns in glory on the Last Day, and the dead are raised from their graves, will scholars attempt one last naturalistic explanation for even this? Or will we finally concede that God does miracles beyond our understanding? Will we finally be still before the throne of God, and let God be God, though every man be found a liar? We will indeed!

—Dr. David N. Menton

So why comment here? Because a *Spokesman* reader sent us a copy of the article, together with two pages of letter-responses the article provoked from readers of *The Lutheran Witness* (cf. September 1998 issue of *The Lutheran Witness*). Our reader suggested: "*Editor Fleischer, maybe you'd like to comment in your magazine.*"

We will comment indeed, and show why. (Dear reader, are you still with us?)

Of eight published letters to *The Lutheran Witness* on the subject of Dr. Menton's article, five expressed appreciation. One pastor wrote: "The article on evolution by David Menton was clear, concise, covered all major issues, demonstrated the theological consequences of theistic evolution, and affirmed science while acknowledging its limits. I intend to use it in catechism classes. . . ."

But three of the eight letters were critical. Said another pastor: "There are many Christian scientists who see God's intelligent design in the universe but who do not agree with Dr. Menton on matters such as the age of the universe, the meaning of the fossil record or the role of a universal flood in fossil deposits. For the sake of intelligent discussion, I hope that *The Lutheran Witness* will offer more balanced articles in the future." A layman, critical of Dr. Menton's writing, wrote: "I find it unfortunate that so many believe that our Lord does everything at the snap of a finger like some magician. If this were so, the Lord would not find it necessary to teach us patience." And more was written at odds with Dr. Menton's presentation.

What was most disturbing to our *Spokesman* reader (who by the way

was a one-time member of the Missouri Synod) was that *The Lutheran Witness* printed the "critical letters" without comment. "Doesn't that say something," our reader suggested, "about the Missouri Synod and where it is today?"

A perceptive Lutheran Christian indeed! What printing such letters without comment says is the subject of the following remarks:

"It is tragic to see how the loss of confidence in the clarity of Scripture renders a church powerless to ward off the corrupting influence of unionism. The story of the Missouri Synod over the past 20 years has been a pathetic record of increasing incapacity for resistance to the trend that seeks compromise with error rather than doctrinal discipline and the isolation of orthodoxy. The earmarks of this trend in a church body are a distaste for polemical theology, and the development of vague, ambiguous doctrinal pronouncements. These have both become conspicuous in Missouri's publications, the Concordia Theological Monthly and The Lutheran Witness, which often publish without comment the unscriptural doings and teachings of other church bodies. To be dogmatic, that is, positive, in affirming the truth and castigating error, is difficult only when it has become necessary to question the clarity and sufficiency of the Word." (The Writings Of Prof. Egbert Schaller, Booklet No. 3, p. 41: "The 'Status Controversiae' Within The Synodical Conference"—essay for the Minnesota District Pastoral Conference of the Wisconsin Synod, April 1958. For information on the availability of Schaller's booklets, see the December 1998 Lutheran

Spokesman.)

It can only confuse the Christian witness for a synod's official magazine to publish conflicting, contradicting writings (letters). This is not insignificant in our postmodern day, or any day. The apostolic warning says: "For if the trumpet make an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle?" (1 Cor. 14:8)

In short, there is a battle going on. Dr. Menton is one of many waging that battle for God's truth. So is our *Spokesman* reader who, out of concern for the clear trumpet sound of the Scriptures, sent us Dr. Menton's article

and the Letters to *The Lutheran Witness*.

And you and I, dear reader, are participants in that war. May God in His grace help and strengthen us for it! In our truth-denying age God keep us from succumbing to the postmodern idea that all views on a given subject are worthy of being heard—and worthy of expression without comment—regardless of the fact that those views call into question the clarity and sufficiency, the authenticity and reliability of the divinely inspired Holy Scriptures.

Onward, Christian soldiers!

In Our CLC Classrooms—

Meet:

Karla Olmanson

Karla Olmanson teaches a half day of 5th and 6th grade classes, plus music, for grades 1-6 at Immanuel Lutheran School in Mankato, Minnesota.

She has been teaching there since 1985. A graduate of ILC in 1969, Karla first taught for three years in Red Wing, Minn. at Our Redeemer's Lutheran School. In the summer of 1972 she married Leif Olmanson, also a teacher. The couple lived in Jamestown, N.Dak. where Karla helped out with music at Our Savior's Lutheran School, taught piano, and began raising a family. They also lived in Austin, Minn. from 1976-1980 while Leif taught at St. Paul's Lutheran School.

The couple has four children: Alan,



a computer programmer at Firepond; Eric, a student at Minnesota State-Mankato; Jason, a student at the U. of Minnesota; and Sarah, a high school junior at Immanuel Lutheran in Mankato.

After moving to Mankato, Karla went on to earn a BS degree in education from ILC in 1991, and from Mankato State in 1994.

Karla's favorite subject to teach is music. She considers the most rewarding part of teaching the discussion generated by Bible History lessons. Outside of the classroom she enjoys gardening, reading, singing in choir, playing the organ, and other musical interests.

Announcements

Installations

In accord with our usage and order, Delwyn Maas, who was called by Holy Cross congregation of Phoenix, Ariz. to be its pastor, was installed on December 6, 1998.

—*Pastor W. H. Fanning*

In accord with our usage and order, Tina Stelter, who was called by Our Saviors' congregation of Jamestown, N.Dak. to be teacher of grades 1-8 in its school, was installed on November 29, 1998.

—*Pastor Steven Sippert*

Devotional Readings—Clarification

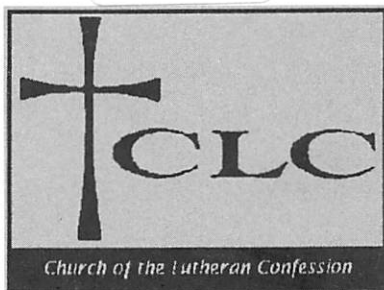
Pastor Roland Gurgel, who prepared the 1999 daily devotional readings (see December 1998 issue), reports a misunderstanding regarding his kind offer pertaining to "devotional booklets based upon the hymns."

These companion devotional booklets do not cover the entire year's readings. Rather, the plan is to provide the booklets on a monthly basis. With this in mind, orders will be accepted throughout the year.

Those interested in receiving the booklets may contact Pastor Gurgel at 22 North State Street, New Ulm, MN 56073, or phone him at (507) 354-4534.

Correction: Last month's announcements section contained the installation notice of Pastor Mark Gurath together with pastors who participated. "Rev. Em. Jonathan Schaller" would have been a more accurate identification in the listing of pastors.

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



Members and friends of the CLC group near Kimball, Minn. (St. Cloud area) gathered again for a picnic last August at the Reuben Streich farm. "A grand time—and great food—was had by all!"