

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

Arise, shine; for thy light is come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. • For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you. • And His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. • Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at your side. • Then you shall see, and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. • The multitude of camels shall cover your land, The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba shall come; They shall bring gold and incense, And they shall proclaim the praises of the Lord. • The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory.

THE PROPHET IN EXILE FORESEES THE  
COMING OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD

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ISAIAH 60 : 1-6 & 19

# Walking With God in The New Year

**A**t this time of year in the northern hemisphere, we learn to walk carefully. Ice may cover a step, sidewalk, or the street. The mere mention of ice conjures up a threat of falling, possibly resulting in injury. A toddler taking its first steps learns quickly to walk carefully. Those who work around machinery are constantly warned to be careful around moving parts.

Yet regardless of how careful one might be, accidents happen, injuries occur, and sadly, lives are lost. In spite of all caution, we desperately need almighty God both to watch over and to guide us on our way through the new year. The apostle Paul wrote: "See then that you walk circumspectly [carefully], not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but under-

stand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:15-17).

During the past year many warnings were issued in regard to the change in the calendar which would include three zeros. By the end of last year few could have remained ignorant of the supposed Y2K problem. Threats of all sorts were described. Disasters resulting from computer failures suggested planes would fall out of the sky, elevators would crash, banks would fail; and not least of all, the end of the world might occur. If the doomsayers had been correct, we would not be reading this now!

Thank God we no longer need to fear our ignorance of what will happen at anytime. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they

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comfort me” (Ps. 23:4). Nor do God’s children ever need to fear what they do not know. “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).

We walk as children of light through faith in God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. “Therefore be followers of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us” (Eph. 5:12). The Lord instructs us to follow God to redeem the time. To redeem the time means to make the most of the time God has graciously given us, “that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

### **Commit Your Way To The Lord**

When someone who is baking needs sugar or flour and finds there is not enough, he or she will ask a neighbor for a cup to fill the needs. How many of us would like to ask for the extra cup of time by the end of a day or week?

Time for the children of God is precious every day of the year. Jesus said: “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Mt. 6:33). God’s “all” means everything we need for this life and the next! This

is the Lord’s promise to His own people: “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” The Psalmist wrote: “Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass” (Ps. 37:5).

Committing our way to the Lord means literally that we have been “rolled off” our weaknesses and placed securely in the Lord Jesus Christ. God tenderly invites us to ask Him for all things for Jesus’ sake, especially that He would lead us by His Word throughout every year, “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20).

Our heavenly Father takes us by the hand of His Word to walk through this life as His dear children. Through the Sacrament of Baptism the Holy Spirit has given us new life in Christ Jesus. Now our steps are no longer weak or hesitant.

Therefore changes in the seasons or the calendar should never influence our walk through the year with God our Savior. We confess with David: “But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD; I say, ‘You are my God.’ My times are in Your hand!” (Ps. 31:14,15).

—Pastor Rick Grams



## ***Another New Year- Another Thousand Years!***

Would you look at all those zeroes! With my old car I’ve seen a row of zeroes a couple of times. It wasn’t too surprising the first time, but then it hap-

pened again! That was a surprise which I really didn’t expect to see.

But even though the old car keeps on running, all those zeroes do have a

# 2000

message. They speak volumes about wear and tear—the car is getting tired and worn. Even though it is running well, I know that it will come down to its last mile. Maybe that will be a few more miles down the road. Maybe it will keep on running until I see another row of zeroes. With my car, that is my hope.

Now we have been focused on the zeroes on the calendar. We have quite a batch of zeroes with this year two thousand. Who would have thought that this world would keep on turning this long after Christ's return to heaven? Even the apostles were looking for the end of this world during their lifetime. They would not have guessed that the year 1000 would come before Christ's return, and here we are at the year 2000! Already in the days of the apostles, there were those skeptics who were ready to disregard any real possibility of Jesus ever returning, or of His calling this world to its end. Surely there are many more in our day who disregard the promises of Christ and would seek to undermine the believer's hope in Christ's promise to return.

We see a bunch of zeroes in our calendar date. What does it mean? There is a message there for us. Let's make sure we get the right message: "But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:8-9).

### **A Marvel Of Grace**

So then what we are observing in

this year 2000 is a marvel of God's grace toward this world of sinners. We continue here because of the strength of God's desire for more sinners to hear the gospel of life and forgiveness in Christ Jesus, and to believe and be saved. While the earth remains, so does this time of grace, and so does our opportunity and privilege to bear this good news to all the world.

We see this new year, then, as a year of hope and opportunity. What a blessing God bestows on us as we live our lives for Him on this earth He created for us!

But our hope for life is not tied to this earth.

As we look at all those zeroes in the date of this new year, we are reminded that we look for the end of things. At the same time as we are brought to understand the patience of God and His gracious desire for salvation to come to the people of this world, we also realize that the counting of all those years is a tally of the use and abuse, the wear and tear that this world has endured.

Many of this world worry about the earth failing. Yet God promises that the earth will provide for our needs as long as our gracious God wills this world to continue: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22).

And when this earth no longer remains, then what? Then we shall be received to a greater glory, to a far better place. This is our hope for life in year 2000 and into eternity!

—Pastor Theodore Barthels

## The Gospel's Effect In Our Lives

The verb form (Greek) of the word *Epiphany* means to “show, make an appearance, reveal.”

We already have had an epiphany of sorts at the New Year. What did the change of the millennium reveal? Most likely it revealed that the millennium hype was just that—hype.

Above all it revealed many so-called prophets for what they are, namely, *false* prophets. Once again it has been proven that, as Christ says, “Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Mt. 24:36).

Christ may or may not be revealed in His Second Coming this year. That remains to be seen. One thing that the New Year is sure to reveal, however, is the coming of Christ into the hearts of sinners through His Word.

The Light of the world has shone into our once dark hearts through His shining Gospel which has revealed to us that Jesus Christ is our Savior from sin.

This Word continues to reveal the

Savior to a world that sits in darkness so that, daily, many of those who sit in darkness are being brought to see the great Light of their Savior.

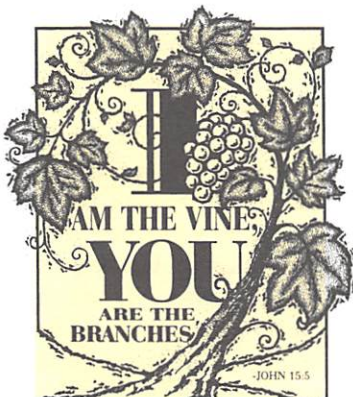
When we read His Word, what do we find that our Savior revealed to this world concerning Himself during His public ministry? Jesus of Nazareth looked outwardly like any other man. But Christ Jesus would let His divinity shine through in His words and His teaching, revealing that He was and is—in addition to being true Man—in fact, true God. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14).

### Faith Shines

What will we reveal to the world concerning ourselves this year? Outwardly believers in Christ resemble other people. But our *faith* shines through and reveals itself to others. This happens chiefly through good works. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:16).

Someone once wrote: “A good example is the best sermon.” But that good example that we as believers set is only fully realized if it is followed up by the Gospel.

Our works tell others that we worship God and desire to do His will. The Gospel tells others why we do this. “[Christ] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless



deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14).

It is by the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins that we have been brought to faith in Christ; the same Gospel motivates our good works; it is the

Gospel of the forgiveness of sins that will bring others to see the Light of the world, the Light of their eternal salvation.

May our Epiphany season and our entire Christian lives be an Epiphany of the Savior for those we meet.

—Pastor Joel Fleischer



## Appreciating Our Lutheran Hymns

1 Great God, we sing that mighty hand By which sup-  
2 By day, by night, at home, a - broad, Still we are  
3 With grate - ful hearts the past we own; The fu - ture,

### Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand

A Hymn for the New Year  
#119 in The Lutheran Hymnal

Awareness of God’s help in the past enables us to enter a new year with confidence. From the Scriptures we have come to know and believe in the only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And, knowing Him, we have seen His hand in our lives, helping us in every need.

This hymn was first published with the heading, “*Help obtained of God. For the New Year.*” This was a reference to Paul’s defense before Agrippa: “Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great” (Acts 26:22). These words of Paul are echoed in the opening lines of the hymn: “*Great God, we sing that mighty hand By which supported still we stand.*”

Philip Doddridge (1702-1751), the author of the hymn, was very much aware of God’s help in his past. He had been a sickly child, so much so that his parents feared that he would not survive.

But God spared his life, and this act of divine mercy surely must have been impressed on young Philip by his mother, the daughter of a Lutheran pastor, who had sung hymns to her son in his boyhood. For Philip was the last of the twenty children she had borne, eighteen of whom had died in infancy.

He experienced the help of God again when he was only thirteen and lost both his parents within a year. He was taken in by kind friends who cared for him and sent him to school.

Though in frail health much of his life, Doddridge had a fruitful career as a pastor and especially as head of a seminary in which about two hundred students were prepared for the ministry.

As we enter this new year, all of us ought to take time to remember how the mighty hand of God has supported us and made us to stand in past years. Such remembrance of the mercy that God has shown us will make us thankful for the past and confident about the future.

And as the hymn reminds us, the

opening of a new year is in itself a token of God's mercy. He has given more time for the Gospel to be preached, calling souls to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, offering life and salvation to all. He has given to each of us a new year in which to serve and glorify Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Our New Year's hymn also reminds us that the years will not go on forever. Death shall interrupt our songs. But even then: "*Our Helper, God, In whom we trust, In better worlds our soul shall boast.*"

—Pastor John Klatt



*Tenth In A Series (from an essay by Pastor Thomas Schuetze)—*

## Psalm 130

*"LORD, lift me up from the depths."*

### A Prayer Psalm

#### Psalm 130

Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD; Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning—I say, more than those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the LORD; for the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

This is one of the seven so-called "penitential psalms" (the others are 6, 32, 38, 51, 106, and 143). The psalmist bares his soul before the Lord, imploring Him to hear his prayer for forgive-

ness. He knows that if Jehovah kept a record of his iniquities, his situation would be quite hopeless. He would remain in "the woeful deep of sin," separated from his God forever. At the same time he knows that Jehovah—though He is a holy and just God who hates sin and must punish it with death—is also a merciful and gracious God who forgives sin and pardons it for Christ's sake.

Concerning this psalm the commentator H. C. Leupold says: "The unique feature of (it) over against the others that are in a special way designated as penitential . . . is, perhaps, the fact that it centers attention on sin itself, not so much on its results and consequences. No other psalm expresses quite so well what an evil sin itself

is. At the same time . . . the psalm has a distinct gospel emphasis.”

Why was it included in the Songs of Ascents collection? What more appropriate way could the Jewish pilgrims have chosen to prepare themselves for the worship of Jehovah during those three festivals than by confessing their sins and seeking God’s forgiveness? Today we prepare our hearts for the worship of the Lord the same way. At the beginning of the service we join together in making confession of our sins, acknowledging our transgressions of thought, word, and deed, and hearing the good news of our

Lord’s forgiveness. We know it is through the Lord’s mercy alone that we can be lifted up from the depths of our sin and draw near to worship Him, our holy God. Washing our robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb is important each and every day because we daily sin much. And this is our daily comfort: “*With the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption, and He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*” When the days of our pilgrimage come to an end, we shall find the gates of the New Jerusalem flung wide open for us. Praise the Lord!



## Biblical Perspectives On The End Times

*Fourth in a Series—*

### WHO IS A JEW?

#### Some Answers

Some Jews—within the Orthodox group—do not recognize other Jews as genuine Jews. Other Jews recognize all offspring of Jewish mothers as Jews. All Jews believe themselves to be the Chosen of God. Most Jews are still awaiting the coming of the promised Messiah. Fundamentalist Christians believe that all Jews are the Chosen of the Lord. They eagerly await the mass conversion of all Jews at the visible coming of the Lord. Whether or not that conversion will be retroactive so as to include all Jews is a matter of speculation. Other Christians believe that the identifying factors of a “Jew” have changed over the centuries from spiritual/racial to completely and pure-

ly spiritual.

Is this what really happened? A walk as a Jew down through the centuries as recorded in the Sacred Scriptures will provide light.

#### From One To A Nation

The “One” was Abraham, the “father” of all Jews. To Abram the LORD God said: “I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:2-3). Notice the spiritual factor of the first Jew! From his seed would come the Savior of the world!

It took the miraculous birth of



Isaac from aged Sarah to produce but one offspring, much less a nation. But that nation would come from Isaac, not from Ishmael who was cast out (Gen. 21:8-13), nor from the sons of Abraham's concubines who were sent away with gifts, (Gen. 25:1-6). These descendants of Abraham were not Jews, although some may well have become "spiritual Jews" by clinging in faith to the promise of a Savior to come through the seed of Isaac. Isaac had two sons, but again one, Esau, was rejected. Jacob had been chosen (Gen. 25:21-23) to carry the promise and to become a great nation. As he was about to enter Egypt, the LORD reassured him with these words: "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there" (Gen. 46:3). Some three and a half centuries later Moses could report that the Children of Israel had been fruitful and had increased abundantly, had multiplied and had grown exceedingly mighty, so that the land of Egypt was filled with them, Ex. 1:7. The LORD God claimed them as His own—"My people" (5:1). He delivered His people from the Egyptian bondage, led them to Mt. Sinai, and made a covenant with them.

### **A Nation Within a Nation**

Israel was an ethnic, racial, political, spiritual group of people. The distinguishing feature was the spiritual factor. The LORD had made a covenant with Israel. That covenant verbalized a spiritual relationship between the LORD and His people. When Israel broke the covenant by worshiping the golden calf, the LORD threatened to destroy His people. He said to Moses: "I have seen this people, and indeed it

is a stiff necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation" (Ex. 32:9-10). Moses knew the people had forfeited their status as the "LORD's People." Yet he interceded for them and prevailed. It became more and more evident that there was a smaller group within the nation that remained faithful to the covenant that the LORD had made with them. They became a "nation" of covenant believers within the visible nation of Israel.

### **The Remnant**

So it continued down through the centuries—the mass of the nation forfeiting their status as "the People of the LORD" through unbelief, while a small minority remained "the People of the LORD" through faith in the God of the covenant. The prophet Isaiah identified this minority as "the remnant." After describing the nation of Israel as a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters, who have forsaken the LORD, have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger and who have turned away backward" (Is. 1:4), Isaiah continued by revealing a miracle of the LORD's grace—the preserving of a remnant in the midst of the sinful nation. "Unless the LORD of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah" (Is. 1:9).

Judgment would fall upon the sinful nation. The remnant would not escape. They also would experience deportation and scattering among the heathen nations, but the LORD would

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**“Israel was an ethnic, racial, political, spiritual group of people. The distinguishing feature was the spiritual factor. The LORD had made a covenant with Israel. That covenant verbalized a spiritual relationship between the LORD and His people. . . .”**

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not forget His people. Jeremiah, who announced the imminent destruction and deportation of the nation, also proclaimed the promise of the LORD: “I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase” (Jer. 23:3). So also Joel 2:32. Isaiah’s rhetorical questions: “Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day or shall a nation be born at once?” (Is. 66:8) were answered by the creation of the new “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) on the Day of Pentecost, and continuing down through the New Testament Age.

### **John the Baptist and Jesus**

John’s call for the leaders of the nation, the Pharisees and Sadducees, to “bear fruits worthy of repentance” was met with spiritual pride: “We have Abraham as our father.” They had lost the very spiritual characteristic that had distinguished Abraham as father of the LORD’s chosen people. John pricked the balloon of their spiritual pride by declaring that “God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones” (Mt. 3:8-9).

Our Lord Jesus, from the very beginning of His ministry, warned the Jews that ethnic, racial, and political

characteristics without the spiritual element could not make anyone a member of the “nation” within the nation, the remnant. Jesus marveled at the faith of the Gentile centurion. He then spoke a word of prophecy, followed by a word of judgment: “I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt. 8:10-12).

As His ministry drew to a close, our Lord’s warnings of judgment upon those who trusted natural descent from Abraham instead of faith in the God of Abraham grew sharper and more pointed. In the “Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers” our Lord traced the history of His people’s rebellion that would culminate in the murder of Him—the landowner’s son. Judgment would fall on Israel. Matthew recorded those words of judgment upon the Nation of Israel: “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it” (Mt. 21:43). What was threatened has become history. Faith in the promise given to Abraham and fulfilled by our Lord makes a person a “Jew” (true descendant of Abraham).

### **The Apostle Paul**

Paul was an ethnic, racial, political Jew. Before his conversion he gloried in His heritage (Php. 3:3-6), but after his conversion he realized that one characteristic and one only made a person a Jew in the sight of the LORD. That characteristic is spiritual! To the

Romans Paul wrote: "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God" (Rom. 2:28-29).

In contending that Abraham was justified before the LORD, God gave him circumcision as the seal of the covenant, and so salvation is by grace through faith. Paul wrote these words concerning the identification of a person as a Jew: "Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Rom. 4:16). Sharing the faith of Abraham—not sharing his ethnic or racial or political qualities—make an individual a son or daughter of

Abraham.

In chapters 9, 10, and 11 of his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul reviewed the history of his people. Why had they, who had been given such great advantages over all other nations, rejected the Messiah promised to them and given to them? Was the Word of God unable to overcome the rebelliousness of his people? No, for "it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham, but 'in Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are accounted as the seed" (Rom. 9:6-8).

Who is a Jew? Jews or Gentiles who share the faith of Father Abraham—Jesus is Savior!

—Pastor Em. Paul F. Nolting



From the Editor —

## *The Church of the Lutheran Confession—Forty Years*

*The delegates at the CLC's synod convention 2000 will be taking special note of the fact that the synod they represent has reached the age of forty years. It would surely be well, we thought, that this official organ of the synod take note of this milestone in one way or another.*

As we wondered "What could be done to mark the significance of this event?", we went to our personal file under "CLC History" and found there are at least four different "histories" of the synod.

### **I. 'A CENTURY OF JUDGMENT AND GRACE' — 1964**

The first was an essay delivered by the Rev. Winfred Schaller Jr. at the nationwide convention of the young



synod in August 1964 at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. While the Church of the Lutheran Confession was in only the fourth year (officially) of its existence, this “history” is one of the longest of all.

How can that be? Pastor Schaller, a gifted writer as well as an astute observer of church history, reviewed and analyzed for the delegates the history and heritage which led to the “downfall” of the once staunchly Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. With uncommon insight the essayist described troubling theological trends which developed within the Missouri Synod, the Synodical Conference’s “big brother.” In the essay much is written of the profound influence—most of it good, but some of it, in a subtle way, bad—which Missouri’s founder, Dr. C. F. W. Walther (1811-1887), had on genuine Lutheranism during—and after—his day.

As the essay surveys the past from which the Church of the Lutheran Confession was to spring, it goes on to speak of the spiritual shot in the arm which the “Wauwatosa Theology” of the Wisconsin Synod Seminary faculty

brought into a weakening Synodical Conference. While (as the essay asserts) Walther might be accused of a theological approach which was too dogmatic (too much “quoting-Luther-and-the-church-fathers”), the Wauwatosa faculty of August Pieper, J. P. Koehler, and John Schaller brought a more exegetical (“back to the Bible”) emphasis. *“They were all students of Walther (schoolmates, in fact) and brought everything from Walther, and went on from Walther to a deeper and richer understanding of the Gospel. Speaking in terms of men, we have two great blessings: first, Walther, and then the Wauwatosa faculty of 1908-1920. He who can inherit these blessings from both has a rich heritage indeed.”* (essay)

Since only the last five or so pages of *A CENTURY OF JUDGMENT AND GRACE* treat the CLC directly—and that largely from a theological perspective—one might choose to question how it can be called a “history” of the synod.

Yet, if there is any validity to the observation that “it is difficult to know where we’re going if we don’t know where we’ve been,” this probing essay helped a fledgling synod—still wobbly afoot—stand more firmly and evangelically on its orthodox Lutheran feet.

And that—as far as any conscientious inquirer is concerned forty years later—would make *A CENTURY OF JUDGMENT AND GRACE* very informative and even “must” reading.

*(\*This fine essay of Rev. Winfred Schaller Jr.—the first editor of the Lutheran Spokesman, by the way—was condensed and serialized into five parts in volumes seven and eight of the Spokesman.)*



## II. 'TEN YEARS OF GRACE' — 1970

This essay, a more standard history of the CLC, was presented to the 1970 CLC Convention by Pastor Maynard J. Witt of Spokane, Washington. (A companion piece was delivered at the same convention by Pastor L. Dale Redlin entitled *LOOKING FORWARD TO GRACE FOR GRACE.*)

Pastor Witt's essay is more standard in that it cites "names and places" bearing on the historical events leading up to and occurring the first ten years within the synod. It recounts briefly the history of Immanuel Lutheran College and speaks of the beginnings of the *Journal of Theology* and *Lutheran Spokesman*.

The Witt essay, even as the Schaller essay, acknowledges that telling the story of a church body antedates its formal date of organization: ". . . To think of our history as comprising no more than ten years would be like starting the history of our country with the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Many important things happened before 1787 which made the Constitutional Convention possible. . . Likewise the history of our church

body did not really begin with the Constitution Convention of 1960 and 1961. Many events and experiences which preceded the years 1960 and 1961 are involved in our history." (essay)

Reading this comparatively short history of the CLC will bring those salient events and experiences home to the reader.

## III. 'A HISTORY OF THE CLC' — 1978

Without doubt the most exhaustive—and authoritative for its quotations from first-hand sources (meeting minutes etc.)—history of the synod is this 1978 writing of then ILC Professor and President C. M. Gullerud (d. 1995). From the essay's introductory comments it appears that this paper was prepared for a CLC teachers' conference (exact time and place we have been unable to determine).

The essay has two parts. Part One is *ITS BIRTH AND EARLY HISTORY*. Following a prologue which begins "Soli Deo Gloria—To God alone the glory," the opening section details the "free conferences and interim conference meetings," which occurred during the years 1957-1960 and gave birth to the synod. Under "Activities of the Interim Conference" Gullerud treats the mission endeavors of the new group, the early history of Immanuel Lutheran College, and the periodicals and publications the group used to communicate its message.

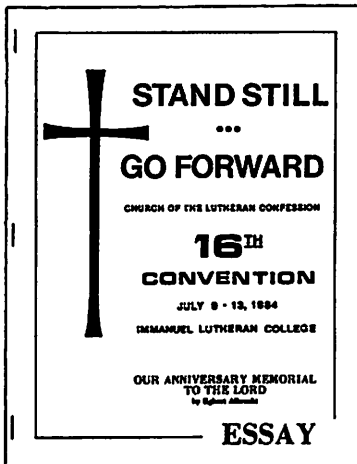
Part Two is *DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF THE C.L.C.* In four parts the synod's growth is detailed in the areas of: 1) in general; 2) Missions; 3) Education; 4) Publications.

While this history of the CLC is in many ways the most thorough and detailed, there is—the reader can't help but notice—an omission of any personal names (copious places are mentioned, but no names whatever). This omission was obviously by intent. The professor desired all glory be given to God alone for what He was bringing to pass in the formation of this new church body.

#### IV. 'OUR ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL TO THE LORD' - 1984

The Rev. Egbert Albrecht was essayist for the synod's 16th Convention at Immanuel Lutheran College in 1984. That year the synod chose to mark the 25th anniversary of its pastor-teacher training school.

On the basis of Exodus 14:13,15 the



essayist draws parallels between the Lord's marvelous deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea and the remarkable history of the school. Remarkable indeed. The school—first established by one congregation, Immanuel Lutheran in Mankato, Minnesota—under the Lord's guiding

hand became the pastor-teacher training school of the new synod, which in turn relocated the campus to Eau Claire in 1963.

This essay has a story to tell which is proof that history is indeed God's story.

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Our personal file contains a few other pieces with historical interest.

In October 1978 Michael Buck, a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, presented a shorter, more popular history of the synod's origins to the joint Wisconsin Pastoral Conference and CLC Teachers' Conference.

In September 1985 retired pastor Albert Sippert read a paper to the Minnesota Christian Education Institute meeting in session in Mankato, Minnesota. Titled "An Early History of the Church of the Lutheran Confession and of Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary," this writing gives a parish pastor's "up close and personal" view of events which, for conscience reasons, led him with others to leave a former synod and form a new one.

In the 1980's the synod's Board of Education commissioned the writing of a booklet entitled "*THIS IS YOUR CHURCH.*" The foreword states: "*This booklet adds a thin slice of history to the overall account of God's preservation of the Truth. Its purpose is to provide our children with a history of the Church of the Lutheran Confession....*" As we recollect, the primary author of this endeavor was the Rev. Gilbert Sydow.

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## *Historical Markings*

### **Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?**

*“ . . . And so now I ask you, members of the CLC, to join me in seeking the help of the Holy Spirit of God to view our heritage not only as a history of amazing gifts from a merciful God, but to see also the bad elements, the sins of the fathers, which are also a part of our heritage. To see that which has called forth the judgment of God and will call forth that judgment also on the CLC to the extent that we continue in the sins of the fathers. May we be made willing to recognize all weakness in Wisconsin which we carry, all weakness in Missouri which we share, all wrong emphases which the Norwegians had and transmitted to us, and do this without a partisan spirit, without prejudice. Since we no longer have a stake in being pro-Wisconsin, pro-Missouri, or pro-Norwegian, may we now learn to be pro-nothing, certainly not pro-CLC, but only pro-Jesus, our Savior. Nor in this work which we now undertake, to study a century of blessing and judgment, is it vital that we agree in each detail of historical evaluation. I can only speak of those things which seem most significant to me, and I will be more than content if we agree that it is essential to submit the body to regular clinical examination, that by daily contrition and repentance a new body may daily come forth, consecrated to the use of the Master.”*

—from the 1964 essay ‘A CENTURY OF JUDGMENT AND GRACE’



A “hometown history” in a local newspaper was prefaced with the comment: “It’s difficult to know where we’re going if we don’t know where we’ve been.” If that is true in the field of the secular, the mundane, the profane, how much more so is it the case in the field of the religious, the spiritual, the holy.

Our intention in this anniversary

year of the Church of the Lutheran Confession is to share historical snippets of where we’ve been—that such historical review might, in turn, help direct us along the path the Lord of the Church would lead in the future.

To that end, beginning this month (see box) and in the months to come, watch for historical vignettes lifted from the above-listed essays. •

# SMORGASBORD

## • 'THE AGE OF CHANGE'

Here is how one Protestant writer summed up changes for which, he says, the 20th century—'The Age Of Change'—will be known in church history. It will be known as an era when (1) Biblical thinking was changed to psychological thinking; (2) Christ-centeredness was changed to self-centeredness; (3) the needs of others were changed to our own personal needs; (4) mental attitudes changed to become feelings; (5) humility and

favor with God were changed to self-esteem; (6) sacrifice and service were changed for a 'health and welfare Christianity'; and (7) faithfulness and loyalty changed to convenience.

This assessment is then given: "The end result in the church has been an acceptance—no, an embracing of the world's philosophy."

What makes this all so terribly sad is the realization that, with humility before God forced out of the picture, blood-bought souls are being misled



A 5 day conference for  
the high school youth of  
the Church of the  
Lutheran Confession  
held at  
Shadowcliff Life Center  
Grand Lake, CO  
**August 4-8, 2000**

The CLC YOUTH CONFERENCE 2000 is being sponsored by *Immanuel Lutheran Church* of Mankato, Minnesota. Please address inquiries, comments, or concerns to Immanuel or either of the two pastors below:

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
421 North Second Street  
Mankato, MN 56001  
(507) 345-3027

Pastor Paul D. Nolting  
(507) 387-7035  
Pdnolting@prodigy.net

Pastor Wayne C. Eichstadt  
(507) 344-0898  
wreichst@mctcnet.net

Note: Please send completed forms to the "Registration Address" (see Registration Form). **PLEASE DO NOT SEND REGISTRATION TO IMMANUEL.**



If you'd like to see and read more about the location of the CLC Youth Conference 2000, you may visit

Shadowcliff's website:

<http://home.Att.net/~engeld>



(deceived) to their eternal peril.

Yes, the consequences are eternal.

In the church change is permissible and may even be devoutly wished in things neither commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God (adiaphora). But the changes itemized above—if they are a correct characterization, and it seems to us they are—are far removed from anything that could be construed as minor.

For as we see it, each of the avowed changes contributes—to a greater or lesser extent—to an undermining of the Christian message.

Biblical Lutheranism has always summarized the heart and core of that message as "Law and Gospel." God's Law accuses, convicts, and condemns all as sinners, worthy of death, temporal and eternal. God's Gospel brings these same sinners the good news that there is forgiveness of sins, redemption, and reconciliation with God through the shed blood of the heavenly Father's unique Son, Jesus Christ, the innocent Lamb of God.

As those who have lived to experience—often with distressed hearts—this period of church history, our prayer might well be and remain:

The haughty spirits, Lord, restrain  
Who o'er Thy Church with might would reign  
And always set forth something new,  
Devised to change Thy doctrine true.

And since the cause and glory, Lord,  
Are Thine, not ours, to us afford  
Thy help and strength and constancy.  
With all our heart we trust in Thee.

(TLH 292:6-7)

• **RETIREMENT** (*Luther Memorial Church, Fond du Lac, Wis. recently observed the retirement of its pastor, John H. Johannes. One of its members contributed this report.*)

Pastor Johannes was born in Two Rivers, Wis. on January 18, 1931. He attended parochial school there and continued his education at Northwestern Prep and College in Watertown, Wis. (graduated 1953) and at the Wisconsin Synod Seminary in

Check-in begins on  
Friday, August 4 at  
4:00 p.m.  
Check-out on  
Tuesday, August 8, at  
11:00 a.m.

Youth Conference is  
open to all CLC Youth  
graduating from  
8th - 12th grade in  
2000.

**\$195.00**  
Cost for Conference  
Meals included  
Transportation not included

Choice between  
Horseback Riding or  
Whitewater Rafting

.....  
"To bring" lists,  
.....  
maps, and other final  
.....  
information will be  
.....  
mailed to registrants.  
.....

Ask Your Pastor For More Information  
and Registration Forms

Study the Word  
of God with fellow  
youth to grow in  
Grace!  
Apply Scripture to  
daily lives and in  
the use of gifts!

Morning and  
Evening worship.

Full group and  
"break-out" group  
sessions

Choir

Talent Night!

Sunday morning  
Worship service  
with area CLC  
congregation  
members

Counselors and  
Staff from CLC  
Congregations

**ALL IN THE  
SETTING OF  
GOD'S  
BEAUTIFUL  
CREATIONS!**

Sleeping  
quarters in  
lodges.

Registrations for the CLC YOUTH  
CONFERENCE 2000 (received  
from your pastor) should be  
mailed to Mrs. Christy  
Kesterson, 2138 So. Custer  
Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537.



**Pastor & Mrs. Johannes**

Mequon (graduated 1957). In August, 1958 he was married to Joanne Paulmann of Manitowoc. This union was blessed with seven children.

Pastor Johannes shepherded congregations in Isabel, Timber Lake, and Trail City, S.Dak., before leaving the Wisconsin Synod for confessional reasons in 1960. Upon joining the CLC, he served congregations in Carlsbad, N.Mex., Lamar, Colo., and Cambridge and Middleton, Wis. before being called to Fond du Lac in 1978.

He retired after forty-two years in the ministry. The farewell service was held June 27, 1999.

As is the case with most of our CLC's "retired" pastors, the Lord soon let it be known that He still has work for them in the public ministry. Soon after retiring, Johannes was called to serve Zion Ev. Lutheran Church in Atlanta, Georgia for one year.

The new pastor at Luther Memorial in Fond du Lac is David Naumann, who had previously served in Ketchikan, Alaska.

• **THE JESUS VIDEO** *(During the holidays just past, a Mankato, Minnesota billboard proclaimed: "Hope For The New Millennium—JESUS—coming to your mailbox." After we saw the billboard, we were happy also to see what was written in the 'Home Messenger' of our CLC church in that city, Immanuel Lutheran. Pastor Paul D. Nolting [who wrote this evaluation] and Pastor Wayne Eichstadt serve Immanuel congregation.)*

Sometime before Christmas many

of our member families in the Mankato area will receive the 'Jesus Video' in the mail. It is a free gift sponsored by a group of Mankato residents of various denominational backgrounds. This distribution of the 'Jesus Video' is part of a worldwide campaign to do Christian mission work through the use of videos and the mail.

The goal of the campaign is commendable Christian mission outreach. It should be our prayer that many people will learn to know more about Jesus and be led by the Holy Spirit to believe in Jesus through the message that the video presents.

The ecumenical nature of the outreach effort, however, is not to be commended. Such an effort ignores differences of teaching and our Lord's command to "beware of false prophets" (Matthew 7:15) and to "avoid" those who "cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine you have learned" (Romans 16:17). Consequently, the effort in part goes contrary to the teachings of the very Lord it seeks to proclaim!

The film itself is very good. It presents the story of Jesus' life in an excellent manner. Jesus is presented as God's Son, who really did perform miracles, who died on the cross, and who arose again from the dead. The presentation is very consistent with the Scriptures, although in just a very few instances the setting of a miracle or parable was altered to fit in the flow of the visual presentation.

There is, however, one area of concern about which our members should be aware. At the end of the film, a kind-looking gentleman appears who urges viewers to "make a decision for Christ," and who offers to pray with

the viewers if they are ready to make such a decision.

This "decision theology," which is part of the teachings of the Reformed Christian churches, is false and misleading. The Bible tells us that human beings are "dead in trespasses and sins" by nature (Ephesians 2:1,5) and so cannot make decisions to believe. Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44). St. Paul says, "No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). Saving faith is, therefore, not the result of a human decision, but rather the work of God within us. It is His gift given to us through the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:4-

7).

"Decision theology" takes away God's glory and places an incorrect emphasis upon man's role in conversion. Conversion is solely the work of God within the human heart, for through it God takes someone spiritually dead and makes him spiritually alive! Once we have been converted, on the other hand, we do in faith make decisions with the help and power of the Holy Spirit to be and remain faithful to God (cf. Philippians 2:12-13). This is a true and scriptural teaching!

So enjoy the 'Jesus video,' but push the "stop" button on your VCR when the kind-looking gentleman at the end appears. His message is unscriptural and could prove confusing and misleading for those who listen!



*In our CLC Classrooms—*

## Meet our 1999 ILC Teacher Graduates

In May 1999 the following teachers graduated from Immanuel Lutheran College's teaching program. They are now serving in their first calls into the public ministry.

Teresa Nelson is teaching grades K-2 at Luther Memorial in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. She enjoys working with young children and hopes to instill in her students a love of learning. She has been able to make use of her musical talents in her classroom. Her children always welcome a new song. Outside of the classroom she enjoys rollerblading, visiting her local health club, and listening to and making music.



**Teresa, Vanessa, Kirsten**

Vanessa Bernthal is serving in Watertown, South Dakota at Trinity Lutheran Church. She traces her desire to become a teacher way back to the first grade when she herself attended a Christian day school. The opportunity to openly teach about Jesus every day to children is truly a blessing. The most rewarding aspect about teaching, she

says, is "hearing the children confess their rock-solid faith in their Savior Jesus Christ." In her free time Vanessa enjoys reading, playing volleyball, walking, and playing piano.

Kirsten Gullerud is teaching at Grace Lutheran Church in Valentine, Nebraska. She too had thought of being a teacher since childhood. She especially enjoys working with students individually on creative writing assignments, and the discussion generated from devotions in God's Word. "I love it (teaching) because it gives me the joy of sharing God's Word every day." In addition to playing the flute, she enjoys exploring the educational potential of the internet. As a good Nebraskan, she also enjoys cheering for the Cornhuskers.

May the Lord richly bless the work of these young, energetic servants.

*(We thank staff member Prof. Joe Lau for gathering information for this column—Ed.)*



## Announcements

### Grade School Basketball Tournament

The fifteenth annual CLC grade school basketball tournament will be held on the campus of Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wis. March 10-11-12, 2000.

Individuals who would like information about this event are encouraged to contact one of

the tournament directors: Ted Quade, 12080 West Grange Ave., Hales Corners, WI 53130 (phone 414-529-2384) or Mark Kranz, 146 21st Street, Fond du lac, WI 54935 (phone 920-924-9237).

### Call Committee on Graduates

The Call Committee on Graduates is planning to meet March 1, 2000. The call (without a name) and the accompanying letter for pastors or teachers should be in my hands before that date. The call for teachers may be delayed to a later date. However, in order not to be overlooked should a congregation be calling a teacher through the committee, have teacher's calls in before March 1.

—Pastor D. Fleischer, President



The Minnesota Pastoral Conference met at Mt. Olive of Detroit Lakes October 26-27, 1999. Pastors present: (top) T. Barthels, J. Albrecht, P. Fleischer; (mid) S. Kurtzahn, J. Ude, N. Greve, P. Nolting; (bot) E. Hallauer, R. Grams, R. Gurgel, W. Eichstadt.

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