

Lutheran Spokesman



The Reformation: To Be Continued

In an age before the camera hung from many a neck, the portrait painter and sculptor were the means by which a person's image was preserved. Such artists sought to capture the essential element or the vital characteristic of their subjects.

Those who painted or sculpted Martin Luther often portrayed him with the Bible. Lucas Cranach, a friend of Luther, at least twice painted him with the Bible in his hand. In the "Age of Reformation" by Kaulbach, Luther is likewise depicted holding an open Bible. And the sculptors Schadow, Rietschel, and Siemering all cast the Bible as the vital element in Luther's life.

Four hundred and fifty plus years ago, God graciously joined His divine agency, the Bible, and a human instrument—Martin Luther. The Book made the man, and through this man God



restored to many men His inspired Word. Take the Book away from Luther and what is he? Take the man away from the Book—cow him, gag him, kill him—and what becomes of the Bible? Perhaps not what it became—the people's Book.

Before Luther the Bible had become virtually a lost book. Hardly anyone

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owned one. Laymen had to seek permission from church officials even to read one. The church had given the people so many substitutes—legends, traditions, superstitions, regulations—that the Bible became unimportant to most. Certainly its central topic as then understood was not Christ Jesus.

As a university student Luther had opportunity to read and study the Bible. But he did not then understand its elemental truth that the righteousness of God is revealed and given to the sinner by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit caused the scales to fall from his eyes when Luther perceived that he could not make himself righteous by his doing for Christ, but that he was declared righteous because of what Christ had done for him.

That day Jesus became his personal Savior! In that hour the gates of heaven swung open to him and he looked straightway into the loving heart of God. That moment truly gave Luther the Bible!

Seeking The Glory Of God

Henceforth the Book became to him his guiding light and absolute authority. It taught him that the human heart is woefully wicked and totally corrupt; that man by nature is spiritually dead in sin. How then could salvation possibly be by human work or decision? With the Bible in his hand, he concluded with St. Paul that sinners are “justified freely by His (God’s) grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

It was Luther who penned the famous statement which has become our banner and rule: “The Word of God shall establish articles of faith, and no

one else, not even an angel” (Smalcald Articles, Art. II).

Small wonder then that Luther called Psalm 119 his own psalm and the ABC’s of all Christians. The Book in his hand became God’s Word engrafted in his heart: “Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day” (v. 97); “through Your precepts I get understanding” (v. 104a); “for by them You have given me life” (v. 93b).

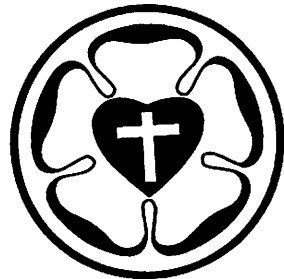
If there is danger today of again losing the Book, it is surely not because of a lack of copies. Today there is a dearth of reading and meditating. Today, even most of those who do read do not find the Savior and do not relate all it says to Christ. Today most do not heed the Bible’s divine truths. Clearly, continuing reformation is needed.

Martin Luther sought no stone monuments to his name. He sought the glory of God. The Book was graciously given to him. He made it his treasure and gave it to his people.

By gracious inheritance we have God’s Word to freely read, study, ingest, and believe. Only in doing these things do we become worth remembering—monuments to the glory and grace of the living God.

The Book has been restored! Let the reformation continue!

—Pastor David Fuerstenau



Luther's Stand for the Truth – The Courage of Christian Conviction

One of the most cherished pictures of the Reformation is that of Luther at the Diet of Worms. Boldly Luther stood before king, princes, nobles, and papal emissaries and refused to recant or withdraw his writings which represented his profession of faith in the truth of God's Word.

Surely we find here an example for us as confessional Lutherans to boldly stand for the truth. Luther's courage did not proceed from the strength of his personal character, as strong a character as he might have been. We need only remember the change of heart that took place in Luther as he discovered the wonders of God's grace, as he was led by the Spirit to understand and believe that "the just shall live by faith" (Rom.1:17).

Before this he had cowered before God and trembled at the name of Jesus. It was not this fear and trembling that led Luther to confess "My conscience is bound by the Word of God!" It was not this fear and trembling that was the source of courage that led him—over tumult and uproar caused by his confession—to cry out: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise; God help me. Amen."

What Luther had found in Holy Scripture was the gracious power of God—the power of God that saves through the Gospel. He had found the power spoken of in the opening verses of Romans where Paul wrote by inspiration: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to

salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'" (Rom.1:16-17).

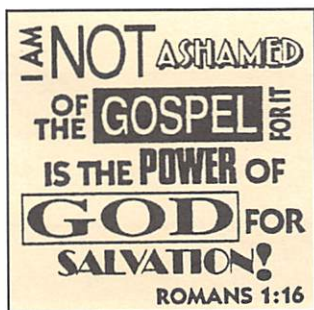
Bound By The Word

Some scholars suggest that Luther's favorite psalm was Psalm 46, which begins with these words: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the depths of the sea. . . . The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Ps. 46:1,2,7).

In times of trial these words of comfort and strength refreshed and encouraged Luther in his stand for the truth of God's Word. Based upon these words, Luther wrote the battle-hymn of the Reformation, "A Mighty Fortress is our God."

What we see in Luther is the courage of Christian conviction. He did not look to personal strength to stand up for the truth before the powers of this dark world. He turned to God in prayer. He looked to the God of his salvation which had brought to Luther the very righteousness of Christ. Luther knew the God of Jacob as his own refuge and strength.

What we see in Luther is the power of the Word, active and alive. The courage of Luther's convictions came by the power of the Holy Spirit, the



same Spirit that works in our hearts through that same Gospel of God's free love and forgiveness in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To stand for the truth, to take a stand for doctrine, is again in our time thought of as an odd and troublesome thing. Confessional Lutherans are fre-

quently perceived as troublemakers, disturbing the peace in both the religious community as well as in the community as a whole. Pressure is brought to bear for us to recant, to withdraw our convictions.

May we be blessed as Luther was with the courage of our convictions. May our consciences continue to be bound by the Word of God.

May our strength of faith and courage of conviction not be found in self, but in the gracious power of the Gospel—in knowing that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

This is our Lutheran heritage.

—Pastor Theodore Barthels

A Reformation Message from our CLC President—

Gospel Preaching—Our Reformation Heritage

Jesus instructed His disciples; “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15). He also declared the blessing of the Gospel, saying: “He who believes and is baptized will be saved...” (16:16). Paul carried the Gospel into Asia and Europe. He who had persecuted the Church in its infancy had himself been won by the Gospel. Paul declared: “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16). We understand the reason for his appreciation of the Gospel. He said: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...” (1 Tim. 1:15). He further declared by the power of the

Spirit: “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:8). This message of the precious Gospel of our Lord Jesus we believe and preach!

Though the Word of God has not changed through the centuries after the establishment of the Church at Pentecost, the Gospel message unfortunately became diluted, diminished, and rejected. By the time of Luther, the emphasis was no longer on the authority of the Word and an unadulterated Gospel. The authority of the Word was replaced by papal authority. The question was no longer, “What does the



Word say?" but "What does the church say?" Further, the message of the Gospel of salvation in Christ without works was replaced by indulgences, penance, meritorious works, pilgrimages, relics, and purgatory. Masses were purchased for a price. The result was indifference on the part of some, slavish fear on the part of others, and an empty exercise of religiousness on the part of most. Certainty of salvation through faith in the finished work of Jesus was replaced by an uncertainty of whether one had done enough to merit salvation.

We have Luther to thank. Under God Luther unwittingly spawned the rebellion against spiritual tyranny that would eventually return the Gospel to its rightful place in the life of the church. The Reformation put the Gospel in its rightful place as the focus of Christian teaching and preaching. The Gospel was "the sermon that Christ gave Himself for us that He might save us from sin, that all who believe this might certainly be saved . . . and that thus sinners, despairing of their own efforts, might cling to Christ alone and rely on Him" (*What Luther Says, Vol. II, p. 562*).

The Law does not save. It condemns. We preach the Law, but the Gospel is at the center of our preaching! Sadly, much of Lutheranism has

come full circle. In our age the focus is again away from the Gospel. The Law for its own sake, universalism, political correctness, mere religiosity, compromise, self-aggrandizement, indifference, together with the inherent fleshly emphasis on salvation by works, and charismatic pursuits—these all have fleshed out Luther's lament when he said: "But this is what happened to the Gospel before, and it will happen again. The children of Israel were badly plagued in Egypt . . . But after they got out and were redeemed from the Egyptians, they soon completely forgot their former plight and remembered only the onions and flesh pots. This is what is happening to this day" (*loc. cit., p. 564*).

The repository of the pure Gospel after the Reformation was the Lutheran Church. Today the Lutheran Church for the most part is in need of another Reformation lest another word of Luther come true. Said the Reformer: "Very well, all sorts of plagues will follow upon this attitude"—an attitude of indifference and lack of unadulterated Gospel preaching manifested by a failure to hold Christ and His cross at the center of things.

Purity of doctrine, sanctification, a fervent spirit of religiousness, a social conscience are important. But unless they are born of the Gospel and are in

the service of the Gospel, the exercise and pursuit of the same is a replay of the self-deception that enveloped the church before the Reformation.

For our part we say with Luther that the Gospel of eternal salvation by grace through faith in Christ shall “be diligently presented in my sermons, for I see well enough what it does where it is present and what harm is caused where it is absent” (*loc. cit.*, p. 564).

God help us!

As we are committed in our church to proclaim the Gospel of Christ without shame or apology, we invite “all who are in distress of mind and heart because of their guilt and condemnation in the sight of Almighty God and seek the pardon and comfort which only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can confer” (*CLC Statement of Faith and Purpose*).

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer

Martin Luther And Church Fathers

Martin Luther is a church father who is highly regarded by Lutheran Christians as well as by individuals in other Christian denominations. He has received such a special standing in our eyes because of the Lord's blessed use of Luther in bringing important truths of God's Word to the light of day. For example, there are the three 'solas'—*Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fidei*. *Sola Scriptura* = SCRIPTURE ALONE is the source of Christian doctrine. *Sola Gratia* = it is by GRACE ALONE that we are saved and not by the works and deeds of mankind. *Sola Fidei* = it is by FAITH ALONE that we receive God's free gift of forgiveness and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Looking back to our Lutheran heritage in more recent times, we could single out a number of church fathers of special note like C.F.W. Walther, August Pieper, and Wilhelm Koren. And with our church body celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, there are founding church fathers of our synod (cf. recent articles in the *Spokesman*) for whom we are thankful to God for their contribu-



MARTIN LUTHER

tions to the Lord's Church.

As we think of Martin Luther at Reformation time and other church fathers at different occasions, what place should they and their writings hold in our faith-life? If Martin Luther were alive today, he would be among the first to say that we should not elevate him and his writings or those of any church father to such a high degree that we rely upon them for our faith-life instead of looking primarily to Holy Scripture.

Since man is not infallible and therefore is subject to error, the church prior

to the Reformation period had lost sight of the pure Gospel message because it looked to and relied upon the faulty teachings of certain church fathers.

The mind and heart of Martin Luther came to behold the glorious light of the saving Gospel of Christ not through the teachings of man but rather through the divine words and teachings found in the Bible.

When Luther debated the Catholic champion John Eck in Leipzig, Germany (1519) concerning teachings in the church, there was a striking difference in the two men's basis for their religious arguments. On the one hand, John Eck placed the teachings of the church fathers in the first position of importance, while he put the Bible in a secondary position. Martin Luther, on the other hand, did the exact opposite. He placed the Scriptures in the first position of importance. And he accepted the teachings of the church fathers insofar as they were in agreement with Scripture.

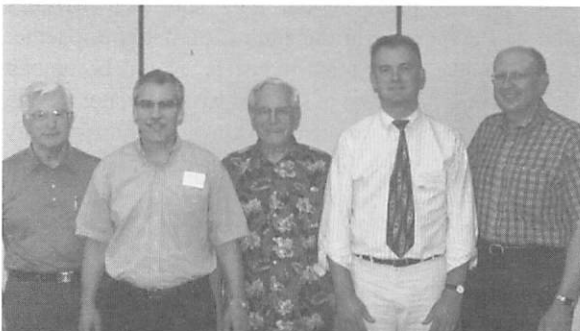
The writings of the church fathers can be spiritually edifying and beneficial to us so long as these writings are faithful and subservient to Holy Scripture. Luther for one did not want people to regard his writings as some

kind of a Lutheran Koran. He said to those who were given the task of putting his writings in print: "I had hoped that people would henceforth pay more attention to the Holy Scriptures themselves and let my books go now that they have served their purpose and led men's hearts into and up to the Scriptures, which was my reason for writing my books."

This writer remembers one of our synod's church fathers speaking of how we can benefit from the sanctified writings of the church fathers, as he spoke of "standing on the shoulders of the church fathers." But then this same church father would agree with Luther's advice of reading the churchmen's writings with spiritual discernment. Luther said: "I do think that all of us need to be admonished to read the writings of the fathers with judgment, and with a very careful and critical one indeed, following the rule of the Holy Spirit: 'Prove all things' (1 Thess. 5:21), and again: 'Try the spirits' (1 Jn. 4:1)."

God be praised and thanked for faithful church fathers who have been a rich blessing to His Church. May their writings serve to lead us into Scripture so that our Christian faith and life are founded solely upon the Word of God.

—Pastor Mark Gullerud



Serving as ministers of the Convention last June:
Prof. Em. John Lau,
Pastor Terrel Kesterson,
Pastor Gordon Radtke,
Pastor Mike Sprengeler,
Pastor Delwyn Maas

Appreciating Our Lutheran Hymns

1 Flung to the heed-less winds Or on the wa-ters cast,
2 The Fa-ther hath re-ceived Their lat-est liv-ing breath,

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both are in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style with quarter and eighth notes.

Flung to the Heedless Winds A Reformation Hymn #259 in The Lutheran Hymnal

In the early days of the New Testament church Stephen was put to death, being falsely accused of blasphemy by a group of men who could not refute his teaching of Jesus as the promised Messiah. He became the first Christian martyr.

The word *martyr* is taken over from a Greek word that means witness. Stephen and the many others who have been killed because they confessed faith in Christ are witnesses for Him. By giving up their lives rather than denying Him, they testified that Jesus is the Lord of life. Even life itself can be sacrificed for Him since He will raise to eternal life all who believe in Him.

Christ had his faithful martyrs also in the Reformation era. As Luther's gospel writings were distributed throughout Europe, many joyfully embraced the truth of justification by grace alone.

And some were persecuted for professing this faith. At an Augustinian monastery in Belgium, the prior and two young monks were sentenced to death for refusing to give up their faith. The prior was put to death in his prison

cell, and the two young men, Heinrich Voes and Johann Esch, were burned at the stake in Brussels on June 30, 1523.

Deeply moved by the deaths of these faithful young men, Luther wrote a poem to commemorate their martyrdom. This poem of twelve stanzas is more a ballad than a church hymn. Yet apparently it was the beginning of Luther's hymnwritings, his first poetic effort. The complete text in English translation can be found in *The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal* (page 190).

The hymn "*Flung to the Heedless Winds*" is a paraphrase of one of the stanzas of Luther's ballad. It expresses the confidence that the sacrifice of Christian martyrs is not in vain. God uses their testimony to bring some to faith and to strengthen the faith of others.

By means of Luther's poem and the hymn derived from it, the voices of two long-dead martyrs continue to be heard.

*Still, still, tho' dead, they speak,
And, trumpet-tongued, proclaim
To many a wak'ning land
The one availing Name.*

—Pastor John Klatt

ARE WE UNITED??

The “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” fails to resolve issues between Roman Catholics and Lutherans in a clear and scriptural manner.

On October 31, 1999 representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation met in Germany and signed a “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” (JDDJ). The signing was hailed by many as an end to the divisions that have existed between Roman Catholics and Lutherans for almost five hundred years.

This is not true! The JDDJ does not represent genuine agreement on the basic teaching of justification. The document itself admits there are still many differences in “language, theological elaboration, and of emphasis in the understanding of justification,” all of which allow individuals to read into the document their own different thoughts without any real agreement.

The differences that remain are real and serious. Consequently, no one should be fooled into believing that there are now no differences between the Roman Catholic Church and our own Lutheran Church. The following are just some of the issues that continue to divide us:

- **First** of all, the Scriptures teach and we believe that justification is a declaration of “not guilty” and “righteous” pronounced by God on sinners because of Christ and His work. Contrary to the Scriptures, Roman Catholicism teaches that justification involves an internal process by which a believer is transformed and “made” more and more right-

eous.

- **Secondly**, the Scriptures teach and we believe that “grace” is God’s undeserved love bestowed upon sinners in connection with Christ. Contrary to Scripture, Roman Catholicism teaches that “grace” is a spiritual power poured or “infused” into the soul that enables one to love God and merit salvation. It is this “infused grace” which enables the internal process and transformation which Roman Catholicism claims to be justification.
- **Thirdly**, although the JDDJ uses the Scriptural wording of justification “through faith” and “by faith,” it also uses the wording of justification “in faith,” which Scripture does not use. Such wording allows for the Roman Catholic idea of “infused grace.” The JDDJ does not state clearly faith’s role in justification. The Scriptures teach and we believe that faith simply receives the benefits of forgiveness, life, and salvation won by Christ through God’s grace. It is not something in man which allows man to merit the blessings of God as Roman Catholicism claims.
- **Fourthly**, while the JDDJ does express the Scriptural teaching embraced by Lutherans that Original Sin remains after baptism, it also includes the unscriptural teaching embraced by

Roman Catholicism that Original Sin is eradicated by baptism and that the desire to sin that remains after baptism is not really sin.

A true agreement would not contain contradictory statements such as these.

Lutherans confess that the Scriptural teaching of justification is the central doctrine of the Bible by which all other teachings are to be judged, for it places everything in direct relationship with Jesus Christ. In fact, Lutherans have historically maintained that justification is the doctrine by which the church either stands or falls. The Vatican, on the other hand, insisted that “justification” be referred to (in the JDDJ) as simply “an indispensable criterion” when considering other teachings within the church. This is an important difference, for the *scriptural* teaching of *justification* by God’s grace alone through faith alone *stands in judgment of many Roman Catholic teachings*. These teachings include: the “meritorious” value of good works, purgatory, indulgences, the papacy, the significance of the saints and of prayers to the saints, and the adoration of Mary. Each of these Roman Catholic teachings stands in opposition to the Scriptural teaching of

justification!

We rejoice that the Means of Grace is used within Roman Catholicism through Baptism and the reading of the Scriptures, for this means that the Holy Spirit is at work there and will accomplish what God pleases. We pray that the Lutheran Churches which have embraced the JDDJ (primarily the ELCA here in the United States), might recognize and stand firm in the Scriptural heritage of our Lutheran Church. For our part, we must beware of the possible deception and the spiritual harm it can bring. The JDDJ is not what many claim it to be—an honest resolution of past differences.

Jesus urges us to “abide in His Word” (John 8:31) and to avoid “those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you learned” (Romans 16:17). He does this to protect us in our faith, to help us preserve the truths of His Word, and to permit us to make a clear confession of that Word to the world. May God grant us those blessings!

—Pastor Paul D. Nolting

“Are We United?” first appeared in the December 1999 *Home Messenger*, the newsletter of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota.)

Studies In Ephesians -Chapter 4:17-32

Dressing The Part

On his way to the rural Christian Day School, the eight-year-old lad was dragging his feet in reluctance, blushing with shame. His mother had insisted that he wear some dressy “knickers.” Dressing the part, as she saw it.

But the boy knew that all of his male schoolmates would be fitted out in bib overalls with brass buttons hooked over the shoulder and pant legs rolled back a neat three folds. *That* was dressing the part for those who looked to the

day when they would be driving the family John Deere.

The knickered lad survived the friendly snickers. But it was not an easy way to learn the importance of *dressing the part*.

Checking Our Wardrobe

To help us, the Apostle gives a model for how we might learn to “dress the part” as the “*followers of God as dear children*” (5:1). Wonderful counsel, especially for parents and Christian educators as they guide their charges into righteous paths.

Here is how it is done without resorting to faith-destroying legalism and moralizing!

Step 1: Reminded of What We Were

All of us by our very nature once *walked* as the rest of the world walks. “*In the futility of their mind . . . darkened in understanding . . . alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of the heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*”

We know all of those vile inclinations, don’t we? They’re in tune with our *old man*, that cruddy sinful nature that clings to us like a scab until we finally depart in peace. Oh, yes, we know and understand that death-prone world. Like our old man, it “*grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*” (think dying).

The point is: Would you want, even a minute, to play that part? God forbid!

. . . And What We Are

Contrast that with *what we are*, by God’s grace: “*You have not so learned*

Christ! (If indeed we have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus).”

Not only have we learned Christ, but by Him and through the agency of the Spirit we have been given a *new man*, a new nature. And remember this amazing fact about that new nature: it “*was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness*”!

Could a serious Christian not *want* to play that part—to walk in that lifestyle? God forbid! That new man is a glorious *creation* of God. Let us glory in it. Let us put it on, as one might happily play the character of some revered role model. That model, of course, is Jesus Himself (vv. 20-21) who walked in perfect righteousness and true holiness (v. 24).

Choosing The Wardrobe

Muddled and befuddled as we often are by our “old man,” we do need help in knowing what clothes to put on to dress the part.

- * Lying? Throw it out. Put on truth (v. 25).
- * Road rage? Out! Put on control even over your righteous anger (vv. 26-27).
- * Dipping the till? Out! Put on diligence at work with a high, unselfish purpose (v. 28).
- * Foul mouthing? Out! Put on good talk that edifies and gives grace to others (v. 29). Not to do so grieves the Holy Spirit of God (v. 30).
- * Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and all malice? Away with all of it, suited as it is to the old man. Be clothed with the simple grace of kindness, tender-heartedness, and forgiveness (v. 32). That’s how God shows Himself to us.

“Therefore be followers of God as dear children” (v. 5:1)!

Of course, you will look different,

child. That happens when you dress the part we have in Christ!

—Rollin A. Reim

SMORGASBORD

• A REUNION—AND MEMORIES

June 23-25, 2000 a reunion was held in Mankato, Minnesota for those who had experienced “The Early Years of ILC-Mankato (1959-1963).” As one of those who attended the reunion, teacher Marion Fitschen recorded the following thoughts—thoughts (and photos) which quite by accident found their way into the hands of the *Spokesman* editor. Herewith—and with Ms. Fitschen’s kind permission—we share them with you.

The memories of our school days in Mankato are precious. I consider it a privilege to have been one of the first students of ILC. I was a member of the first high school graduating class in 1960 and also a member of the first full-time college class in 1963.

The Lord led me into the teaching ministry. My first call was to serve Immanuel of Winter Haven (Florida) where I served from 1963-1972. In 1972 the Lord led me to accept the call to help found the school at Holy Trinity of West Columbia (South Carolina), where I am still teaching.

God has bestowed many blessings upon me in my teaching career. One of my greatest joys is to hear “my little ones” singing even while at play the hymns they have learned. One day this spring we were having some hail. While some of the students were waiting for their parents to pick them up, they were walking through the hallway singing “Everywhere I Go the Lord is



Marion Fitschen
and her students

With Me.” What a privilege it is to be an instrument in helping lead these lambs to know their Savior.

This past year one of the students from the first years of school at Holy Trinity who had been away from the fold for many years came back to Holy Trinity and enrolled his two sons in our school. What a joy to see the validity of the passage “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.” A few weeks ago a tree fell down on our church property. A few days later several of us worked to clean up the debris and several men used the chainsaws to cut up the trunk. A little while later this young man came with a cross he had carved with his chainsaw from one of the pieces of the log. He presented this cross to me as a token of appreciation for things I had done for him and his sons. This cross is now a treasure of mine. (See p. 19)

May the Lord continue to bless all of us in our endeavors of serving Him in His kingdom. /s/ Marion Fitschen

• **“MARK...AVOID”—ORIGIN OF THE CLC**

This is yet another—and the most compelling of all—“history” of the CLC.

To inaugurate the synod’s fortieth anniversary year, back in our January 2000 issue a capsule summary was given of at least four different essays on the history of the synod—essays which had been delivered over the years at synodical conferences and conventions. In our monthly feature “Historical Markings, Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?” pithy excerpts from these four essays have been shared with our readers.

Now we would (re)introduce you, dear reader, to yet another compelling historical account.

Let us seek to explain what lies behind our remark that “MARK . . . AVOID”—ORIGIN OF THE CLC is the most compelling history of all. While the other good writings touched on the doctrinal issues involved, they did not detail them. By contrast “MARK . . . AVOID” is weighted in the

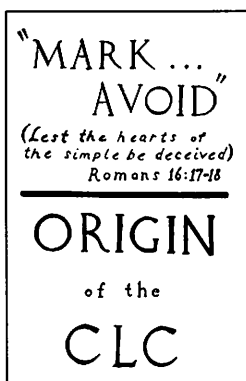
latter direction. The “origin” spoken of alludes to the biblical grounds which justified in 1960—and in our view continues to justify in 2000—the existence of the Church of the Lutheran Confession within the larger Lutheran community.

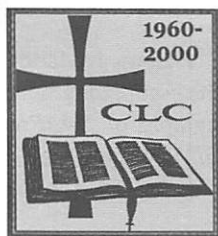
Pastor Paul F. Nolting (at the time pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, West Columbia, South Carolina and synod secretary) provided a special service when he wrote this 20-page pamphlet.

Standing as “text” at the head of the writing is the Scripture passage Romans 16:17-18. That is significant. As Nolting and others of us living in the days of the CLC’s birth were aware, charges were often heard to the effect that “you people are the Romans 16:17-18 church; it’s all you seem to know.” Such charges often came from those who took little time to investigate the doctrinal issues involved. In a straight-forward manner “MARK . . . AVOID” does not apologize for, but elaborates upon, the reasons why fellowship passages such as the stated one from Romans lay heavily on the consciences of many and eventually resulted in the birth of a new synod.

The jacket of “MARK . . . AVOID” reports that the writing (first printing October 1970) “has been authorized by the Coordinating Council of the Church of the Lutheran Confession” and “has been approved by the Praesidium and the Board of Doctrine of the CLC.”

Thus, while not to be considered an official synodical statement of doctrine, “MARK . . . AVOID” circulated for many years among those who wanted to get to the nub of the matter. The pamphlet was downloaded (may we





Historical Markings

Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?

OUR ORIGIN—RIGHT OR WRONG?

The CLC is today a recognized church body. But that in itself does not justify its existence. The questions that demand answers are these: Were the members of the CLC obedient to the Word of the Lord when they "marked and avoided" their former brethren? Are they obedient today—after more than ten years—in continuing their separate, lonely way? Could it be that we deceived ourselves and are living in self-deception? Did we firmly believe, at the time, that we were acting in obedience to the Word of the Lord, while actually being motivated by the flesh? Are we maintaining our separate stance today because of pride, or bitterness, or stubbornness, while we continue to search for justification in the Word for what we have done and are continuing to do? If so we were and are schismatics. Then woe be to us! This is an extremely practical matter. It concerns our daily living in the sight of God, with one another, and over against our former brethren. Either we are living day after day in obedience and so ought to be strengthening one another, or we are living in disobedience and ought to be admonishing one another unto repentance. The Word of our Lord and recent history will give the answers.

SEPARATION FOR THE SAKE OF PRESERVATION AND PROPAGATION!

We are walking our separate way because we want the saving truths of the Gospel preserved unto ourselves and our children and their children. We are continuing our lonely way so that when we go into the world to make disciples of all nations, we have the Truth to preach and teach. The salvation of our souls and of the souls of others is at stake. Error refuses to remain isolated. It tends to work its way through the body of doctrine in its effort to destroy the heart of the Gospel—justification through faith in Christ Jesus. Error also infects people—with spiritual anemia that causes its victims either to despair of ever knowing the Truth or to become too weak to stand up for the Truth. Error is content at first but to be tolerated. Then it seeks equality with the Truth, and finally it demands complete control. We separated from our former church bodies to guard ourselves and our loved ones against soul-destroying error and to remain what we were called to be—faithful witnesses of our Lord.

To this end help us, Lord Jesus. Amen.

From "MARK . . . AVOID" (lest the hearts of the simple be deceived) Romans 16:17-18
— ORIGIN of the CLC by Rev. Paul F. Nolting

say) from tract racks in our CLC churches by members who wanted to review the issues, as well as by “outsiders” who wondered why this smallish Lutheran synod came into existence. Most all appreciated the clarity and straight-forwardness with which

doctrinal questions were addressed in this pamphlet.

This month’s “Historical Markings” quote contains the compelling opening and closing paragraphs of “*MARK . . . AVOID*”—*ORIGIN OF THE CLC*.

Fortieth Anniversary Historical Vignette

vignette (vin-yet'), n. 1. short literary essay; sketch
vignettist (vin-yet'ist), n. a maker of vignettes, painter,
photographer, or writer

Dateline: Hales Corners, Wisconsin

(While more than a “vignette,” this article by Professor David Lau was prompted by the series of historical pieces we have been running in the Spokesman this fortieth anniversary year. We thank Prof. Lau for these insightful reminiscences. — Ed.)

‘All Things For Good’

1960 — A very exciting year for the first members of Messiah Lutheran congregation of Milwaukee, Wisconsin (now Hales Corners), persons with names like Schaller and Mueller and Gerbitz and Radtke. First services in members’ homes. Drawing up a constitution. Losing our first pastor when Paul Koch accepted a call to teach at Immanuel College in Mankato. Sending a delegate to the Interim Conference convention in Watertown, South Dakota. Calling that delegate, a very green young man, to be our pastor after he had been a member for only a few weeks and had just been colloquialized (yes, that’s the word that was used) by Pastors C. M. Gullerud and George Barthels for about ten or fifteen minutes in the basement of Watertown’s Trinity Lutheran Church.

Renting a Seventh Day Adventist church on the north side of Milwaukee for regular Sunday services. Receiving new members almost every week, persons who felt conscience-bound to separate themselves from the Wisconsin Synod, including the sister and widow of a former seminary professor, Arthur Voss, and the daughter and grand-daughters of Professor August Pieper, also a one-time seminary professor. Indeed the Schaller who was one of our first members was Ruth Schaller, the daughter of seminary Professor John Schaller. These courageous women did not vote in our congregational meetings, but they openly confessed their faith by leaving a synod with which they had so many ties and joining a tiny new congregation without any church property or

church building and with a very green young pastor, namely, myself.

Then came the summer of 1961 and a convention of the Wisconsin Synod in the Milwaukee area. For what should we pray? Should we pray that the Wisconsin Synod would continue to maintain its church fellowship with the Missouri Synod in spite of the many protests and withdrawals? We were confident that if the Wisconsin Synod took that course, our Messiah Church would gain many new members, and so it was tempting to pray that that might happen. But yet if the Wisconsin Synod took that course, more of its members would be led away from the Word, and the Missouri Synod also would be strengthened in its downward course away from God's Word. Not knowing specifically what to pray for, we prayed: "Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The Wisconsin Synod did break off its fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1961. It was not a perfectly clean break, and it did not bring back the Wisconsin Synod to an orthodox position on the doctrine of church fellowship. We have felt conscience-bound to continue our separation from the Wisconsin Synod since that time.

But now, as I look back to 1960 and consider what has happened since that time, I begin to see that God used the firm stand of our CLC fathers not only for the benefit of our small church body but also for the benefit of the Wisconsin Synod and the Missouri Synod as well. In the late fifties and early sixties there were some teachers in Wisconsin Synod schools who were trying to steer the Wisconsin Synod in

the direction of unionism and ecumenism and a critical approach to Bible study. Two that I know later found their way into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), that apostate Lutheran body that does not deserve to be called Lutheran at all. If our forefathers in the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) had not taken their strong stand, these dangerous teachers would have been more easily able to persuade the Wisconsin Synod to follow them. But in 1961 when these teachers presented their arguments for a unionistic course, others got up to say: "If we don't take a stand against the Missouri Synod now, we will lose more of our members to the CLC." Having been an observer at the Wisconsin Synod convention in 1961, I know that this is one of the arguments that was used. The mere existence of our church body was used by our God to help bring about the Wisconsin Synod's separation from the Missouri Synod.

Going a step further, I think we can also say that God used the Wisconsin Synod's separation from the Missouri Synod for the benefit of the Missouri Synod. For just as the existence of the CLC put some pressure on the Wisconsin Synod to be more confessional and less unionistic, so also the existence of the Wisconsin Synod put some pressure on the Missouri Synod to be more confessional and less unionistic. The Missouri Synod was once headed directly into the same ecumenical and anti-confessional mess in which the ELCA is now swimming. Its teachers were becoming more and more openly unscriptural in their teachings. But there was a reversal in the late sixties and early seventies and

an exodus of some of the more prominent false teachers, so that the Missouri Synod today is somewhat closer to the truth, yet still not orthodox enough even for the Wisconsin Synod to declare fellowship with them once again.

From all of this I draw the conclusion that what God wants from us is simply to listen to God's Word and do what He says. We need not concern ourselves with questions like whether by our obedience we are going to lose our influence or impact in the world. God certainly knows how to use our obedience in His plan to work all things for good to all those who love God, even those who are not in our

immediate fellowship. God is not parochial in His thinking and planning as we so often are. If we do what is right in our little corner of the world, God can and does use what we do for the benefit of many others. God is concerned not just with the hallowing of His name and the coming of His kingdom and the doing of His will among us in our little group, but with the hallowing of His name and the coming of His kingdom and the doing of His will all over the world. "God works all things (including our decisions to obey His Word) together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).



Missionary Koenig identified for convention delegates the flags of nations where the CLC has contacts or where Gospel work is being done by the synod or its members: Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Kenya, Canada, United States, India, Congo, France, Togo



Pastors received as voting members at the June Convention: (l-r) Kevin McKenny, David Schaller, Stephen Sydow, Mark Gurath, Matthew Gurath

New Professor At ILC

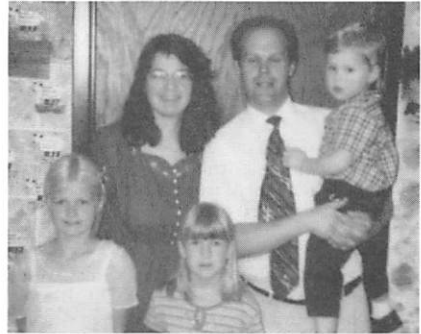
We wish to introduce you now to Prof. Steve Sippert, latest addition to the faculty of Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin as the Lord's gift to His church.

The Rev. Sippert came to ILC from the pastoral ministry of our Savior's congregation in Jamestown, North Dakota; prior to that he shepherded at Grace of Valentine, Nebraska (1989-98).

Many of us are acquainted with his parents, Paul and Bev Sippert of Lakeville, Minnesota, and his wife Amy (nee Olmanson), and we will soon get to know their children Rebekah, Kaitlyn, and Zachary.

It is always a working of God's grace that a young person prepares to serve in the pastoral or teaching ministry, and Prof. Sippert's experiences hold true to that paradigm. After taking the general college courses and earning the AA degree at ILC in 1983, Steve entered the MIS program at UWEC, attended a year, then transferred to MSC in Mankato to prepare for a career in the business world. After a few weeks in Mankato, however, Steve had his mind changed and the Lord brought him back to ILC for the Pre-theology course. To catch up with the sophomores, Prof. Kuehne tutored Steve privately in Greek; he completed the course requirements during the next three years, acquiring the BA degree while a seminary student.

This year Prof. Sippert will be teaching Greek for college freshmen and sophomores, Religion 10 in the high school, and in the seminary courses in Hermeneutics (interpretation),



**Prof. Steven & Amy Sippert,
Becky, Kaitlyn, Zachary**

Exegesis (verse-by-verse study using the original language) of Galatians, and Isagogics (introduction) to the later New Testament epistles.

May the Lord bless Prof. Sippert's service to Him and his ministry to the students at our training school for the prophets. The Sipperts are residing at 513 Ingram Drive West on the ILC campus.

—Paul R. Koch



See page 13

Announcements

Installations

In accord with our usage and order, Philip Strike, who was called by St. John's Ev. Lutheran congregation of Okabena, Minnesota to serve as Principal/Teacher in its school, was installed on August 13, 2000.

—Pastor James Albrecht

In accord with our usage and order, Candice Ohlmann, who was called by Faith Lutheran Church, Markesan, Wis. to be a teacher in its school, was installed on August 20, 2000.

—Pastor Bruce Naumann

In accord with our usage and order, Walter Schaller, who was assigned by the CLC Board of Missions to Mt. Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Detroit, Michigan as Exploratory Missionary, was installed on August 27, 2000.

—Pastor Mark Bernthal

Change Of Address

Pastor John H. Johannes
447 Kings Hill Court
Lawrenceville, GA 30045-5157

(Phone/E-mail unchanged)

Minnesota Pastoral Conference

Dates: October 24-25, 2000

Time: Beginning at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday

Place: Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church,
Red Wing

Agenda:

*New Testament Exegesis: 2 Thessalonians
2:1ff—Pastor James Albrecht

*Old Testament Exegesis: Haggai 2:1-9
—Pastor Norman Greve

*Issues related to dying (pamphlet form)
—Pastor Norman Greve

*A Study of St. Augustine
—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt

*The Enduring Value of the Book of
Concord in an Age of Anti-confes-
sionalism—Pastor Rick Grams

*Evaluation of the Agreement Between the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America and the Roman Catholic
Church—Pastor David Schierenbeck

*Scriptural Teaching on the present state of
those who have died "in the Lord"
—Pastor Elton Hallauer

*Christian Day Schools in Subsidized
Congregations—Discussion
Moderator: Pastor Paul Fleischer

Please announce housing needs to the host
congregation.

—Pastor Rick Grams, Secretary

On The Cover

The cover for our September issue was submitted by John Fox, member of Bethel in Spring, Texas. John, a new artist on our staff as of last summer's convention, will alternate months with our long-time faithful cover artist, Matthew Schaser, member of Peace Thru Christ, Middleton, Wisconsin. Hearty thanks to both men for their appealing cover work!

AREA REFORMATION SERVICE

Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota invites everyone to a CLC Area Reformation Service on Sunday, October 29, 2000.

The day's special activities will begin at 2:00 p.m. with an organ concert presented by Mr. Daniel Sullivan, a member of Messiah, Eau Claire and currently an organ major in his senior year at Oberlin College's Conservatory of Music. The festival service will begin at 4:00 p.m. with the theme "Reformation—The Ongoing Need of the Church Militant!" Pastors Paul D. Nolting and Wayne Eichstadt and Teacher Douglas Libby will present a three-part message reviewing the need for reformation in the church at large in Luther's day, in the Lutheran church specifically in the days of our synod's founding, and within each of our lives today. Area youth and adult choirs will sing for the service. Mr. Sullivan will serve as worship service organist. The offering will go for the CLC's 40th Anniversary Fund. A luncheon fellowship following the worship service will conclude the day's festivities.