

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



(ISSN 0024-7537)

May 2001, Vol 43, No. 11

The Helper Who Never Leaves

In this world we often suffer the pain of separation from loved ones. No one is exempt from this pain.

We recently read an article telling about the mourning of Queen Victoria when her husband Prince Albert died. Her sorrow was such that she did not appear in public for three years. As queen she did not lack for comforts nor for work to occupy her mind. As the mother of nine children she was not without companionship. But the one thing she most valued had been taken from her. The one person she most wanted at her side was missing.

Queen Victoria's experience was neither unique nor unusual. Widows and widowers in every time, place, and social class have felt the pain of losing the one person they most loved, the one upon whom they most depended. Such losses cannot be avoided in this world where death has intruded.

On the night of His betrayal Jesus prepared His disciples for the loss that

they were about to experience. He would soon be taken from them to be put on trial and then to be put to death by crucifixion. With their beloved Master taken from them they would feel like orphans.

But they should not be overwhelmed by sorrow or fall into despair, as though the Lord had deserted them. "Let not your heart be troubled," He said, "neither let it be afraid" (Jn. 14:27). Jesus would go to the cross and grave. He would also rise from the dead and ascend into heaven, and they would see Him no more. But from His exalted place at the Father's right hand He would send from the Father another Helper, the Holy Spirit. This Helper, unlike all human helpers, would be with them forever (Jn. 14:16).

He Lives Within

The same Holy Spirit has been given to us. He was poured out on us in our baptism—shed on us abundantly in

Postmaster: Periodicals postage paid at Roseville, MN 55113 and at additional offices. Send address corrections (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford Street North, Roseville, MN 55113.

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC).

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Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Fleischer one month before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Fleischer.

Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. E-Mail to benno.sydow@rahs.roseville.k12.mn.us. Individual subscriptions {foreign—U.S. currency only}: \$11.00 {\$15.00} for one year; \$19.00 {\$27.00} for two years; \$27.00 {\$39.00} for three years. Subscriptions sent in bulk to congregations: \$9.00.

Spokesman Internet access: http://www.clclutheran.org/library/spokesman_arch/current.html
Printed in U.S.A.



the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5-6). He lives within us, making us His temples (1 Cor. 3:16). He whom we confess in the Nicene Creed as “the Lord and Giver of Life” gives us life by teaching and enabling us to believe in Jesus Christ, so that we have the forgiveness of sins and deliverance from death that Jesus purchased for us by His blood.

The Spirit comforts us with the gospel. He consoles us while we yet

live in this world where our lives are continually touched by sin and sorrow. He assures us of our standing before God—that through Christ we are His children and heirs (Rom. 8:16-17). He enables us to pray even when we cannot find the words (Rom. 8:26-27).

How reassuring to know that this Helper on whom we depend will not leave us. He will continue to do His work in us by means of the gospel in Word and sacrament, strengthening and keeping us in faith.

Let us be careful not to grieve the Spirit by sinning. Other helpers—spouse, children, parents, friends—will leave us, and their departure will cause us pain and sorrow. But the Holy Spirit, the Helper whom Christ has sent, will never leave us. He will be with us to the end to bring us safely to eternal life.

—Pastor John Klatt

An Ascension Meditation—

SHOUTING FOR JOY

How much shouting do you do during the course of an average week? It might be more than you realize or care to admit. If you work in a shop where there’s a lot of machinery running and all your co-workers are wearing ear plugs, of course, it can’t be helped. You practically need to shout just to communicate. Every parent understands the need to shout at times. There seems at times to be a certain decibel level that one’s voice must reach before the children pay full attention and take your words seriously.

On the 24th of this month, how

many of you will be shouting at the top of your lungs? Not in frustration or anger, but with pure, absolute joy? Though vastly underrated and largely ignored, the festival of Jesus’ Ascension should rightly move every Christian to shout “with the voice of triumph.” In the words of the Psalmist: “God has gone up with a shout” (Ps. 47:5).

A Heavenly Celebration . . .

It is doubtful that the first disciples did much shouting as Jesus ascended back to heaven. Frozen in their minds

was the scene of their beloved Savior, hands lifted up, rising into the air until a cloud received Him from sight. Angels appeared. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “Why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

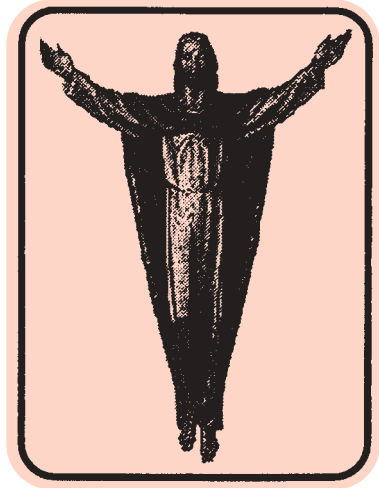
If anything, there was silence. A flood of memories washed over them. For three years Jesus had been with them. They had heard His Word and seen His power. They had witnessed His fulfilling all Old Testament prophecies. Fresh in their minds was His brutal death and powerful resurrection. Ahead of them stretched a course which Jesus Himself established: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15).

And yet Scripture says, “God has gone up with a shout.” How so?

Picture for a moment what is not visible from the Mount of Olives or from any other spot on this earth. Think of the incredible reception that awaited Him. All of heaven must have erupted with shouts of joy when Jesus returned to His heavenly throne. Think of all the people who died with a forward-looking faith that trusted in God’s promise of sending a Savior. Now they formed a welcoming committee, joyfully receiving Him as the Fulfiller of all that God had said. Jesus appeared bearing the scars of battle in hands and feet, crowned with the victory that belongs to all who trust in Him!

... With An Earthly Meaning

Too seldom are the moments we feel like shouting for joy in this earthly life. Because of sin this life is filled with struggle and monotony and hard-



ship. Because our eyes are trained on the things around us, we too seldom gaze upward to the glorious celebration that is coming. We often forget that Jesus’ Ascension is filled with meaning for our life on earth.

Too often things seem to happen by accident. But even now Jesus is throned high above and rules all things for the sake of His elect. He is powerfully at work in your life, as He is in mine.

Too often the devil accuses and our consciences haunt us with sins from the past. But even now Jesus is interceding for us at the Father’s throne. With Him there Paul asks, “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect?” (Rom. 8:33)

Too often we stand helplessly by as fellow Christians lose the battle against disease and age. But even now, when all looks hopeless, Jesus is preparing a place for them. By faith in Jesus every Christian will one day be added to heaven’s great chorus where the shouts of joy never end!

—Pastor James Albrecht

Call Her Blessed

There is a lot of emphasis today on women pursuing careers. Women can be anything they like. They can be doctors, lawyers, CEOs of a company, politicians. We are even told that some day we will have a woman President. There are many women who are very successful in all manner of careers.

We are not here to argue whether or not mothers should work outside the home or have one of these careers. Rather we are here to hold up one career which is most often overlooked or even put down in the world, but one which is praised above all others by God. That is the career of motherhood.

When guidance counselors present all the career options for young women, motherhood is seldom, if ever, mentioned. The impression is given that if you are “only” a mother or housewife, you are wasting your full potential and you cannot have a fulfilled life. It is as if motherhood is a burden that keeps you from reaching your dreams.

Being a full-time mother IS a career. It is probably the most demanding career of all. It requires all of one’s skill and ingenuity. It demands all of one’s time and energy. It also calls for all the care-giving love that God has especially given to women.

In our day the woman who keeps up a full-time career outside the home, and is a mom and wife, is called a “super mom.” In my estimation, the true “super mom” is the one who is a full-time mom.

Raising children has got to be the most physically and emotionally exhausting career of all. Husbands need to understand that and help their

Talk about a rewarding, blessed career—what could be more rewarding than to be able to see the Holy Spirit work a simple childlike faith in the hearts of your children?!

wives in every way they can.

Motherhood is not only a demanding career. It is also the most fulfilling and blessed career of all. Motherhood is a career entrusted by God: “Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is His reward” (Ps. 127:3).

God has entrusted His dear little ones into our care as parents. What could be more fulfilling than carrying out the work God has given us? What could be more important than caring for God’s children?

Crucial For Believers!

As believers this job becomes even more crucial. If the only thing that was needed to raise children was feeding them and watching them to make sure they didn’t get hurt, then any reliable baby-sitter could take care of that. But God says, “He seeks godly offspring” (Mal. 2:15).

Raising godly children for the Lord requires constant training and care from the time children are born until they are out on their own. It involves teaching them Bible stories and lessons from God’s Word. It involves leading them to find their comfort and hope in the Lord. It requires a discipline that teaches them about repentance and for-

giveness, and instills in them a desire to be obedient to their Heavenly Father in thankfulness for His love and grace. Parents need to show children how to make the Lord #1 in their lives and worship. They want to pray with them, teach them to pray, and pray for them.

There is no one better suited for that than the believing mother and father.

Talk about a rewarding, blessed career—what could be more rewarding than to be able to see the Holy Spirit work a simple childlike faith in the hearts of your children?! What a joy to see children express their faith and love for the Lord. So often our children teach us great lessons in faith even as we teach them. Not to mention the excitement of experiencing life again through a child’s eyes as he grows and discovers new things.

No one has a better opportunity to experience the joys of watching chil-

dren grow than the full-time mother who is with her children daily.

Best of all, God says, “Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her” (Prov. 31:28). Other careers may have their rewards, but there can be no greater reward than to see your children grow up as children of God and to have them thank you and call you blessed, knowing also that you will spend eternity with them in heaven.

The world looks at children more as a burden than a blessing, or as something that gets in the way of enjoying life. May we see our children as tremendous blessings from God and the source of joy in our life.

The world may not have a very high regard for full-time motherhood. Let the world think and say what it wants, motherhood is the only career that God calls BLESSED.

—Pastor David Reim



THE WORSHIP SERVICE

“Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.”
Psalm 95:6

Fifth in a Series—

The Confessions of Sins (continued)

“Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 124:8).

These words of the Prophet David are spoken in keen recognition of the fact that we are no match for Satan, his followers, and their evil designs. He begins the psalm by confessing: “If it

had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive. . . .” (Ps. 124:2-3a).

Every day, each second of our lives, we are in need of God’s help. We need to hear the Lord speaking to us from His Word constantly. His Word is His

Name—and there is where we will find our help in every need. In “tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword . . . in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8:35,37).

Whatever may be our circumstance in life, we should recognize that our “Help” is ready and able to aid us. For this is the One “who made heaven and earth.” He it is who spoke, and the world became. He commanded and the heavenly bodies took their place. His “let there be” formed every tiny molecule of life—and man was created the crown of all creation. As Solomon advises: “The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his own esteem” (Prov. 18:10).

In the midst of an adulterous and sinful world which challenges and threatens our trust in the LORD GOD, we need to be reminded and openly confess, “*Our help is in the name of the LORD who made heaven and earth.*”

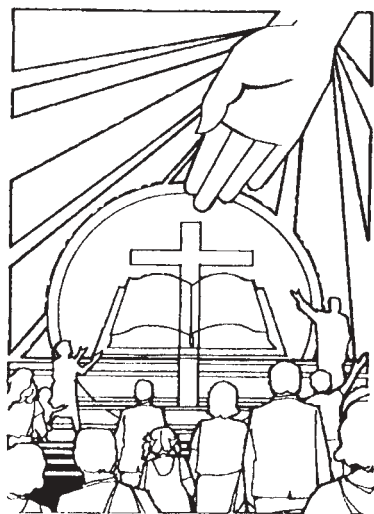
“I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin” (Ps. 32:5b).

The Prophet David knew from experience what agony of heart and mind sin causes. His sins of adultery and murder together with all of his other transgressions of thought, word, and deed, caused him to cry out, “When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer” (Ps. 32:3-4).

Words cannot express the essential importance of heartfelt penitence—true recognition of our sins and what we deserve because of them. “The wages of sin (*regardless of how small they may seem or how huge they are*) is death” (Rom. 6:23)—spiritual, physical, and eternal death. Sin is rebellion against God who has done nothing but love us. How dare anyone treat this matter lightly! How dare anyone who professes to be a child of God treat sinning like a game one plays with God with no heartfelt sorrow and no genuine desire to make amends!

It shall ever be true that “to whom little is forgiven the same loves little” (Lk. 7:47b). If one’s sins are treated as little or of no account, then forgiveness will likewise be a matter of little or no account. Similarly, if one’s forgiveness in Christ Jesus is of little or no importance, one’s thankful love will be negligible or non-existent.

As we make this confession, may each of us have a mental picture of the lifeblood flowing from the sacred veins of the Lord’s Christ for us. May each



of us say, “That is what my sin caused. There the price of my sin is paid. There I have perfect redemption, spiritual healing, total forgiveness.”

What a joyful blessing it was for David to realize: “Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” When he finally confessed his sin before Nathan the prophet (“I have sinned against the LORD”), Nathan was quick to assure him, “The LORD also has put away your sin” (2 Sam. 2:13). What a blessing to come to realize by faith that “Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Is. 1:18).

“Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto Thee that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against Thee by thought, word, and deed. . . .”

On behalf of the people, the minister begins the public confession of sins. It is addressed to the “Almighty God” who has created us and redeemed us through the shed blood of Jesus Christ poured out for us sinners upon Calvary’s tree. Our heartfelt confession to the Almighty recognizes that our sins are a result of 1) “*that we are by nature sinful and unclean*”; 2) “*that we have sinned against Thee in thought, word, and deed.*”

In other words, we recognize the scriptural truth that sin is in our genes, so to speak. We inherit it from our parents and we pass it on to our offspring. As the psalmist David recognizes by inspiration, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51:5). As a result, we recognize that before God we cannot produce anything that is good. In His eyes “we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags” (Is. 64:6).

Out of a heart that is sinful comes forth sinful thoughts, words, and deeds. As the Lord Jesus tells us very clearly, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Mt. 15:19).

Where is hope? Where is mercy? How can we stand before God? “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom. 7:24)

“ . . . Wherefore we flee for refuge to Thine infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Thy grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Without any merit or worthiness in us, we have just one place to take refuge, namely, in the “infinite mercy” of God and His “grace” (undeserved love) which He showers upon us “for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

—Pastor L. Dale Redlin

SMORGASBORD

• **BOOK REVIEW:** *SELECTED SERMONS of E. Schaller*

Those who read essays rehearsing the history of the CLC (see summation articles in the *Spokesman* during 2000, the 40th anniversary year of the synod)

will find that little mention is made of human instruments used by God to guide and direct, shape and mold the young synod. As one old enough (young enough?) to have lived through those early years, this writer remem-

EXCERPT: *SELECTED SERMONS* of E. Schaller

Palm Sunday/Confirmation Sermon; Scripture text: 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

“ . . . Perhaps you have noticed that we are treating you like treasures today, as very valuable people. Just see the preparations made here for you—the floral decorations, your robes, the large gathering of friends and relatives. Does that mean something? Yes, indeed. We are looking ahead. We are thinking of ourselves, too, and we want you to know what we are thinking. Some day, all that we have now here on earth, even our property and our jewels—will be gone. It will be burned in the fires of Judgment Day. We are wise enough to know that. But when that day comes, we still expect to have saved something from this world, something more beautiful than houses and jewelry. Yes, we are looking at you. We expect to be very happy and rich when we stand before Christ’s throne and find you standing alongside of us. . . .”

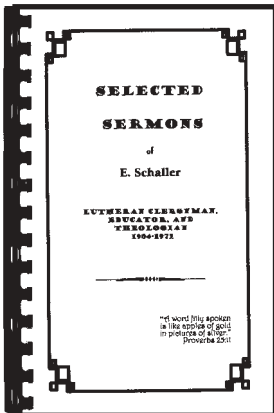
“ . . . The very best product that earth contains is a true Christian. There is nothing like such a royal person; he is like a crown-prince, because he is the child of God by faith in Jesus, and he is walking straight for the open door of heaven. His sins are forgiven. He has peace with God. There is nothing so beautiful as a converted sinner, an instructed Christian whose mind and heart is stocked with Bible passages and hymn verses, who knows what he believes and why he believes it. How blessed are they who can say, ‘We brought the Word to these young people; we instructed these Christians. . . .’” (pp. 100-101)

bers comments made to the effect that names were omitted from CLC historical annals purposefully. The good intention was that any and all glory belongs to God for what may have been accomplished in His name.

We understand and appreciate the point. Yet the Scriptures themselves

assert another viewpoint. It is, on the one hand, incumbent on the older generation to convey scriptural truth to the up-coming one (“Train up a child in the way he should go . . .”, Prov. 22:6). It is, at the same time, incumbent on the current generation to remember those who were used by God in the past to guide and direct, shape and mold the present (“Remember those . . . who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow . . .”, Heb. 13:7).

As a seminary student and fledgling minister of the gospel in the ‘60’s, we “remember” one who spoke the Word of God to us. We refer to Pastor/Professor Egbert Schaller (1904-1971). Since we remember in particular his homiletical (“putting a sermon together”) gifts, we are especially thankful for a new booklet titled





Egbert Schaller:
Lutheran clergyman,
educator, and
theologian
1904-1971

SELECTED SERMONS of E. Schaller.

The project of gathering these sermons into booklet form was undertaken by a son-in-law and daughter of E. Schaller, Paul and Anne Koch of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

A copy of the booklet was provided for our review. Its *Foreword* suggests reasons why also present-day CLC'ers will appreciate what God provided the church in this gifted and dedicated servant: "(E. Schaller) earned the esteem of his contemporaries as a mainstay during doctrinal controversy, served as one of the theological founders of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, and supplied spiritual nourishment for the flourishing of Christian faith-living wherever he spoke. Those who knew E. Schaller as pastor, teacher, colleague, and friend will agree with the testimony of the Lord that 'his works do follow him'"

A biographical sketch at the close of the booklet expands a bit: "As conditions worsened in the Synodical Conference, in willing obedience to his Lord's directive (Romans 16:17-18) [E. Schaller] severed fellowship with the WELS in 1959 and became one of the founding fathers of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. In this fellowship he flourished, as the Lord used his theological maturity to carry forward the cause of Scriptural confessionalism during his editorship of the

CLC *Journal of Theology* and his chairmanship of the CLC Board of doctrine. His insightful presentations of God's Word—whether in written form or from the lecturn in college and seminary courses at Immanuel Lutheran College of Eau Claire, Wis.,—were as edifying as his chapel talks and sermons." [See excerpt (box) this month, and coming months.]

Bound with a plastic ring-binder, the booklet has 182 pages and contains thirty-nine sermons, most from the festival half of the church year and some "special occasion" sermons. Each sermon gives evidence that—as is stated in the scripture passage on the booklet cover—"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (*Proverbs 25:11*).

The *Foreword* mentions that another booklet (featuring E. Schaller "Trinity Season" sermons) may be forthcoming. This reviewer hopes that the idea soon becomes a reality.

Copies of the festival-half sermons are available from Paul R. Koch, 3425 Morgan Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701-7023; e-mail: parekoak@aol.com. Current per copy prices are: One, \$6.00; 2-5, \$5.50; 6 or more, \$5.00. All price quotations are "postpaid."

**• FOUNDER OF THE CONFES-
SIONAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF JAPAN COMPLETES HIS MIS-
SION (Frederick George Tiefel, July
28, 1914-September 13, 2000)**

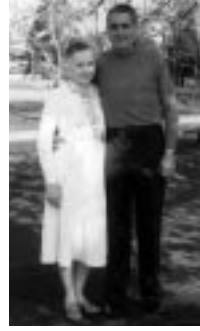
(Editor's note: We thank Spokesman Reporter Rollin A. Reim for his considerable assistance in this report.)

In October, 1951, in the midst of the Korean War, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod called the Rev. Fred Tiefel as Civilian Chaplain

to military personal in Yokohama, Japan. Sixteen months later his call directed him to establish a Christian congregation in Tokyo. This began a solid Lutheran gospel ministry of forty-seven years among the Japanese.

The discernible fruit of those labors today is the established Church of the Lutheran Confession of Japan, which centers its work in a congregation located in Tokyo. This church is now served by the Rev. Kazuo Sano, a long-time colleague in the Holy Ministry. Also continuing in staff service there is Tiefel's adopted daughter, Miss Watanabe Kumika, who had assisted him for twenty-five years.

"Teacher" Tiefel (as he was known in Tokyo) was a prominent figure in early CLC life. Forty years ago he had, for confessional reasons, also left his former fellowship. For fifteen years he gave the American CLC its first opportunity to participate in a foreign mission endeavor as an "affiliate" by way of prayer and financial support. The CLC of Japan has by design been an entity independent of foreign management, truly an "indigenous" church. Tiefel-san sensed the need for this in



Missionary Fred & Louise Tiefel shown in 1918 photo. Mrs. Tiefel's time of grace was March 12, 1918 to June 1, 1995.

the political climate of the field in which he labored.

Since 1975 a doctrinal division between the CLC of Japan and the American CLC has existed, disallowing the practice of religious fellowship between the synods. In the debate about the place and use of the Mosaic Law in gospel ministry, efforts to find a mutually acceptable confessional statement on the subject have not been successful.

We join in thanking God for the gracious working of His Word and Spirit in Japan and pray that He will continue to bring the gospel to them. "Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest."

"Break time" at Coordinating Council Session



Relaxing during the March 2000 meeting were Prof. Em. John Lau, CLC President Daniel Fleischer, Secretary James Albrecht, Pastor (then Vice Pres.) Elton Hallauer, Pastor Bruce Naumann, Pastor (now Vice Pres.) John Schierenbeck

Studies In Ephesians

Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of Christ (See 3:8)

Chapter 5: 15-21

Walking Through the Minefield—Safely

“Talk with your children about drug abuse, sex, and relationships. Talk!”

You’ve heard the public service pleas. The hope is that parental communication might help save society from its social ills. Worldly wisdom at work, and we wish it well.

In a unique and more effective way, however, the Holy Spirit has been talking to the *children of light* (5:8) since the beginning of time, walking them through the minefield of our journey, *preserving them unto the heavenly kingdom*.

In the present portion of Ephesians we have a powerful and practical heart-to-heart from God the Father to His children in Christ.

Let us all, young and old, give careful heed that we might make it safely, for we do *walk in danger all the way*.

Watch Your Step!

Jesus once allowed that *the sons of this world are more shrewd . . . than the sons of light*—especially in the service of Mammon (see Luke 16:8). His apostle, however, makes it clear that His people are smarter by far in what really counts for life and well-being.

“Walk circumspectly [literally, *accurately*]” (v. 15). We dare not be

naive. Carefully put your feet where a path is cleared through the minefield, knowing the snares and explosive hazards all around. Don’t trust even your own natural “wisdom.” It is just as corrupted as the world around us!

“Do not be unwise, but understand *what the will of the Lord is*.” Where and how can that understanding be gained? Jesus prayed: “*Sanctify* [set them apart for holy purposes] *them by Your truth. Your word is truth*” (Jn. 17:17). Isn’t it wonderful that we have this never-failing *light unto our path*? God’s wisdom is always within reach for the inquiring Bible student. Without money and without price.

One thoughtful person who once felt it was necessary to taste wickedness to understand it, observed dryly, “Some think that experience is the best teacher, but I’ve learned that the tuition is much too high.”

Thank God, we have a more sure word of prophecy to which we give heed “as a light that shines in a dark place” (2 Peter 1). We are equipped to walk safely!

Carpe Diem

We are urged to safety, not just for safety’s sake, but for a high purpose—

to redeem the time (v. 16), making the most of every moment, every day. Important kingdom work needs to be done. Evil abounds. A fallen, corrupted, dying world needs to know in whom life is to be found!

For years Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was a mainstay of many Christian libraries, describing in vivid manner the hazards of the pilgrimage. But one discerning reader was saddened to note that the heroic pilgrim never stopped to help any others on the way. True? If so, he hardly redeemed the time in a full sense.

Jesus has left us behind in a hostile, hazardous world. Let us redeem our time there, watching our step all the way.

A Full and Happy Life

(See vv. 18-20) Why is society so

given to substance abuse? Some say it is a search for escape from boring reality. Numerous drugs (like the current rave rage, *Ecstasy*) entice with the prospect of a "happy high" and then deliver death in one form or another.

Truly wise ones know that we do need a lift, and they pray for a renewal of youth that we might soar like the eagle (Psalm 103:5). They also know that this is safely found in the realm of our spirit which resonates to the Holy Spirit and expresses itself in singing sacred truth, bubbling up while "making melody in your heart to the Lord."

At its very best, that spirit is heard especially in corporate worship, "giving thanks always *for all things* to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Could one ask for more in life than that?

—Rollin A. Reim

Appreciating Our Lutheran Hymns

Ho - ly Spir - it, God of Love, Who our night dost bright - en,

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both are in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on the top staff, and the bass line is on the bottom staff. The lyrics are written below the top staff.

Holy Spirit, God of Love A Hymn of Pentecost #230 in The Lutheran Hymnal

In a broad 2,000 feet valley, where we have made our home for the past five years, the Clearwater River flows into the Snake River as it makes its way westward to the still greater

Columbia.

Here in Clarkston, Washington we look forward to this time of year with great anticipation. As a general rule, late spring brings with it the end of our

rainy season—an end to the days on end in which the valley is socked in with low clouds, allowing but rare glimpses of the sun. The early arrival of summer means the return to weeks of clear skies once again.

This month's hymn by Birgitte Boye sings words of praise over another such transition, but a much more drastic and blessed one. It addresses that change which was worked in the once completely darkened heart of us sinners. As the Holy Spirit shed on us the light of God's Word, He worked the miracle of faith. He caused the sun of

God's righteousness to break through the clouds of our disobedience and rebellion.

As we Christians celebrate the Spirit's festival of Pentecost, we join with Boye in asking God the Spirit, "*who our night dost brighten,*" to continue to "*enlighten our faith.*" We pray that He would cause us to keep growing as "*in Thy light we gather*" around the Word. In it shines "*Christ's promise clear*"—never will He leave us, but will abide with us to the end.

May God's Spirit always thus "bless us with His favor!"

—Pastor Paul Krause

THE LORD'S PRAYER—A Series

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil; For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

3rd Petition

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"

In one of our hymns (*The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941, #458) we sing: "*Curb flesh and blood and every ill, that sets itself against Thy will.*" What is the will of God? In the first petition we pray that the name of God may be kept holy among us. That is done when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God lead a godly life according to it. In the second petition we pray that the kingdom of God would come—that is, that His gracious, saving rule will envelop our heart. That is God's will for us.

But there is another will—one

which is all that God's will is not. It is a will that seeks our harm. It is the will of the devil. The will of the devil is directly opposed to God and His will. As we read in the Scriptures the devil, the fallen angel who out of pride and envy rebelled against God, is ably assisted by our own sinful flesh as well as by the world with all its allurements. This "unholy trinity"—the devil, the world, and our flesh—seeks in many ways to lure the Christian into a snare. The enemy of our souls suggests that truth is relative and that one can never know for sure what is truth. He sug-

THE THIRD PETITION

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean? The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is this done? When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow God's name nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; but strengthens and preserves us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S *Small Catechism*
(Concordia Publ. House, 1943)

The Third Petition

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

What does this mean?

God's good and gracious will is certainly done without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it be done among us also.

How is God's will done?

God's will is done when He breaks and stops every evil will and plan of those who do not want us to hallow His name or let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, of the world, and of our own flesh. His will is also done when He gives us strength and keeps us firm in His Word and in faith for as long as we live. This is God's good and gracious will.

—MARTIN LUTHER'S *SMALL CATECHISM*
(Sydow edition, 1988)

A comparison of two currently used versions

gests that right is wrong and wrong is right. He suggests that flirting with sin, walking on the edge, and engaging in the questionable activities offered by the world are acceptable ways to walk. His suggestion is that God would not expect us to deprive ourselves of those things which make us happy through gratification of our flesh.

The devil does not want Christians to be under the rule of Christ, but under his rule. While the devil might not necessarily suggest that we should throw

Christ and the will of God overboard and out of our life—he is too subtle for that—he would suggest that we make room in our heart for himself. In other words, in spite of the fact that our Lord says that we cannot serve two masters, the devil suggests that it is the way to go. In summary, the devil has very carefully and cunningly planned our overthrow.

Our Lord tells us in His Word, “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that

the wicked turn from his way and live” (Eze. 33:11). Through the pen of Paul, the Spirit wrote, “God our Savior . . . will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3f). Again, “The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). The heavenly Father desires our eternal salvation. He wants us to live in heaven with Him. But it is more than a desire. It is His good and gracious will. To accomplish His will He sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to take upon Himself the sins of the world. By His perfect atonement the Lord Jesus has reconciled us unto God. But still more! The Heavenly Father sends the Holy Spirit—who works through the gospel and who creates faith in the heart of the sinner—so that, by His influence, we who were at one time lost but now are saved, say: “I believe in Jesus Christ.”

The child of God recognizes the saving work of Jesus as an expression of the gracious will of the Father. But he also recognizes the power of the devil, the temptations of the world, and the weakness of his own flesh. So he prays in this petition, “Lord, Thy will be done . . .” Therein he is asking that God “would break and hinder every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow the name of God nor let His kingdom come.” We are asking

Him to break and hinder the “will of the devil, the world, and our flesh.” The Lord Jesus, who was manifested that He should destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), and who said, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33), will also fulfill for His children this request and prayer. Further, we pray that the Lord would “strengthen and preserve us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end.” All this happens without our prayer of itself, for it is the gracious good will of God. God is God. But this petition is an expression of the individual Christian’s recognition of his personal need; it is also a prayer that in his personal life God’s name be hallowed and His kingdom come.

God works through His Word. Since the Word itself is our sword and shield (Ephesians 6), may we hear His Word lest by a life of indifference and neglect we rob ourselves of the experience of having the will of God done in our life. God is faithful! Surely it is not too much to ask that God’s children who enjoy His blessings submit to His good and gracious will for them in any and everything He asks. For just as surely, it is inconsistent and manifests a lack of thanks to ask that the Lord’s will be done among us, while at the same time we make the conscious choice to walk according to our own will.

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer



*Take my will and make it Thine
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.*

*Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all, for Thee.*

Hymn 400:5&6 (TLH)

FACING HOMOSEXUALITY

(Part 5, Conclusion)

In this final installment we consider our personal roles in ministering to those caught in the sin of homosexuality.

What to Do?

The clear identification of homosexuality as a sin is LAW-preaching—and that word needs to be preached, lest we compromise the truth of God's Word and make His law and authority of no effect. Nevertheless, where sin is exposed there is need for GOSPEL-preaching. When we identify homosexuality as a sin, we want to be on guard lest we fall into a Pharisee-like pride about our own lives which are equally sinful. We don't want to leave the impression that there is no salvation for those who are tempted with homosexuality. For example, Jesus associated with sinners of all sorts, rebuking their sins but also proclaiming salvation. But never once did He compromise the Truth.

The apostle Paul gave Timothy a pastoral approach for dealing with those who were caught in sin. It is a gospel-centered approach that does not ignore the law. It is an approach that we do well to adopt, not only in dealing with homosexuality, but with all sins: “. . . be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his

will” (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

There is a way “out” for those who are caught in the sin of homosexuality (or the temptations toward it). Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (cf: John 14:6). We have the tools and we have the message of the gospel that can convert any sinner who is caught in any sin. It may seem impossible to believe that someone caught deeply in a sin could be set free from that sin. But it has happened and continues to happen by the power of God's Word every time a sinner comes to faith. “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). “. . . Such WERE some of you. . . .” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Ministering to those who are caught in homosexuality requires a bold love. It requires a BOLD LOVE AND DEEP CONCERN that will not be intimidated by the vocal and strong efforts of the pro-gay movement. BOLD LOVE AND DEEP CONCERN requires endurance—not becoming fatigued and throwing up our hands and saying: “What's the use!?” Rather, we will find continuing strength and sense of purpose from our Lord who continued to minister to sinners on the earth even when they rejected Him, and when He was worn and tired. BOLD LOVE AND DEEP CONCERN remembers that its first love is Christ and seeks to

follow His Word. BOLD LOVE AND DEEP CONCERN remembers that we are called to preach the gospel. The results are not ours to determine, but we leave those in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

As the openness and prevalence of homosexuality continue to spread, we will have opportunity to minister. We may have opportunity at the workplace or in school. Our children may bring friends home—friends who either believe that they are gay or that they have a close family member who is. We may have someone who is close to us personally for whom this sin is a

struggle. All of these are open doors for the gospel.

However, we will never have the opportunity to share the gospel with those from whom we disassociate ourselves. Avoiding these people either leaves the door swinging open with no one to take advantage of it, or else slams it shut and locks it. Instead, let us take advantage of the open door by testifying to our Savior.

Strengthen yourself with the Word . . .

Testify to that Word as you have opportunity . . .

Pray for those caught in sin.

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt



FROM A PASTOR'S DESK . . .

"ARE WE STILL FRIENDS?" or "The Bible and Biscuit Bible Study"

(A pastor sent the following letter to a man he met at a gun show. While visiting at his booth, a friendly discussion was held regarding the serious doctrinal and soul-destroying errors of the ELCA, of which he is a member. Less than a week later the man wrote to ask whether the pastor "still" regarded him "as a friend," and invited him to a weekly "Bible and Biscuit" Bible study at his church.)

Dear _____,

I enjoyed the Gun Show and our brief visit. Are we "friends"? We only just met. On what basis shall we declare our friendship? You seem like a nice fellow. If you think the same of me, then we can say that we are pleased to be acquainted. We are at least "acquaintances."

Friendship goes a bit deeper than what we shared for a few moments. The fact that you wonder whether you are still my "friend after our conversa-

tion" begs the question: "Can two people be friends if they disagree on important matters relating to God, morality, and country?" Without a doubt! But a true friend is not one who agrees with everything you say, even when you are wrong. A true friend will tell you where you are straying from what is right and good for you. That's the friend I was trying to be in our brief conversation about the many and serious errors of the ELCA.

You see, the most important

“friend” I have is Christ my Savior. What does He say about friendship? “You are my friends *if you do whatever I command you*” (John 15:14). With these words our Lord was encouraging His true disciples of all times to show their love for Him and for one another by doing what He says in His Word.

This is where the ELCA has failed so long ago. This church body has given up much of the teachings of Christ and His apostles as clearly revealed in the New Testament Scriptures and as confessed by the Christian Church and the Lutheran Church for centuries. In so far as the ELCA or any church—in order to make friends with the world—no longer does whatever Christ commands in His Word, that church body is no friend of Christ.

I didn’t make that up. That’s what the Lord says in His Word! But if the ELCA and those who defend her errors are not friends of my Savior, but fight against His Word by their false teachings—destroying precious, blood-bought souls in the process—then they are not my friends either. I do not choose to be a traitor to Christ or to those for whom He died and who desperately need to hear His Word in its truth and purity.

You are very kind to invite me to your “Bible and Biscuit Bible Study” at your church “any Thursday morning.” I shall have to decline your invitation, however. I cannot in good conscience attend a gathering of people who belong to a church that trivializes the Bible, speaking of it as though it were the fallible work of men (like a biscuit?!) rather than the infallible, verbally-inspired revelation from God the Holy Spirit.

No doubt I would want to stand up in defense of my Savior’s Word at these “studies.” Soon any “friendship” you and I may feel for one another would fade, as the majority of the group emphasized a fellowship of the “biscuit,” and I spoke of a fellowship of the Bible—the true fellowship that exists only between those friends of Jesus who obey *whatever He commands in His Word*. (Study these passages at your Bible study: 1 Corinthians 1:10, John 8:31-32, Romans 16:17-18).

I am enclosing some materials that reveal some of the serious errors of the ELCA. I do this as a friendly testimony to you because of Jesus, Who loves us all and gave Himself for the sins of the whole world, saying to those who “believed on Him” and sought His friendship: “If you *continue in my word, then are you truly my disciples*; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

I would be pleased if some day we could honestly say of one another: “He is my friend because we are friends of Jesus.” Until then our friendship must remain on a lower level.

Wishing you the very best because
of Jesus,
Your friend,
/s/Pastor Vance Fossum

Announcements

Minnesota Delegate Conference

Date: Sunday, June 10, 2001

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Berea Lutheran Church, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

Agenda:

* Devotional Bible Study (presenter’s

choice of text) — Pastor John Ude

* Study and Discussion of Scriptural Principles Concerning Organizations in General and the American Legion in Specific (cf. 2000 Convention Proceedings, pp. 84-88; two Presidium Statements) — Pastor David Schierenbeck

* Study and Discussion Regarding the Concept of Christian Day Schools in Subsidized Congregations (cf. 2000 Convention Proceedings, p. 96)— Mr. Craig Owings

* Summary Reports of CLC Boards/Coordinating Council Work

* Business Meeting

Chaplain: Pastor David Schierenbeck

Please announce attendance to the host congregation.

—*Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, Sec'y*

West-Central Delegate Conference

Dates: June 8-10, beginning at 10:00 a.m. (CDT) on Friday

Place: Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Watertown, S.Dak.

Agenda:

- 1) Devotional Study of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 — Pastor James Naumann
- 2) The Scriptural or Moral Implications of Bankruptcy — Mr. Paul Mertz
- 3) To What Extent and Limit Can We Make Use of the Natural Knowledge of God (in connection with our prayers and praises) Without Committing Idolatry? — Pastor Andrew Schaller
- 4) What Information Should be Communicated to Both Congregation and Candidate in the Divine Call? — Mr. Butch Lang
- 5) The Use of Scripture and Other Means to Help Those with Addictions — Mr. Lowell Kolb
- 6) An Overview of Home Schooling — Pastor Michael Wilke
- 7) A Comparison of the Divine Call to Preach the Gospel and Personal Evangelism — Pastor James Sandeen
- 8) Discussion of the American Legion
- 9) Discussion of the pros and cons of the use of Christian Day Schools in subsidized congregations

Conference Chaplain: Pastor John M. Johannes
Communion Service Speaker: Pastor Timothy Wheaton

—*Pastor Michael Schierenbeck, Sec'y*

Cover: John Fox

Great Lakes Delegate Conference

Dates: June 4-5

Place: Faith Lutheran Church of Markesan, Wis.

Agenda:

- *A study of the synodical work on the American Legion.
- *A review of the Coordinating Council minutes.
- *The presentation of a Bible Class series for Junior High students.
- *A look at one aspect of our Mission privilege.

General Pastoral Conference June 12-14, 2001

Communion Service

Speaker: Pastor Elton Hallauer

Liturgist: Pastor David Reim

Chaplain: Pastor Paul Fleischer

Agenda:

- *Study regarding Organizations/American Legion—Moderated by the presidium.
- *New Testament Exegesis, 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10—Pastor Paul Tiefel
- *Old Testament Exegesis, Joel 1:1ff—Pastor Delwyn Maas
- *Scriptural Reasons for Divorce with Specific Reference to what is meant by Malicious Desertion—Pastor David Naumann
- *An Examination of the Concepts "Sheep Stealing" and "Proselytizing"—Pastor James Sandeen