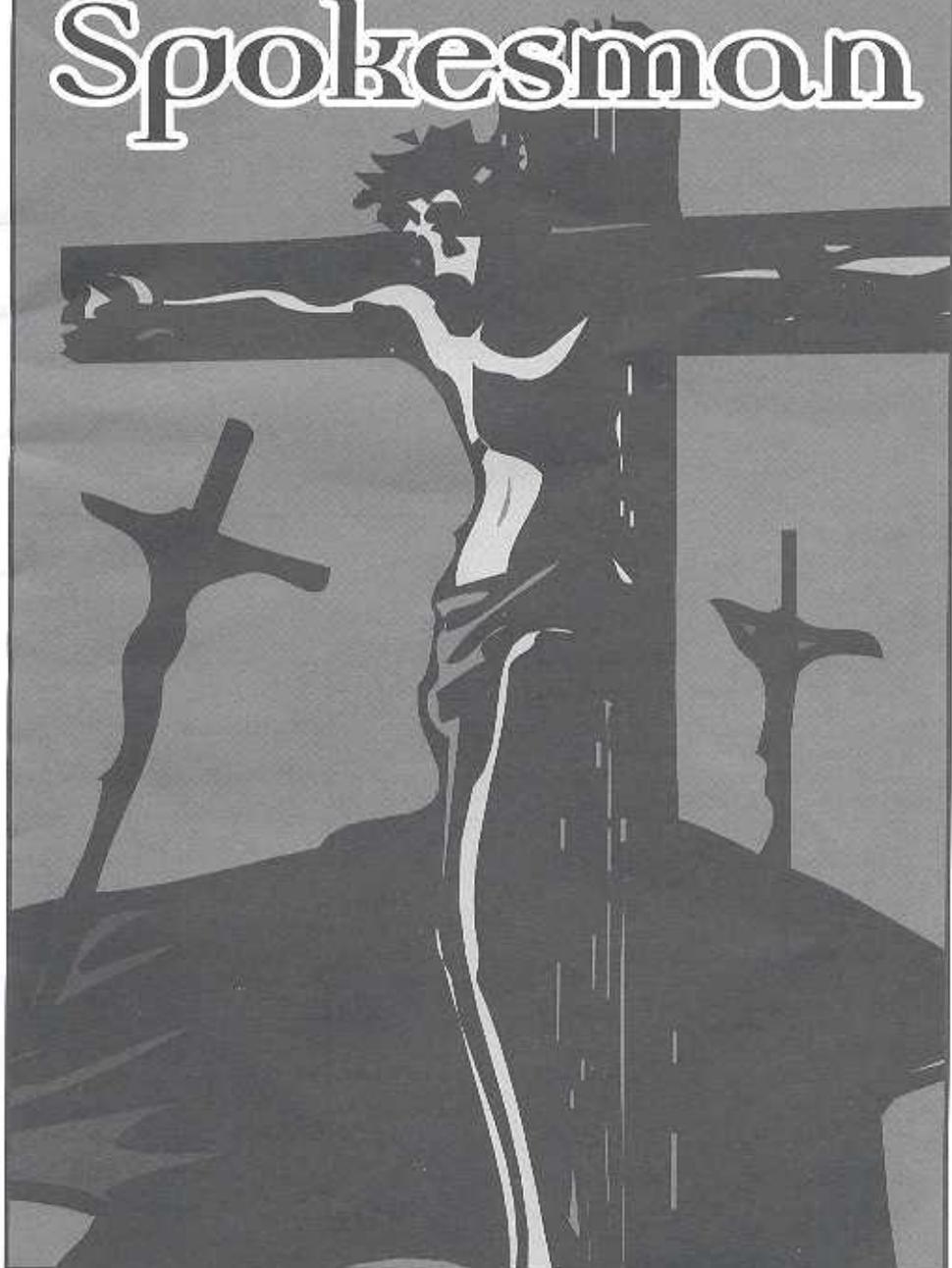


Lutheran Spokesman



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What Christ Gave Up For Lent

Have you given up anything for Lent?

Every year during Lent, many Christians give up something they enjoy. They may give up eating meat or chocolate, or any number of other things or habits. The idea behind the practice is that the believer should, through his own small suffering, be reminded of what Christ suffered on account of our sins.

Unfortunately, as is so often the case, the sinful flesh begins to take pride in what we are supposedly doing for ourselves. We may end up thinking, "I must be pretty good, because I'm giving something up for Lent!" So it is that Luther writes, "Fasting . . . is indeed a fine outward custom. But he is truly worthy and well prepared [for the Lord's Supper] who has faith in these words, 'Given and shed for you

for the forgiveness of sins.'"

God's Word leads the believer to consider what it is that Jesus gave up for Lent. Christ Jesus "did not consider it a prize to be had to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men" (Php. 2:5f). Christ gave up His position of honor and glory in the heavens, so that He could come down to Earth as a lowly human being and live among us.

Jesus gave up His glory with an eye toward Lent. In so doing, He refused to give up the shame and the suffering of the cross. Rather, He embraced it, going willingly to Jerusalem, knowing full well that there He would " . . . suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

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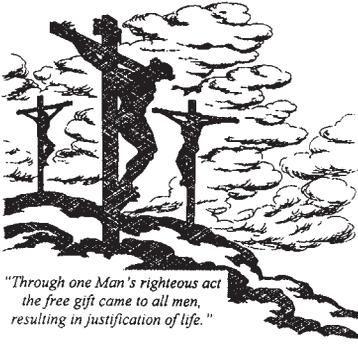
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At the time Jesus' disciples could not accept this. Even on the eve of the Savior's death, His disciples assured Him that even if they had to die with Him, they would not forsake Him (Mt. 26:35). And yet, when the time came, we are told, ". . . all the disciples forsook Him and fled." Even though He had to give up His friends for Lent, Jesus did not give up the cross (see Heb. 12:2).

Yet Jesus did not suffer simply for the sake of suffering. Rather, ". . . being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obe-

dient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Php. 2:7). Jesus gave up His glorious position as the Son of God, gave up His honor and His friends. He gave it all up—knowing that even His Father would give Him up at the cross (see Mt. 27:46). And why? Jesus gave up His life because He was not willing to give up a single sinner to eternal punishment.

Jesus gave up His life for Lent. He gave up His life to take away the sin of the world. He gave up His life for you and me, so that we would have the forgiveness of sins! Jesus gave up His life so that we would have eternal life as children of God. Yes, He gave up His life "to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:5).

On account of all that Christ gave up at Lent, that person is truly blessed who has faith in these words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

—Pastor Joel Fleischer

THE GREATEST WEEK

Some might say that the greatest week in history was that Holy Week which began with Palm Sunday. Others might argue that it was Creation Week. A brief comparison might leave us fascinated with the similarities.

On the first day of creation, God entered His workplace and out of a dark nothingness brought forth, by His almighty Word, a space-time-mass-energy continuum, in which He divided light from darkness. On Palm Sunday Jesus entered His chosen workplace of Jerusalem. Components

of His creation greeted Him: stones and branches, colt and cloaks, and people. He entered to redeem a people who were in the dark spiritual void of sin and unrighteousness.

On the second day God provided His created and activated Earth with a marvelous atmosphere and hydro-

sphere, which hydrosphere was then divided into the waters above and below. The Earth was being created for life! After spending the night in Bethany, Jesus again entered Jerusalem. Outside the city He cursed a fig tree, and inside cleansed His Father's House. He was looking for spiritual life, but found that which was barren of fruit and corrupt. Such spiritual life requires the regenerating breath and cleansing water of the Spirit, just as the Earth required air and water.

On the third day God created the seas and dry land, the earth now bringing forth grass, trees, and herbs. It was to be a beautiful garden paradise. In Jerusalem Jesus taught about faith: that God planted a vineyard in which His people were to faithfully and fruitfully work; that true faith can even move mountains. Appropriately Jesus spent the afternoon on the Mt. of Olives [with its Garden of Gethsemane], recalling both the mountains He had called forth and the garden of Paradise He had created for man.

On the fourth day God formed the celestial bodies. Light had been created earlier, but now He created source-specific lighting to provide beauty and warmth; to illuminate, define the seasons, and keep time. We have no record of the Savior's movements for Wednesday of Passion Week. He likely remained in Bethany, preparing

Himself for up-coming events in communion with His Father. Perhaps He also further instructed His disciples that He is the true Light—come into the world to bring light and life to people forever.

The Creator Is the Savior!

On the fifth day of His creation, God brought forth an abundance of living creatures in the water, air, and on land. In them all, the life of their flesh was in their blood. Thursday of Holy Week was the day for the Passover Supper. Through the centuries untold numbers of sacrificial lambs and other animals had spilled their blood, pointing to this day and the morrow. Then the Lamb of God would take away the sin of the world by offering Himself as the One Sacrifice forever. With the shedding of His blood, there is remission of sins. With the gift of instituted sacrament, the Savior continues to proclaim and assure forgiveness, life, and communion with God through faithful partaking of His very body and blood.

On the sixth day God created man in His own image, to live in righteousness and bliss. Man was the climax of God's creation, all of which was pronounced good. But because of rebellious eating, what God had created for life became destined for death. On Good Friday God's own Son was cursed for man's sake, giving His life's blood on the tree as the price of our reconciliation, crying out, "It is finished!" As God's finished creation was very good, so also our finished redemption is great and complete.

On the seventh day God rested from His creative work. Having finished His perfect redemptive work, Jesus also rested, His body sleeping in Joseph's



tomb to await resurrection on the next week's first day.

Which is the greater week? God's great work of redemption and salvation is meaningless without His prior work of creation. Yet without Passion Week, creation can lead only to the despair of Paradise Lost, of head-knocking and finger-pointing. It's good history, but

provides no future, no hope. The greater week? Both are most holy and awe-inspiring, and worthy of our praise, for they reveal and prove God's infinite power, wisdom, and eternal love. Only the Creator of all things could be the Savior of all things.

—*Pastor David Fuerstenau*

"All's fair in love and war!"

God tells us that Jesus "was delivered for our offences . . ." (Rom. 4:25). Have you ever pondered how unfair it was that Jesus was delivered for our offences? What's fair about God Himself taking the loss, and doing so for the sake of deserters in time of war? Either the word "fair" is unsuitable about God's strategic war-plan of salvation—or God puts new meaning into the aphorism "All's fair in love and war." Let's take a few moments to break the code.

First of all, we realize that God is powered by something that takes precedence over fairness, even when He has to pay the price for doing so in the war against Satan. His top priority is love—the kind of love that is mercy and compassion and pity all rolled together into one glorious and beautiful package, shaped into human form, labeled "Savior of mankind, Made in Heaven" and sent Special Delivery to planet Earth. Such love beats fairness, also in time of war.

When Operation Deliverance got activated, Jesus' tour of duty sent Him to a world that had surrendered to the enemy much earlier and thus had lost

all claim to God's heart. Speaking of fairness, it was not unfair that God expected humans to love, honor, revere, and serve Him 100% of the time in 100% efficiency. All unfairness came from Satan, who so deceived Adam and Eve that they robbed God of the adoration and dedication He deserved.

Was that fair to God? Was it fair to Adam/Eve? No, and our parents knew it, who were ever so regretful about their defection to Satan. And after their craven surrender to Satan, it would have been fair for God to abandon His human project—which would mean Satan had won the war, leaving humanity doomed. Was there nothing to be done about such unfairness?

Heaven's Council came up with the solution—deliver to Earth a substitute for humankind, somebody who did not have the Satan virus, Somebody who could BE and DO God's righteousness. Since all fairness had by now gone by the board, love had to come to the rescue.

So in heavenly mercy for Satan's victims, Father God empowered His chosen Champion to go to Earth and

do perfectly everything that nobody else had the ability to do, and live under the Law while doing it. And He would accept this as a fair solution.

A Perfect Substitute

Next, one would think that Jesus' perfect life would have sufficed (all by itself) to square our account with God. But we are told that He was also "delivered for our offences." This was the hardest part of God's love for sinners (and yet the tenderest mercy for us), for even after Jesus had met the demands of perfection, Satan had one bastion yet standing unbreached—the citadel of Death. One thing remained, therefore—sinless Jesus had to enter Death and bring it down, even though it meant being killed as though He were the worst sinner! (Another reason to cry, "But that's not fair!")

To put it in other words, the war for our souls was not finished until Jesus went beyond being a perfect Substitute for our living; He would become the perfect Substitute also for our dying, to take care of "the wages of sin [which] is death."

Indeed, God squared us with TWO righteousness components, and the mission of Jesus would cover them both. No doubt the more difficult of the two was making that balloon payment at the close of the contract. Again, it was not fair for Jesus that the final, timely, and complete payment for the wages of our sins had to be His death—though it was certainly more than fair for us, who cannot make even one satisfactory payment.

God be praised that He was "delivered for our offences," delivered to Pilate, delivered to the Cross, delivered to the tomb, and delivered to cold,

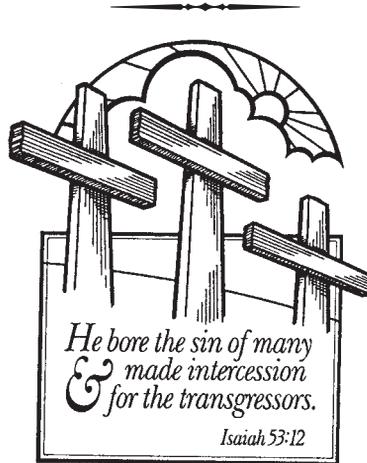
clammy death. All of it was done in love, and all of it in mercy for us!

Let us now not stop one step short of the end product. We have good evidence that the unfairness of it all was not enough to demolish our Savior. After He endured everything to which He had been delivered, He received the vindication He had so richly earned. Father God assures us that the Savior's loving service (both in living and in dying) is perfectly good to stand through Judgment Day, to deliver us along with Jesus safely past the portals of grave and cemetery into the golden streets of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Where is this assurance of His vindication? It comes right after "He was delivered for our offences"—when we are told that He "was raised again for our justification."

That is why, dear reader, we say that in the war against Satan, Jesus has given a new dimension to the old saying, for His love toward us surpasses all fairness and unfairness, both in Heaven and on Earth. Hallelujah to Jesus!

—Paul R. Koch



Studies In Colossians

“In (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:3)

Chapter 1:19-23

Contending for Peace

Contentiousness among Christians is not fashionable in our day and age—nor should it be! ("If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men," Rom. 12:18.) But it is a sad fact of Christendom in our day that such advice is used to condone genuine errors in doctrine and practice. One may study the writings of Paul, Luke, Peter, or any of the other holy writers for a very long time and never find the advice to "agree to disagree agreeably."

The fact is, some of the richest, most comforting, most invigorating parts of Scripture come to us from portions that were unabashedly polemical ("contentious, carrying on a dispute") in purpose. Paul wrote the epistle to the Galatians to combat the error of Jewish traditionalists who tainted the gospel with legal obligations. Galatians was Luther's favorite, not because he enjoyed dispute, but because Paul's words so powerfully comforted him with the liberty that we have in the gospel. When you hear of John's First Epistle, you probably best recall these tender passages: "God is love" and "We love Him because He first loved us"—but John wrote his first Epistle to warn of antichristian influences that undermined true Christian faith and love.

So it is with the Epistle to the Colossians. It is polemical in purpose—as will become evident in later sections, Paul has an ax to grind with the errorists insinuating their way into the congregation there. He directs a litany of warnings to his readers: "This I say lest anyone should deceive you ... " "Beware lest anyone cheat you ... " "Let no one judge you ... " "Let no one defraud you ... " "Why ... subject yourselves ... "

But it is worth noting how Paul handles his polemics. Although he is not above sometimes naming troublemakers in the church (1 Tim. 1:20) or expressing strong feelings about them and the danger they pose (Gal. 5:12), he does not descend to mere personal attacks. Nor does he even go to extraordinary lengths to name or describe the error being taught. Rather, he preaches Christ, but does so very pointedly. One commentator explains, "Paul does not so much oppose [the heresy] argumentatively as overwhelm it by confronting it with the whole riches of the true gospel of Christ."

So in this first part of the epistle, Paul sings a song of praise to Christ—and as a hymn of praise it casts the anvil upon which the errors will be broken down and destroyed. He speaks of Christ as a being "preeminent" over

all creation (v. 18); the Son of God, in whom we have been "delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of [God's] love."

Reconciled Through Christ!

In our section, Paul emphasizes the central truth of the Christian religion, namely, that we have been *reconciled* to God through Christ, and that believing in Him, we have peace with God.

"For it pleased the Father that in [Christ] all the fullness should dwell." "Fullness"? Fullness of what? Later, we're told the fullness of the Godhead (2:9), but here it seems to refer more generally to God's great plan and will to save mankind from the curse of its own sin. It includes the fullness of God's elective grace, predestinating events so that people would be brought to a knowledge of their Savior. It includes the determination of God in Christ in becoming the Servant who alone could bring about salvation; it is the fullness of the riches of the Godhead dwelling in Jesus, so that what took place in Jesus' life and body would have an infinitely great effect.

And the effect was *atonement* for the sin and wickedness of all humankind: "by Him to reconcile all things to Himself." Notice how all-encompassing Paul makes this fact: "whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of the cross."

The "blood of the cross" is the fact upon which the whole Christian faith is based. A Life was given to atone for countless lives lost to the curse of sin. One Life, human, tender, fragile, but endowed with the infinite value of Christ's deity. One Life given, a historical fact which has profound effects for

the standing of sinful mankind before the court of the holy God: "You, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ... to present you holy, and blameless, and irreproachable in His sight."

The heart of the gospel is the glorious announcement that we now stand reconciled to God through the work of God's own Son. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about this marvelous bit of news. Every man, woman, and child on this Earth is invited to hear of it, to believe it as true, and to run with it in a joyous life of knowing God and living here as His children—despite the wiles of Satan, the tug of the flesh, and the opposition of the world.

But any condition placed on this gospel, any contribution required of us, any deed assessed to qualify the person to receive it, proves an obstacle. It was such additions to the gospel that Paul was trying to counter and discredit. We receive this great standing with God and live in it by faith, and faith alone: "If indeed you continue in the faith ... and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard."

There is a time to address error, to contend for the faith, to expose false teachings that undermine the simple message of Christ. That time? Whenever the error appears by somehow adding to, subtracting from, or otherwise muddying the message set forth in God's Word. For in this way it subtly, insinuatingly, and diabolically seeks to attach itself to the pure gospel of salvation.

May we study and grow in the gracious message of Christ, so that we do live in peace—God's peace—and that alone.

—Pastor Peter Reim

"CLOSE COMMUNION"

Or: "Who is to be admitted to the Lord's Supper?"

Tenth In A Series

The articles in this series were inspired by the section 'The Lord's Supper' in Dr. Francis Pieper's "Christian Dogmatics," Volume III. And the quotations from Pieper himself or of Dr. C. F. W. Walther or of Dr. Martin Luther are from pages 381-385 of that work.

The articles were requested by the Board of Elders of the Missouri Synod congregation that this writer served for fourteen years, prior to coming into the CLC. The articles were bulletin inserts, produced in order to clarify and back up the things the author was teaching, from a solid doctrinal basis. There are two more articles left after this one.

It takes years for a pastor to get to know the members of his flock really well. The hope is to develop a deep spiritual bond. Holy Communion is a major factor in the common bond. The word "common"—like the words "communion," "communicate," and "communicant"—are closely linked. Pastors like to stay in communication with members.

There are so many distractions today that this is very difficult. At one time not too long ago, the church was central in the life of many communities. Today the church and the gospel in Word and Sacrament have lost much of their influence—a deep concern!

We ask our communicants to "announce" personally at least once in a while and to confine their communing to their own congregation and



pastor. There are exceptions, of course, as when someone is on vacation or has actually moved to a different community. Then the desire is to go to a sister CLC church, and to contact the pastor beforehand out of courtesy—especially prior to a Communion service.

The pastor has an obligation to know about those he communes—for the sake of the communicant, and for the sake of the unity of the doctrine and life of the congregation.

Constant reformation and amendment are part of the communicant's life. That is why we find question #4 on page 48 in the front of *The Lutheran Hymnal*: "Do you promise that with the aid of the Holy Ghost you will henceforth amend your sinful life?" We want regular admonition, comfort, and encouragement. We want regular urging to repent, to believe, to change, to expand, to grow in Christ. We want the law and the gospel. We want and need these from our pastor. Pray for him that he remain a good communicator!

We are so blessed to have the "enclosed" Communion communities that make up our synod, with so very much in common! In the world around us are religious attractions that want to pull us in every direction, all clamoring for our loyalty.

Our country has every possible type of religion found anywhere in the world, right here in our own cities and towns! Lutheranism is suffering doctrine-wise on a national and on a global scale. The justification of the sinner, the promises of forgiveness and life eternal, the grace and mercy of an offended God—these teachings have been evaporating all around us. Religions of good works abound. Do-it-yourself ideas, with judgment based on personal merit, fill our newspapers.

The practice of "Close Communion" not only keeps us safe—

but it also gives us the impetus and rationale and motivation to reach out to those around us, who are floundering in a sea of mud and confusion. This becomes the springboard for telling and teaching others "all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18ff).

What we think of the Sacrament says something about our outreach as well as our inreach—about our communicating with outsiders as well as communicating with ourselves.

—Pastor Em. Warren Fanning

SMORGASBORD

This being an election year, matters bearing on our Christian faith—and its consistent, orthodox practice in the world in general, and in a religiously pluralistic society in particular—often come up. Two of our pastors have recently made comment on "religion in politics" issues.

• **(AB)USING JESUS' NAME**
(Pastor Daniel Fleischer, Corpus Christi, Texas, writes on this subject in a church bulletin)

It is a matter of the sanctified Christian life that the child of God confesses with his mouth what he believes in his heart concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, Scripture promises eternal blessing to those whose faith is manifest by the confession they make concerning Jesus. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). "Wherefore God also hath high-

ly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Php. 2:9-11).

It is one thing to confess as a conviction of one's heart that the Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true Man, conceived of the Spirit, born of the Virgin, Who is the Savior from sin, and God of our salvation. We trust there are some politicians who hold that conviction. It is quite another thing when a politician makes the conscious decision to invoke the name of Jesus to try to enhance his campaign. Whenever politicians invoke Jesus, one has to ask, "Who is the Jesus of whom they speak?" It is blasphemous to invoke the name of Jesus, "because he fought against self-righteous people" and set "an extraordinary exam-

ple," and furthermore to do it when the politician goes into the so-called Bible belt in order to glorify himself in dredging up votes. Apparently this politician of the far left did not talk about Jesus in the Northeast "where people don't talk about their religion." But in the South where people apparently talk about religion, it appears to be safe and even advantageous to talk about religion—any religion, we suspect—and profess some appreciation for Jesus. Consequently, this candidate "expects to increasingly include references to Jesus and God in his speeches" (WorldNetDaily, December 25, 2003).

The implication is that Jesus would support a politically liberal agenda. This is just as wrongheaded as if some conservative politician claimed that Jesus supported a conservative political agenda. Are we supposed to think that since Jesus "fought against self righteousness," He would stand on the dais with the one who promoted legalized homosexual unions? Any introduction of the name of Jesus in fishing for votes falls under the indictment of the Second Commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain." Any time that a politician introduces religion or the name of God into a public campaign, one must at the very least be wary.

The name of Jesus is made known to bless us and to save us from sin and eternal condemnation. He who truly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will confess his sins, and trust in Christ, believing Him, as Scripture teaches, to be the only way to eternal life (Acts 4:12). Christ-believers do not believe in Jesus because He is a good example! Christ-like works do not grow out of

Jesus' example. They flow from the gospel of which Jesus is the core, and are Spirit-wrought fruits of faith in Jesus. To use the name of Jesus or to invoke His name for any other reason than an expression of faith—to praise and glorify His saving name—falls under the indictment of Scripture, "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). That applies to politicians and to anyone who misuses the name of Jesus Christ.

• **GOD'S WORD & CAPITAL PUNISHMENT** (*Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, Mankato, Minnesota, writes on this subject in a church Newsletter*)

Recently, Minnesota's Governor Pawlenty has expressed his desire to reinstate the death penalty for capital crimes in Minnesota. There will, undoubtedly, be a great deal of political discussion and debate on this issue in the legislative session and beyond. As with most political issues, there are a great many arguments for each opposing view, statistics to support all views, and much emotion.

At times, the political issues of a state or country intersect with moral issues and matters of the Bible. At these times politicians may be quick to cite the Bible in order to "get God on their side." Some church leaders are also quick to share their views on the matter. If these church leaders present God's Word truthfully, there is a helpful contribution to the discussion. However, it seems that often church leaders are more apt to present their own views or their church's "official position" regardless of what God says in His Word. This has already been the case in the emotional exchanges that erupted immediately after Governor

Pawlenty's announcement. Church leaders and others went to the Bible and declared that to reinstate the death penalty in Minnesota would be contrary to God's commandment against killing. Sad to say, this is misinformation in the guise of Christian truth.

God does very specifically protect human life in His commandments. However, when the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to record God's Law (Exodus chapter 20 and Deuteronomy chapter 5), He very carefully chose the word to be used in the command. The Hebrew word in God's command is properly translated as "murder." There is another Hebrew word that would be used for the broader term "kill." Likewise, when God's command is

quoted by the inspired writers of the New Testament, the word chosen is again "murder" and not the broader "kill."

Armies that go to war against enemies kill, but they do not murder. Law enforcement officers who take a life in the exercise of the law or in self defense kill, but they do not murder. Likewise, a government that takes a life of someone who has taken the life of another is "killing," but not "murdering."

God gives governments the authority, and indeed the command, to exercise justice upon lawbreakers. "[The government] is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid;

continued, p. 14

CLC Youth Conference Staff—Back: Jim Sydow, Sally Buchanan, Beth Sydow, Paul Nolting, Marie Meyer, Mark Kranz, Beth Kranz, Del Maas, Sharon Schierenbeck, John Schierenbeck, Paul Stelter; Front: Alana Ahrens, Matt Busch, Tina Radichel, Joel Gullerud, Jeff Radichel.



Back Row: Ross Libby, Lee Klammer, Tim Maas, Josh Stelter, Josh Stratton, Pastor Del Mass; Front Row: Laura Nolting, Kate Friedrichs, Kendra Ahrens, Chris Dreyer.

See p. 18 for more on the Conference.

CLC EXPLORATORY SERVICES

(Last revised: January, 2004)

This is a list of "start-up" congregations who are being served by an off-site pastor. Some meet in homes, others in rented facilities. Also included is our CLC exploratory mission in Detroit, Mich. Visitors are warmly welcomed. Those who are considering a move, or are just traveling through the area, are encouraged to contact these groups and worship with them.

LOCATION	PASTORAL CONTACT	LAY CONTACT
Alaska, Fairbanks	Mr. Jay Hartmann 907-452-1236	
Alaska, Juneau	Rev. David Fuerstenau 907-225-2842	
Arizona, Gold Canyon	Rev. Delwyn Maas 602-866-2341	
California, Pasadena (L.A. area)	Rev. David Povolny 650-964-5915	Mr. Mike Collins 818-883-1749
California, Stockton	Rev. Nathan Pfeiffer 510-581-6637	Mr. Fran Niblett 209-951-9004
Florida, Orlando	Rev. John Schierenbeck 863-299-4084	Mr. Paul Kuehne 407-977-5949
Florida, Coral Springs (North Ft. Lauderdale)	Rev. Paul Larsen 941-423-1822	Mr. Bob Doriot 954-429-0063
Iowa, Sioux Center	Rev. James Albrecht 507-853-4417	Mr. Roger Ver Mulm 712-722-2805
Michigan, Cadillac	Rev. Tim Holland 616-532-0198	Mr. Bob Remus 231-832-2687
Michigan, Detroit	Rev. Walter Schaller 248-457-068	
Minnesota, Kimball (St. Cloud area)	Mr. Lawrence Bade 651-310-0174	
Missouri, Liberty (Northeast Kansas City area)	Rev. Todd Ohlmann 636-225-3458	Mr. Jim Priebe 816-781-4702
New Mexico, Albuquerque	Mr. Robin Vogsland 505-892-6934	
North Dakota, Mapleton (Fargo area)	Rev. John M. Johannes 678-376-9948	Mr. Gary Pansch 701-277-1727
Ohio, Cleveland	Rev. Walter Schaller 248-457-0682	
Tennessee, Monterey	Rev. Nathanael Mayhew 770-962-9034	Mr. Wayne Everhart 270-618-4387
Texas, Weslaco	Rev. Daniel Fleischer 361-241-5147	Mr. Buddy Hovda 956-565-2851
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Washington, Withrow	Rev. Terrel Kesterson 509-327-4203	Mr. Ray Lillquist 509-683-1192

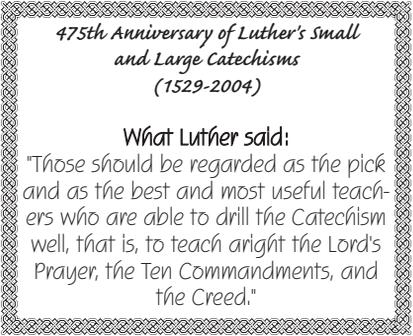
for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to carry out wrath on him who practices evil" (Rom. 13:4). In the case of murder, the government's authority to "carry out wrath" includes taking the life of the murderer: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man" (Gen. 9:6).

The course of the political debate concerning capital punishment in Minnesota remains to be seen. God's Word concerning capital punishment is established, unchanging, and true. We might well pray that the truth of God's Word be upheld in the coming debate and not changed to fit individuals' agendas or compromised for political purposes.

The Third Commandment

The form of this commandment reminds us of the original setting in which the Ten Commandments were given. From the top of Mount Sinai the Lord spoke to His chosen people, the children of Israel. He commanded that they observe a "sabbath," a day of rest. It was to be a day on which they set aside their work for some physical rest.

It was in this that we find the Jews of Jesus' day "grossly misusing the commandment," as Luther put it. They acted "as if the command could be fulfilled by refraining from manual labor of any kind" and found fault with Jesus



when He did what they considered to be work on the Sabbath day. "This was not its meaning," Luther observed correctly. "But as we shall hear, it meant that we should sanctify the Sabbath,

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not despise His Word and the preaching of it; but we should regard God's Word as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

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Large Catechism Comment:

"The treasure that sanctifies all things is the Word of God, by which the saints themselves were all sanctified. In whatever hour one uses, preaches, hears, reads, or thinks about God's Word, it sanctifies the person, his day, and his work, not because of the external act, but because of the Word that makes saints of us all."

the day of rest."

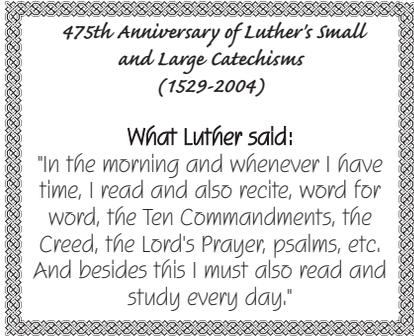
It was not mere ceasing from labor that the Lord desired; it was also spending time with Him and His Word on that day. This is still the focus of the commandment for us who live in New Testament times. St. Paul wrote to the Colossians, "Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (2:16-17). The day itself is of no consequence anymore, as Luther once asserted, saying, "One day in itself is no better than another, and worship should, indeed, be observed daily."

What does it mean then to keep the day holy? Luther answered: "Not by sitting behind the stove and avoiding manual labor, . . . but by studying God's Word and putting it into practice."

Those who do polls on such matters report that of all fifty states, my home state of Washington is the least "churched" of them all. Exactly what this means is anyone's guess, I suppose. It could well be addressing the fact that very few in my state attend church at all, and that many fill their time off with other activities. That I can readily see—on weekends the rivers are full of fishermen, the trails full of snowmobilers and skiers.

We in the 21st century face tremendous temptation from the devil himself regarding this commandment. We are tempted to fill our "free time" with activities, recreation, and hobbies, to the point that there is no time left for church, for God, for His Word—for our souls!

Luther added: "They sin against this commandment who . . . cease to hear



God's Word, or who lie around in taverns, full and stupid like swine; but also [those who] listen to God's Word as to idle talk, only as a matter of habit going into the church and out again, and at the end of the year know as little of that Word as at the beginning. . . . Now, while we have God's Word we still do not correct these misuses. . . . We allow continual preaching to us and admonishing, but we hear it without serious concern. . . . In like manner those are to be reproved . . . who when they have heard a sermon or two, are satisfied and tired, as if sufficient knowledge has been acquired and a teacher is no longer needed."

And Luther concluded: "Satan neither day nor night relaxes his effort to steal unawares upon you. . . . On the other hand, the Word possesses such power that wherever [it is] put into practice . . . it never remains barren of fruit. It always awakens new thoughts, new pleasures and devotions, and cleanses the heart and its meditations. These are not inert or dead words, but active and living. . . . Occupation with the Word [is] most pleasing to God!"

—Pastor Paul Krause



ABOUT JESUS AND ME

Have you ever felt the need of a simple, concise, and most certainly true testimony of Christ and what He means personally to you?

We know of nothing better suited than the crowning jewel of our beloved Catechism, which many readers have memorized in their youth. Yes, Martin Luther's reflections on the "second article" of the Apostolic Creed. Just one sentence as he wrote it(!)—plus the ringing affirmation that "This is

most certainly true!"

This is what came from the Reformer's quill (*see box opposite—Ed.*).

The Minute Message

In our fast-paced times, advertisers often have to get their appeal across in less than sixty seconds of a commercial break. Every word is counted, weighed, and prioritized. Our gospel witness may often have little time to

The Second Article (About Redemption)

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death.

He did this that I should be His very own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy; just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns in eternity.

This is most certainly true.

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Large Catechism Comment:

" . . . The entire Gospel that we preach depends on our thorough grasp of this article. Upon it rests our entire salvation and joy, and it is so rich and inclusive that it will keep challenging our efforts to learn it."

"Ich glaube, dass Jesus
 Christus, wahrhaftiger
 Gott, vom Vater in
 Ewigkeit geboren, und
 auch wahrhaftiger
 Mensch, von der Jungfrau
 Maria geboren, sei mein
 Herr, der mich verloren
 und verdamnten
 Menschen erloest hat,
 erworben und gewonnen
 von allen Sunden, vom
 Tod und von der Gewalt
 des Teufels, nicht mit Gold
 oder Silber, sondern
 mit seinem heiligen,
 teuren Blut and mit
 seinem unschuldigen
 Leiden und Sterben, auf
 dass ich sein eigen sei und
 in seinem Reich unter ihm
 lebe und ihm diene in
 ewiger Gerechtigkeit,
 Unschuld und Seligkeit,
 gleichwie er ist
 auferstanden vom Tode,
 lebt und regiert in
 Ewigkeit. Das ist
 gewiszlich wahr."

make its way to a human heart. Yet it should be accurate, comprehensive, truly Biblical and warmly personal. Look how well Luther's witness qualifies:

* It clearly identifies the One I am privileged to call my Lord: *"Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary."*

* It enables me to confess my total need of God's saving grace: *"me, a lost and condemned person."*

* It defines my Lord's work of salvation: *"redeemed me (bought me back), purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil."*

* It explains the mystery of how He did it: *"not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death."*

* It rejoices in the reason why He did all this: *"that I should be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and joy."*

* It glorifies Jesus for His ongoing role as my living Lord: *"just as He has risen from death, lives and reigns in eternity."*

The Telling Of It

Can you imagine a better way to encapsulate what you believe about Jesus and about yourself in Him? One can read or speak it thoughtfully in less than a minute! And one can do so with absolute confidence, for every word is validated by Scripture.

This writer knows someone who wishes he had made use of this recently, when a plumber came by to root a drain. Handsome man. With a smile he introduced himself simply as

"Mohammed." While he was busy with his lowly task, the householder wondered what he might say if there were to be any talk time.

The plumber was "on the clock" (\$178.00 for 45 minutes), but he held for a bit of socializing—interested in the fridge door with family pictures surrounding a print of Jesus, the Shepherd of the sheep.

When asked if he remembered the promises God made to Abraham about a descendant through whom the whole world would be blessed, Mohammed brightened. "Oh, yes. Ibrahim.

Ismael!" Grasping, the householder replied that we find in the Bible the account of how God fulfilled the promise in Jesus of Nazareth, the Shepherd of the sheep. With a little nod, Mohammed picked up his tools, paused at the door, turned and said, "God bless!"

If only Luther's one-minute testimony had come to mind! This thoughtful Muslim deserved to hear much more than he got.

—Rollin A. Reim

CLC Youth Conference 2003—

BLESSED WITH SUCCESS!

The CLC Youth Conference 2003, sponsored by Immanuel congregation of Mankato, Minnesota and held at Camp Agape in Benton, Tennessee, is now history. It was an unqualified success. For that we thank our loving and gracious God, whose Spirit was present and whose Son was the center of attention!

The conference (which drew fifty-six CLC young people from eighteen different CLC congregations) was held from Tuesday, August 5 through Saturday, August 9. A two-day bus trip down from Mankato and three-day bus trip back, including stops in both St. Louis and Atlanta, added considerable excitement and sight-seeing to the agenda for many.

The theme was "R & R in Christ" (Relationships and Responsibilities in Christ). Eleven learning sessions were incorporated into the four and one-half day conference: An introduction and

then individual sessions on the topics R & R with my God, my family, my Christian friends, my Christian congregation, my church body, my potential spouse, my co-workers, and my non-CLC acquaintances.

Speakers included Dr. Bruce and Sally Buchanan of Ascension, Tacoma, Wash.; Dr. James and Beth Sydow of Messiah, Eau Claire, Wis.; Prof. Mark and Beth Kranz of Immanuel Lutheran College; CLC President John Schierenbeck of Immanuel, Winter Haven, Fla.; Ms. Tina Radichel of Immanuel, Mankato; and Pastor Paul Nolting of Immanuel, Mankato. Matins services were provided each day by Pastor Del Maas of Holy Cross, Phoenix, with vesper services provided by Pastor Nolting of Immanuel, Mankato. Seven counselors from six different CLC congregations worked closely with the students to guide their discussions and provide general

Just a few of the many favorable (and abbreviated) comments written on the camp evaluation form—by youth and staff:

Youth:

- *"It was great, outstanding, and uplifting!"*
- *"It was a spiritual blessing for me to see so many people change in the way they look at things in such a short time."*
- *"This conference has enriched me on several levels—spiritually, mentally, personally, and emotionally. My soul craves this faith-building experience."*
- *"Well, this was my first Youth Conference, and I must say, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I would like to thank everyone who made this possible, and I can't wait to come back next year (2005)!"*
- *"The whole conference was one of the best and most beneficial things I've ever attended. Words can't even describe how much I grew in friendships as well as faith!"*

Counsellors:

- *"I feel that this year was full of 'greats.' Great sessions and topics, great presenters, great staff, great setting, great trip, great hospitality along the way, etc. God bless the plans for 2005!"*
- *"Topic this year was great for teens, very applicable. I think they were captivated and it obviously made a difference in lives. . . . It was all worth it just to see these reactions."*
- *"I believe in the future of our church and was very impressed by what I saw and heard. . . . It is so strengthening for the larger and smaller congregations to get together. Thanks so much to the staff for putting all the time and effort into organizing it."*

encouragement and supervision.

While the emphasis of the conference was on Bible study, one morning was spent white-water rafting on the Ocoee River—a "level four" rafting

experience enjoyed by all! The camp's low-ropes experience helped foster teamwork among the participants, and a climbing/rappelling tower challenged even the fittest of the students and



The Youth Conference ready for their wild ride down the Ocoee River in Tennessee.



Teamwork at the Youth Conference.

staff. Swimming, boating, and a final session—around a blazing bonfire under a full moon and surrounded by the mountains of eastern Tennessee—made for a full week and a fulfilling experience.

Almost sixty of the conference participants traveled to Lawrenceville (Atlanta), Georgia for worship on Sunday, August 10 with members of

our sister congregation, Zion Lutheran. To enhance the service, the youth provided two choral anthems, one student solo, and a student violin accompanist.

The next CLC Youth Conference will be scheduled for August 2005. Look for information sometime during the fall of 2004!

—Pastor Paul Nolting, reporter

Announcements

CLC LADIES LUNCHEON

The CLC Ladies Luncheon will be hosted by Messiah in Eau Claire in June (Wednesday during Convention). This year's theme is *Jesus' Return—a Family Reunion: "I go to prepare a place for you."* The special project is a picture of each church's ladies group (with names). For table display, pictures of ladies' activities, with brief description. Volunteers are needed for MC, presenters, greeters, music director/pianist. Contact Evlyn Carlile at ESCar1999@aol.com or write her at 4716 Kappus Dr. #1, Eau Claire, WI 54701. Phone 715-832-7909.

If you have not come to the Luncheon in the past, please consider joining us this year. Cost is minimal, to cover expenses only—\$5.00.

CLC WOMEN'S RETREAT

There is still time to register for the Fifth Annual CLC Women's Retreat, to be held March 26, 27, 28 at the Schwan Retreat Center in Trego, Wisconsin. Check with your pastor for registration brochures or e-mail Pastor Paul Nolting at pnolting@hickorytech.net

COVER: John Fox