

Lutheran Spokesman



CLC CONVENTION

JUNE 21-25, 2004

“O BLESSED MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION”

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 corinthians 5:18-21

June 2004, vol. 46 No. 12

O Blessed Ministry of Reconciliation

Over the past few synod Conventions our church body has had to deal with one doctrinal controversy or another. By the grace of God these matters have been settled on the basis of God's Word. This year our church body looks forward to a Convention where the biggest "controversy" may be determining which fund will receive the offering at the communion service on Wednesday night.

After the past years of controversy, it is fitting that the theme for the 2004 CLC Convention is "O Blessed Ministry of Reconciliation," based on 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. According to the inspired writer, we are called to be "ambassadors for Christ as though God were pleading through us." God has committed to us—pastors, teachers, and laymen—the message that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. . . . For He made Him who

knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:19,21).

It has been said that all preaching begins at home. The ambassador for Christ can speak of this reconciliation with God because the ambassador himself has, through Christ, been reconciled to God. He knows the joy of sins forgiven, for "God . . . has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5:18). What applies to us as individuals God also wishes us to apply to the world. After all, Christ did pay for the sins of the entire world. Forgiveness is there for all, for God has, through Christ, reconciled the world to Himself. So it is that Scripture urges us to deal with one another as God has dealt with us. We are to " . . . be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in

Opposite: pictures taken by our roving photographer at the 2002 Convention

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Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).

On the Basis of God's Word

At Convention time—especially during times of doctrinal controversy—tensions sometimes run high between participants. But when all is said and done at the Convention, the matter is settled by God's Word. It is hoped that the people on either side of the issue do not go home angry with one another, for even as their differences have been reconciled on the basis of God's Word, so also are their feelings toward one another.

The theme of every Convention could well be "the Blessed Ministry of Reconciliation." As ambassadors for Christ, we have joined together in the CLC to carry out this ministry of reconciliation. Why have we at times debated over the proper meaning and application of God's Word? Because it is our desire that all our work as a church body proceed on the basis of unity of faith and confession. "Can two walk together unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3) So we "reconcile" our doctrine, that we may "all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions



Committee #2 in session in a classroom



Prof. Paul Schaller, Benno Sydow, Prof. Steven Sippert



Pastor Thomas Schuetze, Prof. Em. John Lau



Pastors John Klatt and Norman Greve



Ronald Strike, Melvin Eichstadt, Dr. Gayle Stelter

among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor 1:10).

While we foresee no doctrinal controversy this Convention, some of the issues will be spiritual matters with earthly implications. For example, how will we allocate our mission resources to most effectively carry on our God-given ministry of reconciliation?

But the majority of the issues dealt with will be earthly matters with spiritual implications—matters such as the ILC building project, the question of health insurance for our called workers, and so forth. These "earthly" issues

also impact our effectiveness as ambassadors for Christ, who knew no sin but was made to be sin for us "that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). That is why God has committed to us the Word of reconciliation—because that is what He wants for the entire world!

May God, through His Holy Spirit, move us to make this blessed ministry of reconciliation the goal and theme of every Convention—indeed, of every moment of our lives as ambassadors for Christ!

—*Pastor Joel Fleischer*



Holy Spirit — Divine Matchmaker

Most people appreciate a good love story, even as most seek love and the perfect mate in life. While some might turn to eHarmony.com, who would entrust that job to a hired servant? Yet Abraham and Isaac did.

Genesis chapter 24 reports a most amazing story: a planned marriage, a trustworthy servant authorized to seek out a bride, a young woman who fell in love with someone she had never seen. And most remarkably, the ancient episode gives a glimpse of an eternal love story meant to involve us all.

Sarah was three years dead, Abraham was old—140 years worth. One thing yet remained to be done. Isaac needed a wife. But not just any wife—certainly not a young woman from among the adulterous, idolatrous Canaanites! A God-fearing wife was a must, to help nourish and transmit to future generations faith in the coming Messiah.

So a trusted family servant was sent 500 miles north to Abraham's former abode to find and secure for Isaac such a wife. With instructions from the father and son, the trusted servant set out with camels, jewelry, and other gifts. At the outskirts of Nahor, at the town well, the servant prayed for help and success. Before he had even finished praying, Rebekah appeared. Not only did she give him a drink, but then volunteered to draw water for his ten camels—up to 200 gallons!

Obviously, this girl had some serious qualities: friendliness, beauty, hospitality, a willingness to serve, and physical stamina. Could his prayers be answered so quickly? Gifts were given, further inquiries made, an overnight invitation secured. To Bethuel and Laban (her father and brother) the servant explained Abraham's intention, Isaac's need, and God's obvious directing. Rebekah lis-

tened as the servant undoubtedly went into some detail about Isaac—his faith and godliness, his wealth and prospects, his willing obedience and genteel, loving manner. Her heart thrilled; already she was won over! With hardly any further ado, she followed the servant to her husband. "And he (Isaac) loved her." What an amazing love story!

A Trustworthy Servant

But this love story has a corollary. Many years later, the Lord Jesus (their very descendant!) said, "When He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority . . . He will glorify me . . . All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you" [Jn. 16:13-15].

The Trustworthy Servant in this divine love story is the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son. He approaches us through the gospel of Word and Sacrament and tells us of the Son, the Bridegroom. He describes the Bridegroom's attributes, characteristics, His self-giving love and almighty power, His gentle spirit, and eternal inheritance. This Servant cannot lie to us or deceive, for He is the Spirit of Truth.

Our attention is caught; this sounds interesting. And then we are shown the proffered gifts: forgiveness of sin through the Son's self-sacrifice, a sparkling robe of righteousness, peace, joy, life, and pleasure forevermore. We are convinced by the power of the words of the Servant. We are brought to love and to trust that Someone who obviously loves us.

St. Peter further explained: "Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. 1:8,9).

In this remarkable love story, we leave the past life. We are determined to love no one more than our Lord and Savior—not father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, or children.

We look to the future. In the short term, we know not exactly what it will bring. There are, after all, some 500 miles of life to travel. But the Trustworthy Servant is with us to comfort and guide. The Bridegroom awaits. Surely He loves us. Our hearts are singing and filled with anticipation. We love the Son whom we have not yet seen with our eyes. The Divine Matchmaker has so arranged it and



Missionary Koenig writes: "In January 39 bicycles were given to new preachers of BELC at Nagalapuram...The men are thankful to the Lord and the CLC people for this help in carrying the gospel into the villages."

brought it to pass, just as He did on Pentecost Day when He brought about 3000 souls to faith and love in Christ.

Rebekah, I think, would have loved to listen as St. Peter preached the

gospel of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. Why not? He would have been telling her own story.

—Pastor David Fuerstenau



Studies In Colossians

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

Chapter 2:1-10*

“Graduates! For You a Final Word from the Holy Spirit”

Are you enjoying the exhilarating experience of graduation this spring? Congratulations! Now, to make the day complete, let us bring it into a truly Christian perspective, giving heart and ear to the Lord's own enlightening Word. We'll never hear this from the podium at a state-run school, college, or university, should you have been attending such—nor should we expect to. Here it is. What every Christian graduate needs to hear—from the pen of the Spirit's ready writer, Apostle Paul.

Colossians 2:1-10

[quotes in NIV]

His greeting:

I want you to know how much I am struggling for you . . . and for all who have not met me personally.

His goal: to take us far beyond the level of knowledge we might have gained in secular education:

My purpose is that they may



*be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they might have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the **mystery of God**, namely, **Christ**, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

His concern:

I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine sounding arguments.

His gratitude for where they have come:

For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with

*you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in **Christ** is.*

His counsel for life to the full:

*So then, just as you received **Christ Jesus as Lord**, continue to live **in Him**, rooted and built up **in Him**, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

His deep concern for us all:

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world

*rather than on **Christ**.*

His testimony: What all the highest wisdom and knowledge is found in Christ, the Mystery of God.

*For in **Christ** all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in **Christ**, who is the head over every power and authority.*

Live in **Him!**

—Rollin A. Reim

• Readers may notice that our section studies are out of sequence. An on-hand study of Colossians 1:24-29 is yet to appear; we pre-empt it, since this particular study fits nicely with graduation month. — Editor



"CLOSE COMMUNION"

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

Eleventh In A Series

In our churches we generally enjoy such a unity in doctrine and practice, such a warm degree of contentment and peace, that it is sometimes hard to believe that there is such corruption and confusion in other sections of Christianity. Sometimes we are tempted to be affected by this corruption and confusion. Some groups—contacting us through newspapers, TV, mailings, or personal visits—invite us to buy their materials, attend their worship services or Bible studies, and even commune with them.

We should be aware that a basic problem here is the undermining and overthrowing of the gospel (although spokespersons for other religious groups will say that there is no deliber-

ate attempt to do that).

It's time for a quote from the "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod" (adopted 1932). This is a booklet found in most of our congregational tract racks; this confession is honored today in the CLC more than in the church body that produced it. *The Brief Statement* says:

"ON CHURCH FELLOWSHIP — Since God ordained that His Word only, without the admixture of human doctrine, be taught and believed in the Christian Church (I Peter 4:11; John 8:31,32; I Timothy 6:3,4) all Christians are required by God to discriminate between orthodox and heterodox church-bodies, and in case they have strayed into heterodox church-

bodies, to leave them. We repudiate "unionism," that is, church-fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine, as disobedience to God's command, as causing divisions in the Church (Romans 16:17; II John 9,10) and as involving the constant danger of losing the Word of God entirely (II Timothy 2:17-21)."

A reading of the epistle to the Galatians shows, as Dr. Martin Franzmann has written, that "the letter addresses itself to a very earnest, very pious, and very Christian sort of heresy and crushes it with an unqualified anathema (curse). Our easy age, which discusses heresy with ecumenical calm over teacups, can learn from this letter the terrible seriousness with which the all-inclusive gospel of grace excludes all movements and all men who seek to qualify its grace" (*Concordia Self-study Commentary*, page 176 of the New Testament section).

There are Christians in both orthodox and heterodox churches, but that does not prove there ought to be fellowship/communion between them. In fact, love for Christian brethren does not demand inter-Communion or open Communion between the two types. It requires the opposite! Whoever really loves his Christian brethren will refuse



to participate in error and sin, but will point it out, praying and hoping for deliverance from it.

God forbids unionism. He may permit false teachers and churches to arise, indeed, but only so that Christians may show their obedience to Him by avoiding them and helping them out of their dilemma, rather than by fraternizing with them (Deuteronomy 13:3, 8:2; 1 Corinthians 11:19).

Unionism destroys Christianity. The Church can and should never grant error an equal right alongside truth. This is why we promote a united, Biblical stance in doctrine and life—because God calls for it and provides it!

To that extent the Church is not a democracy, but rather, if you will, a blessed, divine dictatorship—very loving, very tender, and very firm. And all through Christ.

—Pastor Em. Warren Fanning



Mission Helper Team members: Russell Schmitt, Larry Hansen, Loren Hansen, Joshua Stelter (story p.17)



CROSS PURPOSES



A "Centrist Lutheran"?

The term "centrist" has appeared in some literature that has recently come across the desk. It appeared in the *Lutheran Commentator* (Christmas 2003), a publication of dissident ELCA members. The *Commentator* speaks approvingly of building "a centrist Lutheran future." The *Lutheran Commentator* represents a sizeable group within ELCA that laments the heterodoxy which has swallowed the parent body. The October-December 2003 issue spoke approvingly of "associating with other centrist Lutherans."

What does the word *centrist* mean? In politics it describes a "politically moderate thinker." It conjures up in the mind a position between the liberal thinker and the extreme thinker, whatever they might be. Simply put, a centrist takes a position between a position deemed to be too liberal on one hand and too extreme on the other.

So what does a "centrist Lutheran" believe? Does a centrist Lutheran accept what Scripture says of itself when it claims to be the inspired and inerrant Word of God? Or is there a liberal position on the matter of inspiration and an extreme position which can be bridged by being a centrist? If so, what is it? We of the CLC are not centrist, for we believe that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). If some deem it extreme, that's the way it is! That is what we believe and teach because that is what Scripture teaches!

One of the cardinal doctrines of Scripture is the virgin birth of Jesus. Christ-believers confess with Scripture that Jesus was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." The liberal position with respect to this doctrine is easy to identify. Liberal theology either denies it or makes it optional. But what is the extremist position? The extremist position has to be the Scriptural position, not because the doctrine is extremist, but because Jesus was either born of the Virgin Mary or He was not. There is no centrist position!

What does the centrist Lutheran believe about salvation? Is Jesus Christ, Whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, Whose suffering and death we contemplate during Lent, by Whose resurrection from the dead we are justified, and in which we rejoice at Easter, the only way to salvation? We believe what Scripture says. "There is none other name under heaven given among men . . ." (Acts 4:12) through which salvation comes. We know what the liberal teaches. Liberal thought says that such a teaching that faith in Jesus is the only way to salvation is too exclusive. Liberalism creates a broad way to salvation. Scripture, on the other hand, denies an open-door policy that makes room for the denier and rejecter of Christ. God has opened the door to heaven, but only to those who come in through faith in Christ Jesus (see Revelation 7:9-17).

Finally, what is the centrist position between truth and error? The "centrist" color between black and white is gray. In theology gray is the color of compromise. Our understanding at times may be incomplete and inadequate. But God's Word has no gray. Scripture tells us that truth and error cannot co-exist in the Church. When error is taught, defended, and promoted, Scripture is very clear about what is necessary for a faithful child of God. In Romans 16:17 God tells us to avoid the purveyors of error. A centrist position in this regard is in itself error.

So what is a "centrist Lutheran future"? If a centrist Lutheran is what it sounds like it is, then it sounds like compromise. Why in this day would

someone use a word which means nothing at best, and at worst is a word that suggests compromise of truth, which in fact is error? C.P. Krauth in "The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology" said, "A Lutheran is a Christian whose rule of faith is the Bible, and whose creed is the Augsburg Confession" (p. 185). Now, that we can understand. Krauth would not today recognize the church of which he was part; it is doubtful that he would understand what a "centrist Lutheran" is, much less be one.

(A week ago we wrote to the editor of the *Lutheran Commentator* to ask for a definition of what a "centrist" Lutheran is. We received no response.)

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer



Third Article—

The Holy Spirit Nourishes the Faith of the Church

A typical Mother's Day: Dad takes Mom and the whole family, including six-year-old Johnny, out to eat at the best restaurant in town. The grown-ups' taste buds are alive at the prospect of feasting on dishes like shrimp scampi, chicken cordon bleu, or fettucini alfredo. But as the menu items are reported and explained to Johnny, his reaction is a rather forced "no thanks." A cheeseburger and spaghetti would be more to his liking.

Mankind's view of what God gives us is somewhat similar. We've considered the first article of the Creed, which confesses that God is the Creator of the world and of ourselves. Many people on this Earth willingly speak of His power in creation; they

*475th Anniversary of Luther's Small
and Large Catechisms
(1529-2004)*

What Luther said:

"...I do not merely pass over the (catechism) words hurriedly, but I carefully observe what the individual word means. And really, if I do not do this but am preoccupied with other business, I feel a definite loss because of the neglect. For God gave the Word that we should impress it on ourselves, as Moses says (Deut.6:7), and practice it. Without this practice our souls become rusty, as it were, and we lose ourselves."

acknowledge a dependance on God for their livelihood; they read into nature the workings of a wondrous and eter-

nal Supreme Being. Believers, above all, certainly delight in the marvels of this created world and accordingly give praise to our God: "O Lord, whose bounteous hand again Hath poured Thy gifts in plenty down, Who all creation dost sustain And all the earth with goodness crown, Lord of the harvest, here we own Our joy to be Thy gift alone" (TLH 567:1).

But that 'first article' knowledge, dear friend, is "cheeseburger and spaghetti" compared to the robust menu served up by the Holy Spirit to Christ's Church (although the maturity of a Christian may determine how greatly those servings are appreciated).

Notice that we skipped over mention of the Second Article—the redeeming work of Christ. That work, of course, took place in the Kitchen, so to speak. Jesus' incarnation, life, suffering and death, and resurrection occurred at a point in time—the fulfillment of God's plan to deliver us from the curse of sin. Jesus described Himself as "the Bread which came down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die . . . If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" (Jn. 6:51).

But it is the Holy Spirit's work to get this "Bread" from the kitchen to the restaurant table at which you and I are sitting. The Restaurant where this occurs is the Holy Christian Church. Those who have come to know the Lord Jesus as their Savior from sin have a whole set of taste buds awakened in them that the unbelieving (unregenerate) man doesn't really experience. Jesus stated that "blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Mt. 5:6). The tax collector who, in the distress of his spirit, came to the



Temple pleading "God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (cf. Lk. 18:9-14) found that hunger for spiritual peace satisfied. "He went home justified"—not by his action of begging for mercy, but by confidence in God's having that mercy.

Feasting on Jesus' Work

The Spirit of God causes us to feast upon all the benefits that come from Jesus' work by which God is reconciled to man in spite of his sins. The Church is the 'place' where that feasting occurs. What the Spirit did for you or me when He "called me by the gospel . . ." etc., He likewise does with every believer, creating this invisible communion of saints called the Holy Christian Church: "in the same way, He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith."

There is one true Christian faith. It all rests upon Jesus and His saving work. This faith is so simple a child can grasp it ("I am Jesus' little lamb Ever glad at heart I am . . ."), yet it generates a menu of spiritual blessings so rich that we, in our hungering and thirsting after righteousness, will never weary of it. Yes, the same menu is displayed at the door of this Restaurant every day: "The Holy Spirit daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers."

But with that diet of forgiveness day after day comes a marvelous variety of spiritual blessings which the seasoned

(that is, burdened and tested, tempted and oft-fallen) Christian will relish more and more as the Spirit works life. He causes us to rejoice in our salvation and to take confidence that God is on our side; the same Spirit causes us to rejoice that we have the privilege of prayer, heard and positively answered (though in God's own wisdom and way).

In this Restaurant we find ourselves dining with like-minded souls who share an appetite for things heavenly and who have a like distaste for worldly pollutions. It is a delight to see these others—a wondrous variety of people—nourished in the same spiritual way. Every table has a clear view of the Kitchen where our heavenly food is prepared, so that we are ever assured that we are served the right Ingredient, prepared in the right Way. We gaze in wonder at the love and worth of all that went on there, and we realize we can never sufficiently thank Him through Whom we receive these things.

Furthermore, our affection for those who dine with us grows and becomes a fruitful bond. We are careful to lead others to seek only this food and not to neglect or substitute it for any cheap imitation. We are aware of those who pass by the door of this Restaurant seeking some lesser food, and we urgently seek to lead to these same tables any and all who don't know what may be found here. At the same time, the fact that so many others despise or reject what the Holy Spirit serves here does nothing to lessen our confidence and joy that here we have the true Bread from heaven.

This Restaurant is Christ's true Church—"a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people, but are now the people of God" (1 Pet. 2:9).

—Pastor Peter Reim



The Sixth Commandment

It is still safe in these early years of the 21st century to speak out against certain things God addresses in the Ten Commandments. Things like stealing and murder are still considered to be wrong. Many would frown on purposefully giving someone a bad name, but at the same time would accept mud-slinging as an integral part of the political election process.

When it comes to the sixth commandment, it is a different story. Things like "shacking up," having children out of marriage, and gay marriages are gaining acceptance in our

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and Large Catechisms
(1529-2004)*

What Luther said:

"I, too, am a theologian who has attained a fairly good practical knowledge and experience of Holy Scriptures through various dangers. But I do not so glory in this gift as not to join my children daily in prayerfully reciting the Catechism, that is, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer and meditating on them with an attentive heart..."

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we live a pure and decent life in words of actions, and that husband and wife love and honor one another.

++++++

Large Catechism Comment:

"Since among us there is such a disgraceful mess and sludge of all manner of vice and lewdness, this commandment is aimed against every form of unchastity, whatever its name. Not only is the external act prohibited, but also every kind of source, stimulation, and means...."

society at an alarming rate.

But what is becoming okay with society is not okay with the Lord. Ever since the sixth day of creation, God has made it clear what has His approval—and that is marriage of one man and one woman lawfully joined together as one until death parts them. Sexual relations belong in marriage, and nowhere else; God does not approve of sexual acts between those of the same gender, or between multi-spouses (be it many wives or husbands).

God set this commandment in stone to protect His holy estate of marriage. It is His will that husband and wife be able to find security and companionship beneath the protection of the marriage vow. He blesses such a relationship with sexual intimacy, and with children as He chooses.

As a Roman Catholic, Martin Luther was taught that one of the greatest works a person could do before God was to remain celibate (not to marry), dedicating one's life to the church as a monk or nun. In Luther's day God's will was disobeyed to the point that marriage was considered sinful, and even the sexual desire for one's spouse was considered a sin calling for repentance. When he addressed

this commandment in his Large Catechism, Luther spoke out against this abuse. "I have always taught that we should not despise marriage nor esteem it lightly, as the short-sighted world and the hypocritical clergy do; but view it in the light of God's Word, by which it is adorned and sanctified. ... It is not an exceptional estate, but the most universal and the noblest, ... extending through the whole world."

Flee to the Word!

Luther acknowledged that there are those who "have become free to live chaste lives unmarried," but, he added, "to unaided human nature, as God created it, chastity apart from matrimony is an impossibility. For flesh and blood remain flesh and blood, and the natural inclination and excitement run their course without let or hindrance, as everyone's observation and experience testify." When it came to the "papal rabble, priests, monks, and nuns, who dishonor and prohibit marriage," Luther wrote, they "resist God's command. ... And in short, where they even abstain from actual commission of sin, unchaste thoughts and evil passions so fill their hearts that they suffer incessant ragings of passion which may be avoided in married life."

As Luther spoke out against the abuses of this commandment at his time, so we wish to preach God's Word just as clearly. Where we see so many rationalizations and reasons and excuses offered for why this commandment is not good and not in keeping with "the times," we do well to keep in mind what the Lord says: "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).

As we address these words to others, let us heed them ourselves. Let us do as Paul encourages: "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:18).

And remember that as terrible as these sins are, they too can be repented of and forgiven. As Paul wrote: "Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, ... nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ... will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

That God would help us "live a pure and decent life in word and deed, and each honor and love his spouse," we make our prayer the words of King David: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10).

—Pastor Paul Krause



SMORGASBORD

• **WITNESS PLANNING** (*taken from a CLC Ministry by Mail sermon by Pastor Michael Roehl, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Bismarck, N.Dak; printed here as a compelling perspective on "mission work"*)

I doubt there has ever been a true Christian who did not very much desire to share his Savior with those whom he loves on this Earth. When a human being truly believes that no one can enter heaven without faith in Jesus Christ, it is natural and right to want to share that truth with others. Remember that unbelievers are all awash in a torrent of perversion and confusion. So much that is false and perverse is fed to them on a daily basis that they are quite literally without hope unless someone (like you) takes the time and effort to share the good news of Jesus Christ

with them. That message is not complicated. God our Father has forgiven the sins of every man, woman, and child ever born. He has placed all of those sins on His Son, Jesus Christ. Because of this, whoever believes in Jesus Christ will, without question, be saved and will spend eternity in the untold bliss of heaven. Only the one who refuses Jesus Christ and His salvation will be condemned eternally.

This is the message we want to share. The age-old problem is how to accomplish what we want to do.

In many cases the solution is simple planning. Now, what in the world does *that* mean? It means that something as important as sharing the key to eternal life is certainly worthy of at least as much planning as we devote to other far less important things in our lives.

For example, most of you have (or should have) some kind of winter survival kit in your car. You've thought ahead to what might happen, and you've prepared by carrying an extra quilt or blankets, candles, flares, first aid kit, etc. Or when you take a trip, don't you consider what you will be doing and pack the appropriate clothes? Sports teams make plans to counter the strengths of their opponents. The military trains our soldiers to handle the unexpected, and lawyers prepare their witnesses for every conceivable question.

Yet, how do we apply what we know to be true about planning to our Lord's Great Commission—the sharing of our faith? It *is* rather startling how little planning we do for something so important, so life-and-death urgent. This planning can be as simple as identifying common forms of interaction with our neighbors. That done, consider how best to respond to turn the conversation into an opportunity to witness. It's pretty much the same thing we do when we plan the emergency kit for our vehicles. We think of what might happen and we decide how we will deal with it. What would we wish we had, for example, if we happened to get snowbound in a blizzard? That, within reason, is what we include in the kit.

Thus, witness planning is a matter of recognizing what happens to us all the time, and then turning that to the Lord's advantage. Some examples might help to clarify. Suppose someone asks, "How are you doing?" or "How's your day going?" What is your standard, canned answer? "Can't complain"? "Pretty good. How 'bout you?" Why not think of a different stock answer, like, "Great! One day closer to meeting my Savior." Our Lord encouraged us to be wise. Would it not be wise for us to identify such opportunities in our own lives and to prepare for them? If someone asks where I work or what I do for a living, why not answer, "Physically or spiritually?" If someone asks how many children you have, why not answer, "The Lord has given us _____" (or some similar response)?

The need to witness should be a powerful, compelling force within each one of us. It is entirely possible that nothing may come of this, but then again something great just might.

May the faith that has been created in your heart by God the Holy Spirit never know doubt or uncertainty, and may you never find yourself in opposition to that Holy Spirit, who labors on your behalf for your eternal salvation. Amen.



Whose Fault Is It Anyway?

Perhaps you have heard the story of the convert who asks the Christian worker how long the gospel has been preached in the worker's home country. Upon learning how long it has been,

the question is raised, "Why did you not come earlier? If only my father and grandfather had heard . . . But they died in unbelief!" This story should be a reminder to us not to dilly-dally about,

but be busy in outreach to those who have not heard the gospel of full and free salvation. Yet the ultimate fault for one dying in unbelief regardless of whether he has heard the gospel or not rests with the individual.

God has given ample evidence throughout nature and history that relying upon a thing of creation as an object of worship is insufficient. Trusting in an idol made by man's hands is as futile a gesture as grabbing the wind with the hands. After the action you have nothing. Sinful man fools himself by thinking the placating of an idol will set things right and eventually propel him to glory and bliss. The common sense that God gave man should cause man to seek further.

We are reminded of all this by Paul's words. At Lystra Paul said, "Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). To the Romans Paul wrote: "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the

things that have been made. So they are without excuse. . . they did not see fit to acknowledge God. . . ." (Rom. 1:19-20,28). And again at Athens Paul said that God gave the evidence, "That they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27).

The Devil at Work

The devil has worked hard to obscure the evidence and truth by engendering laziness, superstition, and pride in what man can do. An all too willing ally and dupe is found in the sinful flesh. Whose fault it is anyway that man goes to damnation? The most dreadful cataclysm the world has ever seen did not change the sinful human heart. Before the flood (Gen. 6:5) and after the flood (Gen. 8:21), God says that the imagination of man's heart is evil continually. Look deep down in your own heart and know this. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt, who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9) The situation is so bad for us in the murky deep that we appeal, "Cleanse thou me from hidden faults." We are so befuddled, we commit to God's forgiveness what we don't even know to be sin.



Mission Helpers Josh Stelter and Loren Hansen in Taveta, Kenya

Moving about in Chennai, India with its population of over four million, we find Christian churches here and there. Some say that there may be one in ten in this city who are Christian. There is ample opportunity for the 3.6 million outside the faith to inquire.

Out in the countryside, traveling up the coast of Andhra Pradesh State, you see villages where Christ is worshiped. The government's statistics for the country are that four percent are Christian. Those under fear and superstition can see and find. But will they? Many don't want to. That is the problem.

Even in the North where you could go through thousands of villages and not hear the name of Christ, it should be seen that the true God is not represented by the thousands upon thousands of idols—that even daily devotions with incense, painted foreheads at Hindu shrines just doesn't work. True

joy, love, hope, peace are as elusive as ever. What idolatry offers is an illusion. And Satan's demon army is out there to prop up the illusory, as if real.

Still the guilt cannot be laid entirely at Satan's doorstep. It is due to man's desperately corrupt heart, and none other, that he opts for the flimsy facsimile, rather than for the real God.

Of course, knowing whose fault damnation is in no way lessens our duty to do all within our power to reach the lost. This is one of the lesser paradoxes of our Christian faith. Paul gives us the Word and his example: "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more . . . I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:19,22). "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (2 Cor. 12:15).

—*Missionary David Koenig*



Mission Helper Work in Tanzania

Members of Immanuel of Mankato, Loren Hansen, Russell Schmitt, and Joshua Stelter (accompanied by Larry Hansen of the Hecla, S.Dak. congregation) on January 13, 2003, traveled to Tanzania, Africa to complete the finish work of a building suitable for the seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (LCEA).

What follows is a brief summary of the work completed. All of the windows needed glass, so large sheets of glass were purchased, cut to size, installed, and then glazed. Two stub walls were removed from the classrooms, and a wall

of ceiling height removed so the two small rooms could serve as an office. The ceilings of some of the rooms needed completion. The floors of the bathroom, classroom, and entry were resurfaced. A concrete slab and water tank were placed on the existing tower. The water supply to the tank had previously been rerouted, so the city (Himo) officials were contacted to correct this matter. The plumbing connections from the tower to the building were completed. All the electric wiring in the attic had been pirated, so rewiring of the entire building was necessary.

Many men and women members of



Seminary Building



Seminary Kitchen

the LCEA were involved with the work on the building, or were outside the building cooking lunch over an open fire. In addition to the work on the seminary, visits to each congregation for Sunday morning worship were a high priority. Sometimes at the end of the work day, the volunteers joined to harmonize in song to the Lord.

The bishop, Jesse Angowi, is pastor of Uchira and Himo, Tanzania, congregations. John Elishilia Ulotu is pastor of Machame, Tanzania, congregation. Ajuaye King Homella is pastor of Dar

es Salaam, congregation. Abel Massawe is pastor of Kisaseni, Tanzania, congregation. Alex Karumali Rayasi is pastor of Taveta, Kenya, congregation. Jeremiah Issangya is pastor of Maru, Tanzania, congregation and of the Massai tribe.

The story of the Maasai tribe is an amazing story. The Maasai are a group of semi-nomadic pastoral people who live in grass huts and walk many miles for water and land for grazing. Pastor Jeremiah introduced these people to Christianity, into which some of the



Mission Helper Team worships with the Maasai tribe



Pastor Angowi and his wife



Being feasted in Pastor Angowi's home

tribe have been baptized. A church service was conducted underneath a shade tree located deep in the Arusha savanna region. The service consisted of Pastor Angowi preaching the Word in Swahili, the Maasai leader translated the sermon into the tribe's language, Maa (Nilotic), and Pastor Jeremiah translated the sermon into English.

Mention was made that the LCEA has received some persecution from members of the church from which the LCEA discontinued fellowship. Mention was also made that influence of Islamic beliefs is present. Ending on

a positive note, the names of the four mission workers were broadcast on Tanzania radio. The Tanzanian government welcomed the CLC and its workers as a positive contribution to their nation. Our African brothers and sisters in Christ were joyous with the CLC's contributions and our presence in their midst. They desire our continued prayers for their spiritual and physical well-being, as they also pray for us.

Note: This report is from Mission Helper team member, Russell Schmitt, who submitted it at the encouragement of Missionary Koenig. —Editor

Announcements

Trinity, Spokane Anniversary

Trinity Lutheran Church of Spokane, Washington, will be celebrating its 60th anniversary on Sunday, June 13, with a service at 10:00 a.m., followed by a potluck meal, and another service at 2:00 p.m. Professor Paul Schaller, Pastors David Schaller and John Hein will participate in our services. We will have special music, including a joint choir with Gethsemane Lutheran Church of Spokane for the afternoon service. You are invited to join us on our special day of thanksgiving and praise to God!

—Pastor Terrel Kesterson

Faith, Markesan Anniversary

Faith Lutheran Church of Markesan, Wisconsin will be celebrating 40 years of God's grace with a special anniversary service on June 20 at 10:00 a.m. You are invited to come and celebrate with us!

—Pastor Michael Schierenbeck

Mt. Olive, Detroit Lakes Anniversary

The members of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church of Detroit Lakes Minnesota, would like to invite our brothers and sisters of the CLC to the 50th Anniversary service of God's grace on Sunday, June 27. A special afternoon service will begin at 4:00 p.m., followed by a potluck meal prepared by the church ladies. A special program is planned.

—Pastor John M. Johannes

Great Lakes Delegate Conference

The Great Lakes Delegate Conference will be hosted by Calvary Lutheran Church, Marquette, Michigan, June 7-8, 2004. Agenda items include "The Honor and Privilege of Serving on the Church Council" (Pastor Michael Schierenbeck) and a discussion of the Convention Prospectus.

—Pastor Michael Eichstadt

Attention Homeschoolers, and others:

One more reason to subscribe to the *Lutheran Spokesman*:

" . . . Now that my kids are in high school, I've found the *Spokesman* to be a very useful resource for Bible study. For instance, we've used some of the chapter studies (Philippians, Galatians) and Parables of the Master. (I have issues saved back several years.) We haven't done any of the Old Testament studies yet. I've usually had them read the section and write a summary of what they've read, then I'd read the *Spokesman* article and discuss what we'd read. . . . "

Lifted from a synod e-mail piece in which home-schooling parents were exchanging ideas.

Yes, we're prejudiced. But—with subscriptions coming due this month of June—we find the "pitch" worth sharing!

—Pastor Paul Fleischer, Editor