

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

BEFORE GOD only those works are good which are done for the glory of God and the good of man, according to the rule of divine Law. Such works, however, no man performs unless he first believes that God has forgiven him his sins and has given him eternal life by grace, for Christ's sake, without any works of his own, John 15:4, 5. We reject as a great folly the assertion, frequently made in our day, that works must be placed in the fore, and "faith in dogmas" -- meaning the Gospel of Christ crucified for the sins of the world -- must be regulated to the rear. Since good works never precede faith, but are always and in every instance the *result* of faith in the Gospel, it is evident that the only means by which we Christians can become rich in good works (and God would have us to be rich in good works, Titus 2:14) is unceasingly to remember the grace of God which we have received in Christ, Rom. 12:1; 2 Cor. 8:9. Hence we reject as unchristian and foolish any attempt to produce good works by the compulsion of the Law or through carnal motives.

Of Good Works

THE BRIEF STATEMENT OF 1932



september 2007, VOL. 50 NO. 3

CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS OF SPEAKING GOD'S WORD OF TRUTH

Your Spouse—The Answer to Your Prayers!

I know firsthand that our gracious God answers prayer. Some of my prayers have been astoundingly answered. Others were quietly concluded. A few I am still waiting on. But have you ever thought of *yourself* as being the answer to a prayer?

Early in our marriage, my wife told me that her now sainted pastor had instructed her confirmation class that it was never too early to pray for a Christian spouse.

Being young and impressionable, she took the counsel to heart. She recalled sitting behind her parents' home on a summer's eve watching the moon rise over Mud Lake. And she prayed that God might give her a Christian spouse. She told me that I was the answer to that prayer.

I was impressed—to be the answer

to someone's prayer? Wow! Then I was humbled—the answer to someone's prayer, me?! And then I was amazed—am I the answer to this someone's prayer?!

You see, I knew that my wife was the answer to my prayers. I guess I just hadn't reversed the thinking and applied it to myself.

What were the responsibilities of being a 'prayer answerer' going to be?

Would I be able to live up to the privileged responsibilities this entailed?

What if something goes terribly wrong in our marriage relationship?

A comment you have most likely heard (and probably used) is "They were made for each other!" In the book of Genesis we have the true account of one individual being quite literally

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made for another.

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man” (Gen. 2:21-22).

Do you imagine there was any anxiety or apprehension on Adam’s part to take Eve as his wife? Were there any ‘Are you sure, Lord, that she’s the right one?’-type comments? She had been created just for him—a perfect helper comparable to him!

“And Adam said: ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’” (Gen. 2:23). Eve was the answer to Adam’s prayers! When Adam could not find a helper to complete him—and before aloneness turned into loneliness—God provided!

In a sense, every Christian spouse is the answer to a prayer. When we seek the counsel and guidance of our heavenly Father, He will provide the answer. The answer may come early or late, or the Lord may decide to provide the strength of faith and devout courage to go it alone, but an answer there will be.

Communicate!

One of the saddest aspects of our

sinful nature is that we can so easily take important things in our lives for granted. Take our faith-living, for instance. How often don’t we try to go it alone rather than seek the will of our Lord? If we take our eyes off our Savior for only a moment (like Peter did), the crashing waves of this world can easily drag us down.

Besides the forgiveness of sins and life eternal, one of the most precious earthly gifts our Father has given us is our spouse. God brought the two of us together. The Lord has taken two human beings and made them partners in heart and life! What a miracle!

Yet, how often do we take this holy estate for granted? Married couples often take for granted what they believe their spouse should know. “He should know what I need help with or what my needs are.” “She should know what really irritates me!”

Our God is a God of communication. The Lord didn’t leave us on our own to guess or think up what He desires for us. He gave us His Word—very clear and concise.

Let’s not take our spouse and his or her needs for granted. Communicate with each other! It’s the easiest tool at our disposal and one of the hardest to implement, especially for—dare I say it?—men!

Even—or especially!—in such an important relationship as marriage there will be challenges and obstacles to overcome. The best way to keep our marriage on track and the problems at bay is to love the Lord more than we love our spouse (!). When each spouse seeks the Lord’s will in all matters, all will go according to His good purpose.

The troubles in any marriage—whether one has been unfaithful (in

thought, word, or deed), slothful, or neglectful—can be conquered by Christ. He has the power to get us back on track. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...” (1 Jn. 1:7). Needing repair or restoration of our marriage covenant, we need only look to the perfect Bridegroom,

Christ, for a pattern of love to follow.

O happy home where two, in heart united,
In holy faith, are clinging unto Thee;
Where both, to Thee a joyful service bringing,
Hear and obey Thy voice most willingly...
(TLH #626:2)

—Teacher David Bernthal
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin



Christian Evangelism-

A Lord Rich To All Who Call Upon Him

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such
None can ever ask too much. (TLH #459:2)

When we come to God in prayer, we can do so with confidence. Nothing is too hard for Him, so we do not have to scale back our requests to bring them within the scope of His power. And we come in response to His gracious invitation, so we do not have to worry that we are imposing on Him.

A verse from the traditional epistle lesson for Mission Festival Sunday provides the basis for such thoughts about God: “There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him” (Rom. 10:12).

Our God is rich; He has an infinite store of good things. This is good news for us, because our needs are so great. Commenting on this verse from Romans, Luther says, “We are poor as we pray, but God is rich as He hears us.”

God’s riches go far beyond our daily and basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. He is rich to be able to give us what we need most. We sinners,

indebted to God, are most in need of forgiveness. We aging, dying mortals are most in need of life. Even in these things our God is rich. He is able to give us forgiveness for all our sins for the sake of His Son Jesus who died for us and atoned for all our sins. He is able to give us eternal life through Jesus who defeated death for us and rose from the dead.

He Sends Out the Word...

God is not stingy with His riches. He is willing—indeed, eager—to give them out to all who call upon Him, believing in Jesus Christ. He publicizes



His willingness to give to any who ask Him. He wants everyone to know that He is both rich and generous, so that they will come to Him, ask, and receive. He sends out the word that He is willing to grant salvation to sinners who call upon Him.

Jesus Christ appointed apostles and sent them into the world with the offer of salvation. He said that they would be witnesses to Him in Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8). The apostles both preached the gospel to the people of their day and wrote it down in the New Testament.

For the last two thousand years, this written gospel has been carried to the ends of the Earth. In our day, this gospel continues to be preached the world over, also among us.

God does more than send out preachers. The Word that He gives them to proclaim has the power to work faith in those who hear it. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the

word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Wherever the gospel is preached it opens hearts to Jesus, leading souls to call on Him and be saved.

We who have experienced the richness of our God have the opportunity to spread the good news of God’s riches. As disciples of Christ, we have His commission to make disciples by baptizing and teaching His Word.

It is a privilege to share the gospel in personal witnessing.

It is a blessing to have a part in the gospel ministry in a Christian congregation.

It is good to be able to contribute to support our church body’s mission program.

We have many opportunities to be a part of a most blessed and worthwhile work: getting out the word that God is rich and willing to give His riches to all who call upon Him.

—*Pastor John Klatt*
Rapid City, S.Dak.



The Means of Grace— “Listen, God is Calling!”

Cell-phones can be a great tool when you need to get an important message to someone. Say your pastor is away on vacation, someone in the congregation dies, and though you don’t know where the pastor is at that moment, if he has a cell-phone you may be able to reach him with this important news.

However, if your pastor is in an area where there is no cell phone reception, you won’t be able to contact him. It

won’t matter how important your message is, because he is in an area where there is no coverage—there is no way to get the message to him.

When it comes to cell-phones we understand how important cell-phone towers are. The tower is the means by which we are able to place and receive important calls. Without the means to send or receive a call, our cell-phone is nothing more than an expensive digital paperweight.

Let's take that illustration and apply it to the salvation of our souls. We all needed God to come to us. The sin we were born in and the sins we commit in thoughts, words, and actions have separated us from God. Born dead in our trespasses and sins, we were like a cell-phone without reception.

But God did not abandon us. More than simply caring about us, He set out to resolve our hopeless condition. He sent Jesus to fix our relationship with Him. Jesus took on Himself that which had separated us from God—our sin. On the cross Jesus suffered abandonment by God in our place. He suffered what we deserved. He gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins. He redeemed us to God.

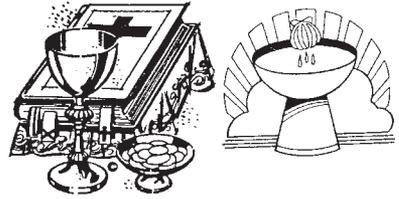
Because of Jesus' sacrifice, Paul writes that God has "forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:13-14).

Reaching Out to Us

What a gracious God who would do this for hopeless sinners like us!

So it is that God has an important message for all people—Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

But how does God get this important message to us? Does He call us on the phone? Does He send angels to tell us? Does He appear to us in visions? While God certainly could work in any of those ways, He doesn't. He works through human and earthly means. Just as a cell-phone tower is the means by which we can get that important message to our pastor, so too the gospel in Word and Sacrament (Baptism and



The Gospel in Word and Sacraments

Lord's Supper) is the means by which the Holy Spirit comes to us with this important message.

Without these means, there is no "reception," if you will. Paul writes to the Romans, "And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14) Aside from the gospel in Word and Sacrament, faith is not created or sustained.

But through the gospel in Word and Sacrament the Holy Spirit is actively creating faith and sustaining it in the hearts of believers. The gospel is the means by which the Holy Spirit works in us. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Just as we are able to reach our pastor with that important message when he has cell-phone reception, the Holy Spirit uses the Means of Grace to reach us. Through the gospel the Spirit comes to us and works in us. Through these means He brings the important message of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Through these means He helps us, as we make our way to the Paradise Christ is preparing for us.

So let us all "listen, God is calling!"

Listen, listen, God is calling
Through the Word inviting,
Offering forgiveness,
Comfort and joy. (WS2000 #771)

—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
Hecla, South Dakota

Studies in Second Thessalonians—

“...God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13).

Chapter 2:13-17

Stand Your Ground

If you have had the privilege of standing in the ocean or at a wave pool in a waterpark, you know how difficult it can be to keep your footing. The pounding of the waves is relentless. Little children routinely get knocked over, and even adults are toppled when caught unaware.

It's all fun and games in the water, but when we are trying to stand our ground against the relentless pounding of the lies of Satan, it becomes a matter of spiritual life and death. The spiritually immature are susceptible to falling—and even the spiritually mature, if not watchful, may be washed away.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (see our July '07 issue), the Lord issued a warning concerning the deception of the Antichrist. Many have fallen under the sway of the “man of sin,” but Satan doesn't stop there. He propagates many other falsehoods which relegate Jesus to a status of being less than true God and true Man, the Savior of the world.

The ones who remain firm and are able to hold their ground are those who have the common denominator of reliance upon God and His Word. That is how a person is able to stand fast and remain upright in the truth.

The Lord is the One who deserves the credit for separating believers from

the world and giving them the truth, in the first place. “God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 2:13-14).

Back To Our Roots!

The minute that we start giving ourselves even partial credit for coming into God's family, that's when we will begin to wobble in the waves! It is nothing less than the grace and power of God that has caused us to know the truth about Jesus. He loved His children from eternity and, in time, brought the good news of salvation to them, changing their hearts. This knowledge of God's plan will give comfort and renew our strength.

It is necessary also to remain in that truth. We are directed in 2 Thessalonians 2:15: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” In order to stand still, it is of ultimate importance that we go back to our roots.

This does not mean going back to “traditions” such as men sitting on one side of the church and women on the

other or pastors wearing only black gowns—or other such things neither commanded nor forbidden by God (*adiaphora*).

However, it is essential that we faithfully pass down the truth of God that has been passed down to us! Whether it is read or spoken, God’s Word is intended to be presented truthfully. It is the only legitimate counter to the deception of Satan. Only God’s Word gives the facts of sin and its damnable consequences. Only in God’s Word do we find a rescue plan

that actually works—Jesus Christ and Him crucified for the sins of the whole world.

Many forces are incessantly working against us, and it can get tiring as we strive to stand against the waves of words and works that would lead us away from God. Our comfort comes from knowing that God can keep us upright in His truth, and thus keep us standing fast.

—Pastor Michael Schierenbeck
Markesan, Wisconsin



“God-centered” vs. “Man-centered” Education

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

These words were God’s command to parents in Old Testament Israel. While questions may arise regarding the exact nature of “frontlets between your eyes,” God’s meaning is quite clear. It is the responsibility of parents to instruct their children at all times and in all places regarding the will of God as recorded in His Word!

This is not as easily done today as it

was in Moses’ day, when most parents and children lived and worked together in an agricultural setting. Today with one—and many times two—parents working outside the home, the logistics of fulfilling God’s will become much more difficult. Parents and children just do not see as much of each other as in previous generations.

What can be done about this? How can parents fulfill God’s expectations regarding the proper education of their children?

Before answering those questions, let us be clear that God is instructing parents to provide a “God-centered” versus a “man-centered” education. Children are to be taught that God lies at the center of their lives, rather than any other factor, human or earthly. Children need to know, for instance, as the Psalmist professes, that “it is He (the LORD God) who has made us, and not we ourselves” (100:3b). This is “God-centered” education.

“Man-centered” education will sug-

gest that man came into existence through the process of evolution, with at best no reference to God and at worst the total rejection of God's existence! "God-centered" education will encourage children to develop their God-given talents and to use them as the Lord ultimately leads them to further His kingdom—serving God by serving others. "Man-centered" education, on the other hand, will encourage children to develop their natural talents and pursue their personal dreams in order to lead full and satisfying lives. "Man-centered" education, thereby, appears very appealing, but it separates the development of gifts and their ultimate use from the guidance and intention of the Lord.

Walking by Faith, Not By Sight

While children who pursue and ultimately achieve their personal dreams may in fact experience great earthly success, their ultimate destiny could easily become uncertain. As Jesus queried, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mt. 16:26a) "God-centered" education, therefore, keeps as its goal the ultimate destiny of heaven, suggesting very wisely that in this world we must "walk by faith not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). "Man-centered" education confines itself to this physical world and this present life, walking by sight and giving little or no thought to an eternal future.

How might Christian parents best achieve the goal of a "God-centered" education for their children? Those congregations which have a parochial school provide parents many advantages. Our Christian teachers, sharing

The fear of the Lord



is the beginning of wisdom

Biblical faith with parents and students, will approach their subjects—whether science, history, language, or mathematics—with the will and Word of God in mind. They will strive to use God's law and gospel properly and appropriately in matters of discipline and student conflict.

In spite of obvious advantages, there are some disadvantages. In many parochial schools size is a limiting factor—not all student needs, especially special needs, are readily available; not all courses available elsewhere are provided in the local congregational school.

Yet, wise Christian parents should think long and hard about what is best for their children before turning away from a school the purpose of which is to provide a "God-centered" education. Our parochial teachers and our pastors are to assist with the Christian education of children, but that responsibility still lies with the parents and requires their steadfast involvement both at school and in the home.

Having weighed the options, other Christian parents choose to send their children to public schools. Public schools may appear to do a good job of

providing a secular education for children. Christian parents need to know, however, that public education is by its very nature a secular education and thus “man-centered.” Science will be taught from the perspective of evolution. History will exclude any consideration of the role of God and will often deemphasize or distort the role of religion within history. English, mathematics, and music will be taught strictly for their temporal and utilitarian purpose, not with any thought of their usefulness in glorifying and serving God.

Christian parents who utilize the public school system will need to provide “God-centered” education at home. This requires an active review of textbooks and the addition of important “God-centered” materials and perspectives. They will also want to make sure to make use of the organized programs and activities provided by their church in behalf of the children and young people.

Some Christian parents may well opt for home-schooling. This option does in a way provide a return to the



—District Delegate Conference, St. Luke’s, Lemmon, S. Dak., May 2007—

Below: Teacher James Arndt & Pastor Peter Reim accompany the Wiechmann girls; Top: the girls violining classical!; Bottom: Dorena, Katelinn, father Jonathan, Mara, & Ethan; The children are home-schooled by their parents.

situation that existed in Moses’ day— education provided by the parents in the home. If parents are well-grounded in Scripture and knowledgeable in the required subject areas, they can provide a quality “God-centered” education for their children. Desired socialization of their children can be accomplished through the Sunday School and Youth Group programs of the local congregation.

It is imperative that Christian parents understand the responsibility that God has placed on their shoulders regarding the education of their children. Jesus says, “One thing is needed” (Lk. 10:42a). Children need to know and love their Savior God. He created them. He redeemed them. He has called them to be His own here in time and hereafter in eternity. May the Spirit of God move us to desire and then help us to provide truly “God-centered” education for our children, wherever they may be enrolled!

—Pastor Paul Nolting

(From the August 2006 Immanuel Home Messenger, Newsletter of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota—with the writer’s permission, adapted)





The Dumbing Down of Public Discourse

In any culture, the purpose of language is to communicate. Different cultures have their manner of speaking, phraseology or idiom, depending upon in what part of the country one lives.

Our interest here is not whether everyone should speak English, or at least be required to learn it if he is going to live in this country (unfortunately, the language is often fractured, even by those who speak English; we read horror stories of young adults coming out of high school and entering college who can hardly speak correct English, much less write it). If one listens carefully, one finds that newscasters and public officials occasionally fracture the language. Unfortunately also, language is frequently sacrificed upon the altar of political correctness. But like it or not, it communicates.

Language is important. Wars have been fought over what the official language of a nation should be. This too is a consequence of the sin of the citizens of Babel, when all the people spoke one language. In pride they thought there was nothing they couldn't do. They wanted to make a name for themselves lest they should be "scattered abroad over the face of the earth" (Gen. 11:4). So God confused their language that they could "not understand one another's speech" (v.7). Consequently, "the Lord scattered them over all the face of the earth" (v.9). Surely you have not missed the

irony of the whole thing!

But public discourse—the public verbalization of ideas, the communication of thoughts—is sinking deeper and deeper into the slime pits. Scripture warns against sins of the tongue. "The tongue is fire, a world of iniquity...it defiles the body" (Jam. 3:6). God makes His case against lies, deceit, gossip, slander, and defamation of character (8th Com.). These prevalent sins, certainly not new, are freely practiced in our society—have you listened to a politician recently?! [We leave that as well as the abuse of our Lord's name (2nd Com.) for another dissertation.]

We are speaking of the vulgarity that is so prevalent—certainly again not new—but spewed forth without any sense of shame. From our own backyards, to Hollywood, to the halls of congress, to the newsrooms, to the stage, music, literature, magazine racks, sitcoms, coffee conversations, the street—you name it—public discourse is sinking deeper and deeper into the lowest depth of the manure pit!

**"Out of the abundance
of the heart..."**

It is almost as though those who practice vulgarity can no longer express themselves without such language. Does this say something about their level of education? About their intelligence, or lack thereof? Are we

wrong to suggest that intelligent people should be able to express themselves without vulgarity?!

The problem is that there is no conscience toward God! Yes, we know all about the shock factor. We know about emotional outbursts. And yes, we know the argument which defends vulgar expressions on the basis of the right of free speech. But our speech and manner of speaking say something about us. Peter's speech—his accent—betrayed him. His accusers at Jesus' trial knew Peter was a Galilean (Mark 14:70).

Along the same lines, what does the vulgarity that flows so freely out of the mouth (our mouth?) say about supposedly Christian people, or about supposedly intelligent individuals—Christian or not—who have no shame about what they say, where they say it, and to whom?

Vulgar language also communicates. It communicates more than the point one is trying to make. It communicates the inner being. As a bucket filled to overflowing overflows, what is in the heart also overflows. Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt. 12:34). The overflow of vulgarity says that the heart from which it flows has no respect for God or for the neighbor. It suggests that the heart is a cesspool.

But someone may suggest that he is not even aware that he does it. Does

this mean that it has become so commonplace that one is no longer shocked by it, even when it comes off his own lips?

We have no illusions about changing the public discourse. Without a conscience bound by the Word of God, a change in discourse will not happen. As far as the abuse of public discourse is concerned, and of those who are the contributors to it, no better word can be given than that recorded by the Lord through Solomon, "Excellent speech is not becoming to a fool..." (Prov. 17:7).

Inasmuch as it is possible, we can try to avoid places where coarse vulgarity is commonplace and people whose mouths are full of vulgarity. We live in the world, but we need not be part of it. Where we ourselves have sinned in this regard, we will confess our sins and find comfort in the grace of God which cleanses us of all sin. We will pray for strength to guard our tongue.

For the Christian, it is more than lamenting the dumbing down of the language in public discourse. It is a matter of our responsibility to glorify our Lord in life, as well as in speech. Think on these words of the Psalmist, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer" (Ps. 19:14).

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer
Corpus Christi, Texas



West Central
Conference Pastors
& Delegates,
St. Luke's, Lemmon,
S. Dak.,
May 2007

Noting the 75th Anniversary of the "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the MISSOURI SYNOD" (1932-2007)

A Trumpet Which Gave—and Gives!—a Clear Sound
(See 1 Corinthians 14:8)

Brief Statement Of Good Works

Introductory Thoughts:

This is a short article—in contrast to treatment of the same subject in the Augsburg Confession, which demonstrated that this was a main issue at stake in the struggle to bring God's Word to the forefront, where it never had been in Roman Catholicism.

Satan ever uses the wrecking-bar of falsehood to attack the temple of God, for he knows that the Scriptural truth on "good works" lives or dies in partnership with God's truth on Justification, since on Jesus' merits alone (in contrast to any merits of human good works) rests the sinner's salvation. Jesus must remain the Lord of Life and salvation, while our status must remain His unworthy servants!

Why, then, is the adjective "good" used for the life and doings of the child of God? Because the doings and life of the child of God are God's creations insofar as they arise from the heart of faith and function out of love for Jesus.

This is simple enough in Scripture (and on paper), but in real life, dear Christians, we must be on guard that we do not begin to value our good deeds too highly! Indeed, if we find

ourselves mulling over how nicely we treat others or how devoted we are to spouse, children, church, or employer—the red flag should pop up that says, "You self-centered Pharisee! You are heaping affront on your Savior! Repent, you sinner!"

Here God is laying the truth about good works at our heart's doorstep.

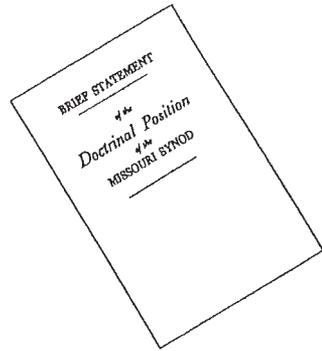
Brief Statement text [with comment]

Of Good Works

[We are speaking about Christian good works, of course, because God has no use at all for the deeds/works that come out of a heart that is still devoted to sin, self, and Satan. Thus we believe and teach:]

20. Before God *[whose view is the view that really counts]* **only those works are good which are done for the glory of God and the good of man** *[covering both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of God's will], according to the rule of the divine Law.* *[The true measuring stick of value is God's Law, not human notions.]* **Such works, however, no man performs unless he first** *[as birth*

precedes childhood, and as conversion precedes sanctification] **believes that God has forgiven him his sins and has given him eternal life by grace, [for Christ's sake, without any contribution of his own] Jn. 15:4-5** ("Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." NKJV). **We reject as a great folly the assertion, frequently made in our day [Lutherans can and do go off the track, too!] that good works must be placed in the fore, and "faith in dogmas"—meaning the Gospel of Christ crucified for the sins of the world—must be relegated to the rear. [Even if its proponents intend to say that deeds are more effective in the daily engagements of faith-living (as in mission outreach, perhaps) than creeds, we must still maintain the proper order of precedence.] Since good works never precede faith, but are always and in every instance the result of faith in the Gospel, it is evident that the only means by which we Christians can become rich in good works (and God would have us to be rich in good works, Titus 2:14) ["... who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." NKJV] is [for us redeemed sinners] **unceasingly to remember the grace of God which we have received in Christ, Rom. 12:1** ["I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is**



your reasonable service.”] 2 Cor. 8:9 ["For you know the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." This is an issue only with our unconverted nature, which tries to squirm away from the sharp points of the Law by self-congratulatory deeds of piety and uprightness. Our converted and godly nature, on the other hand, has no problem responding with warm appreciation and devoted love to the One who has rescued us from eternal damnation in hellfire and brought us into the family of our heavenly Father.] **Hence we reject as unchristian and foolish any attempt to produce good works by the compulsion of the Law or through carnal motives. [We might as well expect to harvest figs from Canada thistles or Concord grapes from thorn bushes— cf. Mt. 7:16 and Luke 7:49. At close of day, the child of God kneels before the Lord Jesus and from the heart confesses, "I am but Your unprofitable servant. Thank You for saving me and for allowing me to serve You one more day. I love You, too. Amen!"]**

—Paul R. Koch
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Paul Gerhardt - "A theologian sifted in Satan's sieve"

Above the place where Paul Gerhardt's remains lie is the inscription: "A theologian sifted in Satan's sieve." Gerhardt saw more than his share of difficulties in life. I believe that is why the hymns he penned are so timeless and meaningful.

Oh, enter, Lord, Thy temple,
Be Thou my spirit's Guest,
Who gavest me, the earth-born,
A second birth more blest.
Thou in the Godhead, Lord,
Though here to dwell Thou deignest,
Forever equal reignest,
Art equally adored. (TLH #228:1)

Paul Gerhardt was born March 12, 1607, in a small town not far from Wittenberg where Luther had lived and worked about a hundred years earlier. On January 2, 1628, he enrolled as a student at the University of Wittenberg, where he trained to be a Lutheran pastor. The entirety of his youth and early adulthood fell in the midst of the Thirty Years' War, which involved much if not all of Germany.

These were not easy years. When he got out of school, there were no calls available for Lutheran pastors. The best records tell us that Gerhardt remained in Wittenberg until about 1642-43. He spent the decade of the 1640s as a private tutor for the Andreas Barthold family in Berlin. Although money was tight, he survived. During this time Gerhardt formed a close friendship with a Berlin organist named Johann Crueger. Together they produced some of the greatest Lutheran chorales. In all Gerhardt wrote some 123 hymns, many of which are still used today.

I will sing my Maker's praises
And in Him most joyful be,
For in all things I see traces



Paul
Gerhardt

Of His tender love to me.
Nothing else than love could move Him
With such sweet and tender care
Evermore to raise and bear
All who try to serve and love Him.
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye. (TLH #25:1)

Finally, in 1651 (at the age of 45) Gerhardt was appointed as the chief pastor at Mittenwalde, near Berlin, during which time he married Anna Maria Barthold. The six years he spent there were relatively quiet—that is, at least until several of his hymns were published in 1653 in the *Berlin Hymn Book*. These hymns immediately attracted great attention and were quickly adopted into the hymn books of nearby Saxony and Brandenburg.

In 1657 Gerhardt was invited to be the pastor at the great church of St. Nicholas in Berlin, where his life was both busy and honorable. He worked successfully in his pastoral duties and wrote many hymns; he became the

favorite preacher in the city, with crowds flocking to hear him.

Oh, grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell but Thy pure love alone!
Oh, may Thy love possess me whole,
My Joy, my Treasure, and my Crown!
All coldness from my heart remove;
My every act, word, thought, be love.
(TLH #349:2)

Paul Gerhardt is described as a man of middle height, quiet but firm and cheerful. His preaching was said to be very earnest and persuasive, and full of Christian love—a trait he not only preached but also practiced. He never turned beggars away from his door; he received into his own house widows and orphans who needed help and shelter.

The disappointments Gerhardt faced during that Thirty Years' War didn't leave him embittered. Moreover, he was a very sensitive man; whenever faced with a question of conscience, he would go through great mental and spiritual anguish. Those few years at St. Nicholas' church in Berlin were no doubt the most enjoyable years of his life; but all too soon they came to an end in a most unfortunate way.

Commit whatever grieves thee
Into the gracious hands
Of Him who never leaves thee,
Who heaven and earth commands.
Who points the clouds thy courses,
Whom winds and waves obey,
He will direct thy footsteps
And find for thee a way. (TLH #520:1)

With the end of the Thirty Years' War, the philosophy of *cuius regio, eius religio* was embedded deeply in Germany. At that time, Prussia (the area around Berlin) was governed by Frederick William I. He knew that most of the people in his district were Lutherans, though he himself was Reformed (a follower of John Calvin).

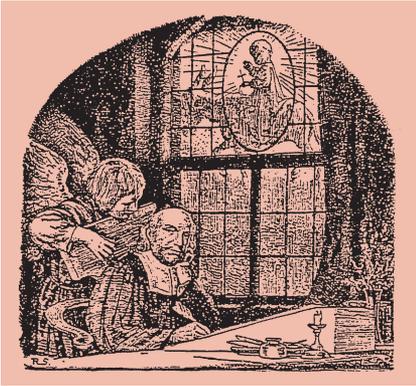
William set about to make peace between the two churches but met with little success. After two years the two churches found themselves even farther apart. Making matters worse, area Lutheran pastors not only preached against Calvinism but did so with scorn and bitterness.

Gerhardt was not like that. He was a sound, confessional Lutheran pastor, but his sermons were free from controversy—so much so that many Reformed folks attended his church, including some very influential nobility and leaders.

O Lord, I sing with lips and heart,
Joy of my soul, to Thee;
To earth Thy knowledge I impart
As it is known to me. (TLH #569: 1)

Gerhardt hoped for resolution at Lutheran/Reformed conferences. He diligently attended the meetings; in fact, he drew up most of the Lutheran defense statements. However, the Elector got tired of waiting, and in 1664 issued an edict which said that both Reformed and Lutheran pastors under his rule were to abstain from attacking each others' teachings. A year later an announcement was made that every Lutheran pastor was to sign a document saying that he would abide by the terms of the edict.

Many Lutheran clergy refused to sign the document, for they recognized that the document would keep them from preaching the "whole counsel of God" as the Bible directs. Paul Gerhardt was one of the first to refuse to sign; as a result, in 1666 he was deprived of his appointment as pastor at the church in Berlin. (When people flocked to his home to hear him speak, he was ordered not to speak there either!)



The world against me rageth,
 Its fury I disdain;
 Though bitter war it wageth,
 Its work is all in vain.
 My heart from care is free,
 No trouble troubles me.
 Misfortune now is play,
 And night is bright as day. (TLH #192:5)

A brief glimmer of hope came with the fact that the people of Berlin wanted their favorite pastor reinstated. The Elector allowed Gerhardt to resume preaching, but he did so relying on Gerhardt's well-known moderation to act in conformity to the edict. Gerhardt couldn't do this, and within two years someone else was appointed in his place.

Besides his ministry challenges, three of Gerhardt's five children had died in infancy, and now he lost one of his two remaining sons; soon afterwards his wife died also, leaving Gerhardt alone with his six-year-old son.

Though a heavy cross I'm bearing
 And my heart Feels the smart,
 Shall I be despairing?
 God, my Helper, who doth send it,
 Well doth know All my woe
 And how best to end it. (TLH #523:2)

Until his death in 1676, Gerhardt spent the rest of his life at a small parish in Saxony. These were again

years of sadness; his wife was gone, his remaining son suffered some serious illnesses, and the town in which he preached was made up of rough and half-educated people who subjected him to many annoyances.

A contemporary spoke of how Gerhardt wrote hymns "under circumstances which would have made most men cry rather than sing." Truly, the gift of song was his refuge and refreshment.

A pilgrim and a stranger,
 I journey here below;
 Far distant is my country,
 The home to which I go.
 Here I must toil and travail,
 Oft weary and opprest;
 But there my God shall lead me
 To everlasting rest. (TLH #586:1)

In this "theologian sifted in Satan's sieve," what a gift the Lord gave to His Church! His hymns reveal the simple yet deeply devout and courageous spirit of a Lutheran pastor—masterfully combining the solid, objective truths of God's Word with a very heartfelt, personal response to the love of God.

Surely we recognize many other beautiful hymns penned by this man—such as "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth," "Upon the Cross Extended," and "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded." Those hymns are sung among us regularly during Lent.

And at Vespers or at bedtime, what better words with which to close one's eyes than those of Paul Gerhardt's "Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow"?

Lord Jesus, who dost love me,
 Oh, spread Thy wings above me
 And shield me from alarm!
 Though evil would assail me,
 Thy mercy will not fail me:
 I rest in thy protecting arm. (TLH #554:5)

—Pastor Paul Krause
 Clarkston, Washington

Volume 50 Revisits Earlier Volumes

Volume 1, Number 1 (June, 1958)

Excerpts from the editorial "FOREWORD" on pages 1-2 of the first issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman*

FOREWORD: The policy and purpose of this new periodical which greets you at this time is summarized on the front cover. The name, LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN, indicates that it is our purpose to be a true daughter of the Reformation and to speak as Martin Luther did in his time.

With dozens of periodicals in existence which bear the name Lutheran in their mastheads, the question would appear in order, "Why another one? Are there not more than enough papers proclaiming the heritage of the Lutheran Reformation in America?"

Our answer is the reason for this new journal. Lutheranism has fallen on evil days. One Lutheran body after another has lost its confessional character or is in the process of losing it.

...But we would not be Lutheran Spokesmen in the sense of simply reiterating all that Luther taught in an unquestioning way. True Lutheranism is depicted in the illustration and motto (*on the cover opposite-ed.*). Luther was not his own

spokesman, but a spokesman for the Word. He had to speak, because Scripture cannot be broken. And that, pray God, will be our policy. "It is written," and we cannot add or subtract from that message, but proclaim the whole counsel of God. Even among the more conservative elements of Lutheranism in America, the ugly "doubt theology" has entered in. "One cannot be sure." "This is my opinion."

There are two sides to it." "Each one must follow his conscience."

We believe that Scripture is clear and sufficient. We believe that Scripture not only reveals what we are to believe, but with equal clarity reveals false teaching and error. On the basis of that clear word, it will be our purpose and policy to feed God's flock, to protect them from false teaching, to attack when necessary all teachings and practices which are not in accord with the Word, for Scripture cannot be broken. "We now implore God the Holy Ghost."

(Rev. Winfred Schaller, Jr., 1922-1983, first editor)



"THE SCRIPTURE
CANNOT
BE BROKEN."

John 10:35



Hello (& Goodbye?) to Dusty Old Files or...

The Golden Jubilee of the Lutheran Spokesman

Careful observers may have noted the one-liner which has been appearing on the bottom of the cover-page for Volume 50 issues. The line “Celebrating Fifty Years of Speaking God’s Word of Truth” first appeared at the bottom of our July 2007 cover. Yes, with the current volume the Lutheran Spokesman, by the grace of God, is observing a half-century of existence.

... On the Production Side

What a fifty years it has been—first on the production side! What changes have been witnessed by some who were not only alive but even present when the *Spokesman* was first born! The first issue of the magazine was typed on a “stencil” and then “run off” on a “mimeograph machine” in the basement of Redeemer church, Cheyenne, Wyoming, where the first editor (Pastor Winfred Schaller Jr.) served in the ministry (the current editor now pastors at Redeemer). A few current Redeemer members still recall helping with collating and mailing those first issues.

Allow a bit more history. During its first two years of publication, the *Spokesman* was a bi-monthly periodical (subscription price \$1.00 per year); beginning in June, 1960, the magazine was published monthly and the price increased to \$2.00 annually. It was at the organizational Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, (January, 1961) that the magazine was first designated as the official organ of the synod (retroactive to Volume 1, No.

1). From that point on, all official announcements and notices were to be printed in the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

Jumping fast ahead fifty years—we literally blew the dust off the covers of archived Volume-50 issues of the *Spokesman*. Dust-blowing may not need to occur in the future inasmuch as recent volumes (and even the earliest ones) will likely soon be archived on CD’s.

Beyond that, we are forced to ask: how much longer shall the *Spokesman* continue? The answer depends for one thing on some things out of our control, such as increasing snail-mail postal rates and production costs. With the advent of the computer/internet—which in many ways makes for easier and less expensive accessibility—is the day coming when the production of a “hard copy” magazine with a comparatively small list of supporters/subscribers is no longer financially feasible?

We hope not and we doubt it. Since the *Spokesman* remains an official organ of the CLC, and since not everyone has—or even desires?—internet capability, we expect the church body will do everything it can to see that

hard-copy issues arrive regularly into our churches and homes.

... On the Spiritual Side

What a fifty years it has been—secondly and more importantly—on the “spiritual” or “church” side of things!

In connection with his explaining reasons for launching the magazine, in its first issue the first editor remarked, “Lutheranism has fallen on evil days”; and this was added: “One Lutheran body after another has lost its confessional character or is in the process of losing it...” (see the accompanying “June 1958” editorial). Dear reader, don’t those comments—and the rest of the editorial as well—apply just as well to the Lutheran church in our day?!

On the one hand, we trust that regular readers of the *Spokesman* can attest to the fact that “We [still] believe that Scripture is clear and sufficient. We [still] believe that Scripture not only

reveals what we are to believe, but with equal clarity reveals false teaching and error...” (afore-mentioned editorial).

On the other hand, if biblical confessionalism was on the wane a half century ago, the leaven of false doctrine has continued its not-so-subtle working, and the downhill slide continues apace! A most glaring example of this is, in our opinion, the slippery slope which the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS) continues on today.

The *Lutheran Spokesman* has been noting, and giving perspectives on, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the *Brief Statement* of the LC-MS (1932-2007). What concise, classic statements of biblical doctrine are found in that confessional document! But the orthodox Lutheran forefathers who authored the *Brief Statement* would hardly recognize—nor, we are convinced, would they desire to be part of—“Missouri” today. As has been noted in *Spokesman*

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE LUTHERAN WITNESS

*Fifty years of witness-bearing,
Fearing neither gain nor loss,
Rallying the Christian soldiers
Round the banner of the cross.*

*Fifty years of firm contending
For the everlasting truth.
For the faith to man delivered
Once for all, to sage and youth.*

*Fifty years of faithful watching
Lest Mount Zion’s rich estates
Fall into the hands of foemen
Who approach her walls and gates.*

*Fifty years of ceaseless labor
To provide the Bread of Life*

*For the countless souls who hunger
In this world of stress and strife.*

*Fifty years of constant sowing,
Sowing oft with sighs and tears,
Waiting for the Master’s blessing
Till the harvest joy appears.*

*Fifty years of blessed progress!
Onward till thy course is run,
Till the Savior at His coming
Deigns to say to thee, “Well done!”*

—A poem by W. M. Czamanske, as contained in the January 5, 1932, issue of *The Lutheran Witness*, official magazine of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (submitted by Pastor Arthur Schulz).

articles over the years, the LC-MS, once a beacon of God’s Word of truth and biblical confessionalism, has consistently been selling her once staunch confessional heritage for a mess of doctrinal unionism and spineless ecumenical pottage. *(Item: LC-MS District President Benke contends that “the Muslim God is also the true God”; he remains in good standing today, even though he worshipped and prayed together with Jews, Moslems, Roman Catholics etc. in a post 9/11 service in Yankee Stadium.)*

See the accompanying poem entitled: “Golden Jubilee of *The Lutheran Witness*” (*The Lutheran Witness* was and remains a periodical and “official organ” of the LC-MS). Note the date of the poem—written the very year the *Brief Statement* appeared! In spite of the poem’s closing verse, the doctrinal state of affairs in Missouri 75 years later hardly calls for the Savior’s “Well done!” *(Item: At its July synod Convention in Houston, LC-MS President Gerald Kieschnick was re-elected with a 52% majority, called “one of the closest elections in the synod’s history.” According to synod conservatives, the election was rigged with political maneuverings; also, we read that Kieschnick—who “absolved” Benke for his Yankee Stadium partici-*



Editor Fleischer, Assistant editor Koch

ation—endorses liberals, moderates, charismatics, evolutionists, and women pastors; the synod is truly a divided church.)

We write these things not with joy or to boast—God forbid and God have mercy! Rather, during this golden jubilee year of the *Lutheran Spokesman* we write to implore the continuing prayers of you, our readers, that our little magazine—and our small CLC synod—may go forward speaking to the current generation God’s inerrant and unchanging Word of truth. “On the basis of that clear word, it will be our purpose and policy to feed God’s flock, to protect them from false teaching, to attack when necessary all teaching and practices which are not in accord with the Word, for Scripture cannot be broken. ‘We now implore God the Holy Ghost’...” (conclusion to aforementioned editorial).

—Pastor Paul Fleischer



At last Spring’s ILC graduation ceremony, Bd. of Regents Chairman, Pastor Theodore Barthels, extending best wishes and plaque to retiring Prof. Ronald Roehl for his 47 years of service to the school

Pastor Norbert Reim

January 10, 1918 — June 27, 2007

The Rev. Norbert Reim was among those who were called to pastoral ministry in the very earliest period of CLC formation. He was actively engaged in this service from January 1, 1961 until February, 2002.

After 89-plus years of life, love of the Savior, and gospel ministry, he committed his spirit to the hands of the heavenly Father. Though weakened in his last days, there was enough mental clarity to hear gospel assurances and respond with audible “Hallelujahs!”—much to the joy of those who stood at his side.

Reim is survived by his wife, Celeste; daughters Nancy Miller, Patricia Dick, Kathleen Dreyer, Peggy Kesterson, Gloria Wilke, and son David Reim; their children and grandchildren; a sister, Jeanette Zemlock, and a brother, Rollin Reim.

At the Memorial Service conducted by Pastor Steven Karp, the following life story was offered by devoted family (adapted—ed.):

“HALLELUJAH! PRAISE THE LORD”—That is what Norbert Reim is saying right now; he considered it a great privilege to serve God by proclaiming the good news of salvation through Jesus to the lost souls of the world. Now he is enjoying that salvation firsthand. We all join him in eagerly awaiting the resurrection of the body and the full glory of life with God in heaven.

We give this brief summary of Norbert’s life as evidence of the grace of God who chose Norbert to serve in His kingdom. Hallelujah!



Norbert Hans Reim was born in Kenosha, Wisconsin, to Edmund and Selma Reim on January 10, 1918. He was born into God’s Family through baptism on January 27, 1918, at St. Luke’s Ev. Lutheran Church in Kenosha. He was taught by his parents from early on to love the Lord. Norbert was confirmed in the faith on March 29, 1931, at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Forest, Wisconsin. The text for his confirmation was “For you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20).

Norbert was eager to “glorify God in [his] body and in [his] spirit,” and so entered the seminary in Thiensville, Wisconsin, graduating in 1942. Out of seminary, Norbert filled in during a pastor’s leave of absence in the joint parish of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Slinger and Cedar Lake, Wis. From October 4, 1942 to February 13, 1944. The Lord then called him to St. Paul’s in Dale, Wisconsin, where he served until June 3, 1945.

A day of rejoicing! On March 12, 1945, Norbert received the call to be a missionary in Nigeria. He danced around the room with joy and praise to

- Jesus' Teaching and Preaching Methods—
Pastor Michael Schierenbeck
- The Strength of the Gospel for Daily Life—
Pastor Paul Tiefel
- Upholding the Will of the Majority While not
Disrespecting the Minority in Congregational
Life—Pastor Walter Schaller
- The Concept of Offense in 1 Corinthians 8 &
10 and Application of “meat offered to idols”
in our Present Society—Prof. John Ude
- New Testament Exegesis: Romans 2:17ff—
Pastor Michael Eichstadt
- Old Testament Exegesis: Daniel 2—Pastor
Thomas Schuetze
—*Pastor Mark Gullerud, reporter*

South-East Pastoral Conference
Winter Haven, Florida
October 9-11, 2007

Agenda:

- New Testament Exegesis: Colossians 3:5ff—
Pastor Luke Bernthal
- Old Testament Exegesis: Genesis 1:20-23—
Pastor Roland Gurgel
- Isagogical study of Zephaniah—Pastor
Dennis Rieken
- The significance of Christian burial in the light
of the increasing practice of cremation—
Pastor Karl Stewart
- How do we maintain a truly relevant church for
the next generation?—Pastor Nathanael
Mayhew
- Word study of “nomos” in the New Testament
and its different uses—Glenn Oster
- Practical guidelines for participating in religi-
ous online forums/newspaper articles in light
of 2 Timothy 2:23, Titus 3:9 etc.—Pastor
Daniel Fleischer
- What are our “Twelve stones” and how do we
keep these before our children and visitors?—
Pastor Paul Larsen
- Continuation of “The Role of Men in the Home,
Church, and Society”—Pastor Vance Fossum
- Word study on the Greek word “hades” in the
New Testament—Pastor Todd Ohlmann
Chaplain—Pastor John Schierenbeck
Preacher—Pastor Matthew Hanel

—*Pastor Nathanael Mayhew, Secretary*

Minnesota Pastoral Conference
October 9-10, 2007
Mount Olive Lutheran Church
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

Agenda:

- Old Testament Exegesis: Isaiah 51:1-8—Pastor
James Albrecht
- New Testament Exegesis: 1 Timothy 1:12-
17—Pastor Theodore Barthels

- Isagogical Study of Ezekiel—Pastor Rick
Grams
- Changes in Doctrine and Practice which
appear to have changed in Lutheranism—Prof.
Em. David Lau
- An Evaluation of the Use of Extra-Biblical
Evidence in making “The Case for
Christianity”—Pastor John Hein
- Strengths and Weaknesses of “Confessional”
Lutheran Hymnals—Pastors Wayne Eichstadt,
Norman Greve, Paul Nolting
- The Use of Non-CLC Christian Schools—
Pastor David Schierenbeck
- Book Review: The Christian Counselor’s
Manual by Jay Adams—Pastor Bruce
Naumann
- Book Review on Homiletics: *Let’s Illustrate* by
Eldon Weisheit—Pastor John M. Johannes
Chaplain: Pastor Paul Nolting

—*Pastor Rick Grams, Secretary*

Ordination/Installation

In accord with our usage and order, Immanuel Lutheran Seminary graduate, Neal Radichel, who was called as pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Mountain View, California, was ordained and installed on July 29, 2007. Also participating in the service were Pastors Rollin Reim and Wayne Eichstadt, Prof. John Reim, and Mrs. Philip Radichel, Ben Wright, Michael Slattengren, Jan Messerschmidt, and Jeff Karnitz. Pastor Eichstadt was the speaker.

—*Pastor James Sandeen*

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