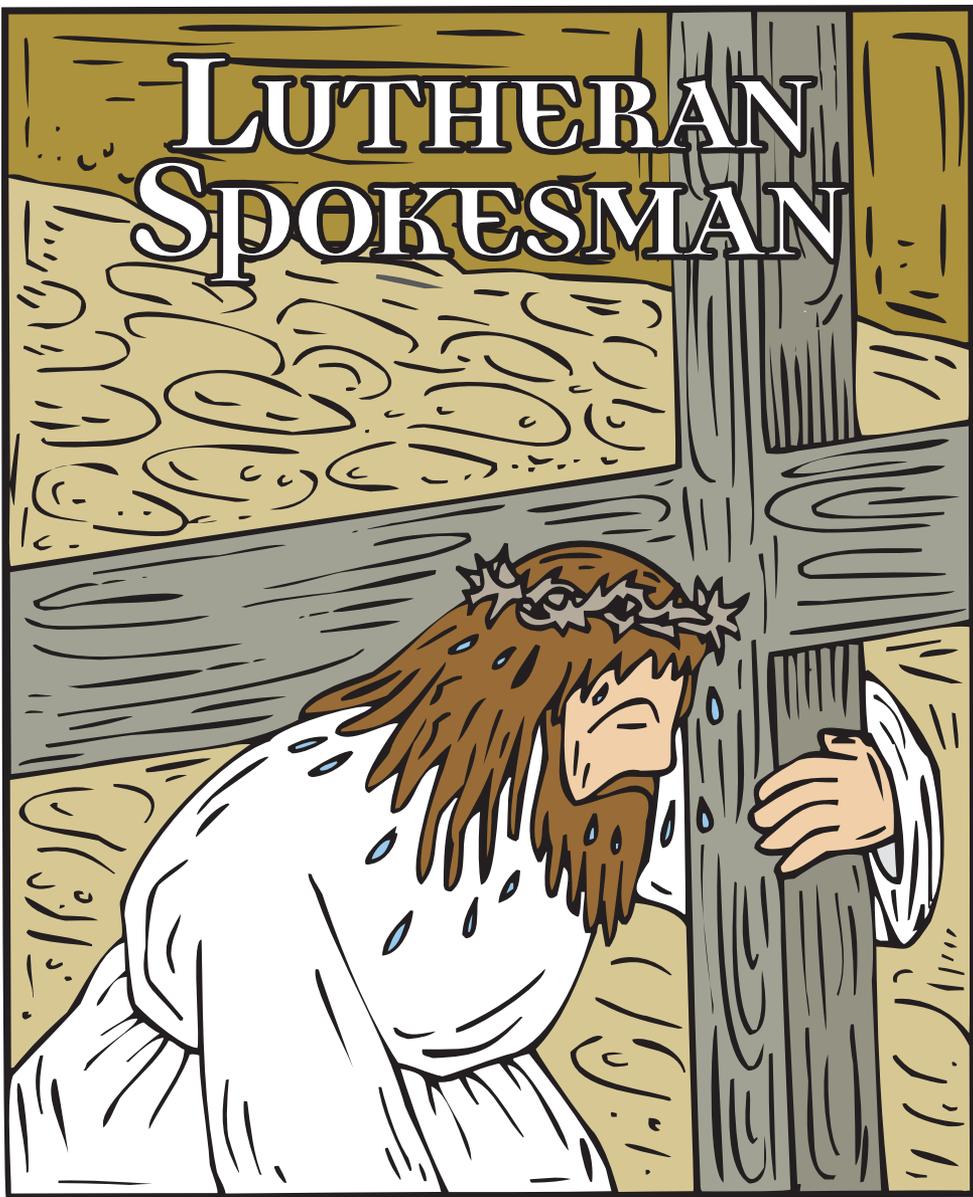


LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



MARCH 2010, VOL. 52 NO. 9



The Season of Lent . . .

It's About Bridge Building

The season of Lent is in full swing, having begun on Ash Wednesday. It will continue until Holy Saturday, the day before Easter.

What is the significance of the Lenten season? Why have many churches adopted the custom of holding special weekday services during this time?

Lent serves as a helpful transition between the seasons of Epiphany and Easter.

During the forty days of Lent we take time to consider questions such as: Why was it important for God's Son to come to our world and make Himself known? Why did He need to live a life of lowliness as our Servant—to suffer, die, and be raised again on the third day?

During Lent we reflect on Scriptures which show that by nature we are outcasts from God's family. Our transgressions against His holy will cut us off from Him. They are like a gigantic chasm situated between us and Him, which prevents us from drawing near.

Just as impossible as it is for a person to jump from the south rim of the Grand Canyon over to the north side, so impossible it is for us to jump from the "death side" of our sinfulness

over to the "life side" of our holy and righteous God. If He had left us to fend for ourselves spiritually, we could enjoy no relationship of love with Him in this life nor look forward to living with Him in the perfect life of heaven hereafter. Somehow that vast chasm of our sin, with its terrible consequence of death, needed to be bridged over.

During Lent we remember how our God accomplished this miraculous feat. In love He sent His Son to construct a bridge over the sin-chasm. He had Jesus live the sinless life we can't live and lay down that life on the cross—the Innocent for the guilty!—to atone for all our missteps against His Law.

The cross of Christ has become the bridge over which we sinners may freely pass from our "death side" over to our God's "life side." In the words of Jesus: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24).

Thank You, heavenly Father, for revealing the truth of who Jesus is and why He came to Earth. Lead us to make profitable use of the Lenten season by

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thinking of our sins, repenting of them, and looking with eyes of faith to the promise of Your mercy and forgiveness in the Savior. Keep us by Your grace in

this blessed state of joy and faith for His sake. Amen.

—Pastor Thomas Schuetze
Coloma, Michigan



Good Friday

He Gives His Life

There are many names and titles which are given to our Savior in the Bible: the Seed of the Woman, the Prophet, the Servant of the LORD, the LORD our Righteousness, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and End, and many, many more.

But of all the titles and descriptions of Jesus given in Scripture, perhaps the one which is dearest to the heart of the Christian is that of the Good Shepherd.

This picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd comes to a climax in Jesus' words recorded for us in the tenth chapter of John (it is also quite possibly the most common of all the pictures of Christ used in Scripture).

Think of all the ways Scripture has described Christ as the Good Shepherd:

- + He watches over the flock;
- + He bears untold hardships;
- + He stands guard against robbers and wolves by day and night;
- + He leaves the ninety-nine to search out the one who has gone astray;
- + He leads us to still waters and green pastures; and finally
- + He even gives His own life to save the sheep from death.

While there are many different features of this picture presented in Scripture, here we will consider the final of these: "The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:11).

Jesus presents a picture of Himself which is a contrast to those who claim to



be shepherds, leaders of the people, but they offer nothing but a dream. Christ's sheep also know Him as their one and only Shepherd. They do not trust the substitute, but trust only in Jesus, the Good Shepherd, for their safety.

We depend only on Him for our full salvation. We depend on Him to have fulfilled the Law of God perfectly for us through His perfect life on this Earth. When we realize that we cannot fulfill it ourselves, we can rest totally on Him, for He has fulfilled it for us. We depend on Him to have made full atonement for our sin—to have made the payment to satisfy God's punishment for our sins.

Our Shepherd made that sacrifice for us by giving up Himself as the sacrifice for our sins. He gave up His life to redeem us. He came to die on the cross and to rise again the third day. His death was the necessary sacrifice for our sins, and His resurrection was the evidence that God the Father accepted that sacrifice—the proof that all had been accomplished.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and as the Good Shepherd He gives His life for the sheep!

This is an important reminder as we celebrate Good Friday this year. It's important to be reminded of why Christ had to die on the cross. God sent His Son Jesus because of His love for us and because, without the cross, we were headed to hell.

As our Good Shepherd, Jesus gave His life for sinners—sinners like you and me! Through His life and through His death we have been saved, delivered, from eternal death.

Thanks be to our Savior, our Good Shepherd, that He willingly went to the cross to die for us, His sheep!

*Thou hast suffered great affliction
And hast borne it patiently,
Even death by crucifixion,
Fully to atone for me;*

*Thou didst choose to be tormented
That my doom should be prevented.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus unto Thee. Amen.*

(TLH #151:6)

*—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
Atlanta (Lawrenceville), Georgia*



Holy Baptism

The Circumcision Made Without Hands

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead” (Col. 2:11-12).

God had established a covenant of grace with Abraham and had given a promise to him and his Seed. That promise was to bless Abraham and make of him and his Seed a great nation. That Seed was also the One who would make this promise a reality.

Sometime later God gave Abraham a sign of the covenant. Every male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life. That circumcision was a physical sign and reminder to every Israelite male that he belonged to the chosen people of God. He was an heir of the promise given to Abraham and his Seed.

The cutting off of the foreskin also symbolized the cutting away of the sinful flesh so that one could live as God's holy child.

However, cutting off a piece of skin could not actually get rid of sinful human nature. Moses saw the need for a much deeper surgery. He urged the people of

ANNIVERSARY HISTORICAL FACT:

The 1974 convention was informed that the Church of the Lutheran Confession in Japan no longer needed subsidy, and that they decided to call an assistant to Pastor Fred Tiefel.

Israel who had been circumcised in the flesh to also “circumcise the foreskin of your heart and be stiff-necked no longer” (Deut. 10:16).

We too need our hearts changed, not just having some skin removed. We need to have sin and the love of it cut away from our hearts so that we can live as God’s children.

A Deeper Circumcision

In the Scripture verses above, Paul shows us that we have received this deeper circumcision of the heart. It is the “circumcision made without hands.” Jesus Christ has worked this circumcision in us. He has cut off “the body of the sins of the flesh.” He has totally removed our sin from us forever. Not only that, He has given us a new heart and a new nature that loves God and desires nothing but His righteousness.

When and how did each of us receive this “circumcision of Christ”? Paul tells us in v. 12 that we were “buried with Him in baptism.” When we were baptized we were buried with Christ—that is, our old self with all its sin and our corrupt heart were crucified and buried in the tomb with Christ. At the same time, through the same baptism, a new person which is holy and righteous was raised up with

Christ.

That is truly a circumcision made without hands. It is done entirely by God through Jesus Christ. Through the sacrament of Holy Baptism God has done this work in our hearts and given or confirmed in us the true faith in His Son. You and I are now a part of that great nation that was promised to the Seed of Abraham—it is a holy nation of God’s own special people! (1 Peter 2:9)

When we are tempted with sin, let us remember who we are. We are children of God and part of Christ’s holy nation. The body of sin has been removed. We have been raised with Christ to live in holiness.

As St. Paul says in Romans 6:11-14, “Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

—Pastor David Reim
Vernon (BC), Canada



Studies in First Timothy

“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work” (1 Tim. 3:1)

CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY!

Chapter 6:11–16

I have to be careful how I say this, but this January we heard some cute poetry about certain people living somewhere north of the 38th parallel who couldn’t

come south because their feet were frozen to the ground!

On the serious side, many do not want to come south anyway. As one man e-mailed me, “We choose to live up here.”

I know many people who love the North year around. (Sometimes during Arizona summers we feel that our feet are fried to the ground—I suppose you could say that we love that—ouch!)

But on a more serious note, Martin Luther’s feet were stuck to the ground, too. He said so in effect back in 1517: “My conscience is captive to the Word of God. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen!” He was saying that he was stuck, that he couldn’t help it, and that he was not going to budge or move away from that position.

He just had to say so, and he said so in very measured words.

Luther’s ground, as ours today, is the Word written down for our everlasting safety—Jesus Christ’s grace and forgiveness being at its very heart. We are stuck there, and by God’s Spirit we have come to love it.

Most people in the world have nowhere solid to stand—stuck in the idolatry and lust of broken commandments. Imagine the Ten Commandments to be like a room where the devil has convinced us to kick in the front door, knock out the back door, and break all the windows. The polluted air of hell seeps in. All that’s left to breathe in is deadly poison, and to grope around in the dark on wood splinters and broken glass.

This is evident in the discontent, temptations, money-love, foolish and hurtful desires, greed, love of things and pleasure, and idolatry that are choking people all around us.

And the real problem is they think they can rectify the situation all by themselves! Dream on.

Standing on Biblical Ground!

When you hold your Scriptural ground, you can stand and fight off the things mentioned just above. The marvelous thing is that when you stand on Biblical ground, you are given the ability to conquer the things that destroy faith and godly living. The very weapon



Colored window from the nave of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Denver (Lakewood), Colo.

that protects you is Scripture itself. That is why you have your Bible (in case you’ve forgotten). Read that Book!

Read Galatians 5 and Ephesians 6, for instance: “Stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free!”...“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...that you may be able to withstand... and...to stand...Stand therefore...having shod your feet...”

Ah, yes, the feet. Paul was very familiar with Roman soldiers and their armor. Their bodies were armed on the front, and their heavy, strapped-on shin-guarding sandals had long, sharp hobnails which slanted backwards so as to hold ground. Turning around or retreating was not part of their military vocabulary.

Jesus has called you, placing your feet firmly in the direction of heaven. The Scriptures transport you there as if on an escalator. Already you lay hold on eternal life. You cannot help but demonstrate the gifts of an upright and godly life, faith and love, patience and meekness.

Jesus stood His ground at His trials, fulfilling and professing that Messianic

life which the Scriptures portrayed of Him. He did not retreat. He was careful in what He said, faithful to the written Word.

Timothy made a good profession of faith before many witnesses, basing it on the things pertaining to Christ. In our text Paul urges him not to retreat but to “keep this commandment,” which means to hold onto the entire Christian religion—all of Christian doctrine.

Be thankful to God that you do not

have to invent a profession. It has been given to you. You don’t have to be careful to choose words that you devise— just be careful to speak and explain the Bible passages you have learned and known for years—in Bible, Catechism, Hymnal, Creeds!

Don’t back down. Pray that you, your congregation, and your pastor are careful to remain faithful to the Scriptures.

—*Pastor Em. Warren Fanning
Sun City, Arizona*



Portraits of Christ *from the Gospel of John*

Chapter Nine

Jesus, the Light of the World

What an amazing day it was for that man! He had never been able to see a thing before—never! For his whole life he had been locked away in the darkness of physical blindness. He had been “blind from birth” (9:1).

That all changed when “a man named Jesus” (v. 11) told him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (v. 7). He who had been blind came back able to see! How he must have soaked in all the sights that had up until this time been known to him mostly as sounds—the people who did the talking, the door that did the creaking, the crows that did the cackling.

Jesus had brought light into this man’s physical world!

His arrival at home brought no small stir. Some couldn’t believe that this was the same man that had been blind! “He is like him” (v. 9). Rather quickly the whole scenario was brought to the attention of leaders among the Jews, the Pharisees.

When they learned that Jesus was involved, everything became suspect. They questioned the man’s honesty—whether he really had been born blind.

Chapter By Chapter “Portraits of Christ” in John’s Gospel:

- Ch. 1 — *The Son of God*
- Ch. 2 — *The Son of Man*
- Ch. 3 — *The Divine Teacher*
- Ch. 4 — *The Soul-Winner*
- Ch. 5 — *The Great Physician*
- Ch. 6 — *The Bread of Life*
- Ch. 7 — *The Water of Life*
- Ch. 8 — *The Defender of the Weak*
- Ch. 9 — *The Light of the World*
- Ch. 10 — *The Good Shepherd*
- Ch. 11 — *The Prince of Life*
- Ch. 12 — *The King*
- Ch. 13 — *The Servant*
- Ch. 14 — *The Consoler*
- Ch. 15 — *The True Vine*
- Ch. 16 — *The Giver of the Holy Spirit*
- Ch. 17 — *The Great Intercessor*
- Ch. 18 — *The Model Sufferer*
- Ch. 19 — *The Uplifted Savior*
- Ch. 20 — *The Conqueror of Death*
- Ch. 21 — *The Restorer of the Penitent*

His parents gave witness that he truly had been blind (v. 20). They raised doubts about Jesus being “from God”

(v. 16) because both He and this man were involved in doing “work” which was frowned upon, for “it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes” (v. 14). They further demanded that this man “give God the glory” for they claimed to know that “this Man was a sinner” (v. 24).

These Pharisees wanted the truth of the matter—when it was staring them right in the face! This irony was not lost on this once-blind man. When he was grilled again concerning how he had been healed by Jesus, he responded, “I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?” (v. 27)

By the time our account is finished, this once-blind man found himself “cast out of the synagogue” (9:34). It was all because the “Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue” (v. 22).

“Seeing” Even More!

Jesus found the man soon thereafter and brought him to see even more. When the man asked, “Who is [Jesus, the Son of God] that I may believe in Him?” Jesus responded, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking to you” (v. 39)

This man had not just been healed of his physical blindness that day; he was also given true spiritual sight through the One who Himself is “the Light of the world” (v. 5).

And that is exactly what Jesus had come into the world to do! He had come to give—indeed, to be—Light. He had come to remove the darkness of sin and

unbelief in which this world had been lost since the Fall. He had come to reveal in Himself God’s plan of salvation that “if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation [the satisfactory sacrifice] for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (1 Jn. 2:1-2).

That once-blind man was indeed enlightened: “Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him” (v. 38) It is of him and others like him that Jesus said, “those who do not see may see.”

Jesus, the Light of the world, had shined in his heart! We too by faith have come to see the Light and believe the wonders of who He is and what God has done for us in Him.

Of the Pharisees and others like them Jesus said, “those who see may be made blind” (v. 39) In their unbelieving blindness, they could not “see” the One standing before them—the One who had come as a Light for them that they too might see and believe.

It was God’s intent that this man’s blindness would be “so that the works of God should be revealed in him” (v. 3). May our God so move us to continue studying His Word, making it a part of our own lives so that His Light would continually be revealed also through us!

*Thou who didst come to bring,
On Thy redeeming wing,
Healing and sight,
Health to the sick in mind,
Sight to the in-ly blind,
Oh, now to all mankind
Let there be light!* (TLH #508:2)

—**Pastor Paul Krause**
Markesan, Wisconsin



ANNIVERSARY HISTORICAL FACT:

The 1976 convention heard the sad report that the “cherished” fellowship with the church in Japan was disturbed by differences that eventually led to severance of fellowship with the JCLC.



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You already know the long epic into which Genesis chapter 41 is embedded: it’s the gospel epic that God Jehovah reached down into the human race and picked up Abraham to be His special person to carry forward His grand plans that began in Eden—the epic whose climactic chapters would take shape in the land of Judea centuries later.

This is one of the earlier chapters in the longer epic. Scenario: after allowing Joseph to languish more than seven hundred days and nights in a dungeon, God orchestrated events so as to elevate Joseph to the top, right into the palace of the emperor, to whom God had given a duet of nightmares.

Pharaoh’s nightmares featured bovine cannibalism and plant cannibalism, so naturally he was scared—and when his best dream—interpreters were stymied, God moved His finger. He touched the bakery tsar’s memory button about the young Hebrew convict who possessed the heavenly gift of interpreting dreams—and that got Pharaoh to whisk Joseph out of the dungeon into the royal presence.

Pharaoh sat quietly through Joseph’s introduction—that God was responsible for the dreams and for the gift of divination: “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace” (v. 16); and “God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do” (v. 28)—but the king was properly jolted with the thunder-clap revelation: “The thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass” (v. 32).

Therein lies the longer story—that God presides over His planet for His own purpose to advance His kingdom of grace and mercy to fallen sinners.

Recap: God notified this heathen emperor that He as Planet-Preserver

intended to manipulate the weather patterns of the Mediterranean world over the next fourteen years. In Phase #1 God will tweak climate and agriculture factors to provide bumper crops for a cycle of seven years, and then in Phase #2 He will create seven years of farm disasters.

How can this be? Dear reader, it’s no problem at all for a God who controls time and space (with its every atom and star nebula) to modulate weather patterns in North Africa for fourteen years—first to bless and then to humble a proud country.

Would Pharaoh heed God’s message and follow His directives? Apparently that’s how it went, for the king took Joseph’s advice to heart and appointed him as Egypt’s first Secretary of the Interior as tsar of agriculture, then Secretary of State to manage and administrate a national program for preserving Egypt-land.

What did God have in mind? God was simply using Pharaoh as His instrument for preserving His people to carry Abraham’s progeny down the conveyor belt of history toward Bethlehem of Judea! Our heavenly Father was orchestrating our salvation!

God Was At Work!

It worked out well for Joseph too; he ruled in the palace and in the nation (second only to Pharaoh), got the royal signet ring, the second-best royal chariot, a new royal name, and the daughter of a ranking clergyman for a new wife (40-45).

Then he went to work nationalizing the agriculture industry during the seven years of bumper crops. As Egypt

prospered, so did Joseph. When he fathered Manasseh and Ephraim (two of the twelve tribes of Israel!) he knew what was going on: “God has made me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction” (vv. 46-52).

As the drought and famine years followed, Joseph nationalized Egypt’s entire economy, and Egypt became rich on an international scale.

That’s how God works in His mercy to make all things work together for good for His children (Romans 8:28). “Work together” is a wonderful expression for the on-going miracle that God is the One who blueprints every event and all human factors so that they mesh together for the smooth progress of His great engine of salvation!

Note well the other saving aspects in this chapter of the annals of salvation: God rescued Joseph from being a throw-away by his brothers; God did not let his years in the federal pen become wasted years, and God impressed Pharaoh that he was facing the true and living God. We know Him as our divine Monarch, who manipulates social ills and economic stresses so as to serve the advancement of His heavenly Kingdom. And all along the way He gives grace to His individual children to weather their afflictions suffered for His name’s sake.

We are more enlightened than Pharaoh, for we have been given to know God’s love and mercy from His own Son, who willingly went into bondage, prison, and humiliation for our sakes—then to be raised again to pre-eminent greatness and glory in the mansions of His heavenly Father.

In this way Joseph with his experiences serves as a shadow/prefiguration of Jesus; Joseph is a sample which gives us an idea of what the real thing is to be. The real thing casting the shadow is Christ, as we learn from Colossians 2:17. Thus we read Genesis 41 with this in mind: here’s a long chapter in the life of a special child of God, portraying experiences that parallel the experiences of Jesus in the much longer annals of salvation.

Let us apply ourselves to the wisdom that comes from above, revealing to our wondering minds and hearts: “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Ph. 2:9-11).

Hallelujah!

—Paul R. Koch
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Middleton Church takes part in a Parade



Pastor Mark Bernthal reported that Peace Thru Christ Lutheran Church, Madison (Middleton), Wisc., took part in the city’s Good Neighbor Parade last August. The theme for all floats was to be “A Blast from the Past.” Their float, which took second place, told the gospel story of the GREATEST blast from the past!



A Christian Perspective on . . .

THE HAITIAN EARTHQUAKE

Television program preacher Pat Robertson (“The 700 Club”) has been widely criticized for his comments about the earthquake. According to a local Op-Ed piece, Robertson explained that when Haiti was a French colony, rebels “swore a pact with the devil,” saying, “We will serve you if you will get us free from the French. And so the devil said, ‘OK, it’s a deal.’” Ever since, according to Robertson, “they (Haitians) have been cursed by one thing after the other.” Robertson, we’re told, was referring to a Voodoo ceremony in 1791 that some historians believe sparked their revolution.

We will hardly defend such a comment by someone purporting to speak for the Christian community. We will not defend such a comment because it is too narrow in scope, linking a given disaster with a specific sin. Making that link puts one in the area of playing God who alone knows when and why He allows preliminary judgments to happen on and in and to the Earth He created, and over which He continues to have sovereign power and control. Lest we be presumed by our hearers to stand in the place of God by blaming the victims, it is far better for us to teach what is indeed the broader and all-encompassing truth, namely, that it is sin in general and mankind’s fallen condition in a fallen world that at times makes victims of us all, Christians or non-Christians. (How many Christians died in the terrorist attacks of 9/11 or, for that matter, in the Haitian earthquake?)

Remember, the Bible does teach that it was the Lord who allowed Satan to test one of His children, Job, under an “earthquake of troubles,” yes, to within an inch of his very life. Yet again, in any specific case we mere-humans dare not presume to play God by saying it was a

“pact with the devil” or an “act of the devil” per se which brought about some such disaster.

When natural disasters such as floods (the flood at Noah’s time, as well as other destructive floods), hurricanes (for example, Katrina), and earthquakes happen—as they do regularly in this sinful, fallen world (Jesus foretold their happening [Mark 13:8 etc.]), rather than looking to blame the victims for some particular cause-and-effect sin, it is far more wise to remember what our Savior taught when one such disaster happened, as we read in Scripture: “There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13).

Based on the Savior’s words, it can and **NEEDS TO BE PROCLAIMED FAR AND WIDE** that any and all tragedies/disasters (natural or man-caused, such as 9/11) are calls to repentance for one and all.

Living (and dying!) as we do in a fallen world, the Bible speaks of the whole creation “groaning and travailing” right along with fallen mankind (see Romans 8:22f). In such a world death comes in countless ways—either by natural or unnatural causes (as determined by God!).

Does this mean God’s believing children need live in a state of constant

fear or dread of unknown, unforeseen tragedies or disasters?

Not at all, for we remember the rest of the holy truths taught by the apostle Paul in the same chapter of Romans. There we are reminded that God's providential care and gracious, merciful love in His Son is that which oversees and supersedes anything and everything that this fallen world and its prince the devil can bring into our lives to discourage and depress: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we are killed all day long; we

are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" proclaimed the Savior. That is a gospel to be remembered and shared, even when we ourselves might be trapped in the rubble of an earthquake.

—Editor



Fifty Years Ago

(Our *Spokesman* staff members have been invited to pass along their memories from fifty years ago. Here is one such response.)

It Was A Great Time!

"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." So reads the opening line in *A Tale of Two Cities*, a novel by Charles Dickens set in the period before and during the French Revolution.

In 1959 I was eleven years old. What happened then was not as catastrophic as what happened in France, but for those involved it was just as memorable and affecting. For this growing lad it was the best of times and the worst of times at the same time.

Here's some of what I remember about those days.

It was the worst of times because God was called a liar—by Christian folk. At least that's how I understood it. When you have "marked" a false prophet, you then "avoid" such a person spiritually. Thus spoke the Creator.

But Satan was busy asking, as he always does: "Did God really say that?" Sad to say, many replied, "we don't think

so."

It was the worst of times because families and friends were alienated and became as enemies. My father was so slandered that some of his secular friends would hardly speak to him. I was sneeringly asked by a classmate: "I thought you guys didn't read the Bible anymore?" Thirty years later I was assailed verbally with anger, tears, and shaking fist by someone I had never met before—for breaking up her family!

It was the worst of times as pastors faithful to God's Word were treated so unlovingly by those who said they were concerned about "love for the brethren" and "doing the loving thing." I was confused about that. Without warning my pastor (with his wife and all his belongings) was booted out of the parsonage and lived for a time in an old, deserted farmhouse with huge holes in the roof.

My elderly great uncle was told by a synod official to “Shut up, you stupid old man.” (His crime was that he was asking an uncomfortable question—in a church meeting.) Another great-uncle “avoided” with tears, knowing he would not be buried in the cemetery next to his parents.

To my young eyes it seemed like love took quite a hit; it seemed like the worst of times.

But it was also the best of times! Never before had my siblings and I, together with other kids, been allowed to stay up so late (1:00-4:00 a.m.) on Friday nights, as parents conversed and debated for hours among themselves.

It was exciting to see grown men discuss God’s Word—straight from barns and fields, with dirt and dung still clinging to their unchanged clothing. But that didn’t matter; the important stuff couldn’t wait!

It was the best of times because it was a mysterious time, with reports of car chases, meetings at secret locations, bullets fired through our church window and lodged in our church wall, glue squirted into new locks. Every day seemed to bring some new report, some new mischief or puzzle. This was Dickens material, or at least The Hardy Boys.

It was an exciting time because the organizing convention of the CLC was gavelled to order in my home church—Trinity of Watertown, South Dakota.

Unknown delegates and unfamiliar pastors abounded.

There was a “wow factor” as a visiting Pastor Gordon Radtke tooled around in his Mercedes Benz—quite a step up from our old family DeSoto and Kaiser-Frazer.

It was the best of times because never since has our family spent as much time and energy discussing spiritual things together, especially concerning “Thus says the Lord.” We spent hours shucking peas, but we also strove to “unpeel” God’s Word to taste His nuggets of truth.

It was the best of days, for we were quietly trained by example to love Holy Scripture and to walk in its paths.

It was a good time because people were forced to study what God said and confront the issues. We heard of court cases, but no one was fed to the lions. People were slandered, but no one was crucified.

It was a glorious time and a blessed thing to see people stand up for Jesus and gladly share in His sufferings. The Lord did not weaken, forsake, or leave us ashamed—no, not then or these fifty years later.

In the best of times and the worst of times, it is always prudent and wise to cast our lot with the Lord and put ourselves in His gracious and almighty hands. Then the times will truly be great!

—*Pastor David Fuerstenau
Ketchikan, Alaska*



Surveying CLC History

From the 25th Anniversary Booklet (1985)
“Reflections . . . Projections”

“Projection” Number Three of Twelve DARKNESS TO SHARE

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land . . .” (Mt. 27:45).
When the Lord sent the plague of darkness over the land of Egypt in the days of

Moses, it did not include the Israelites' homes. But when Jesus hung on the cross, darkness covered all the land. This reminds us that, even as we reach out to share Christ with others, we already share with them some of the effects of sin in the world.

The same troubles and afflictions that came upon others in the past have also touched us, and we cannot expect it to be different in the future. The same diseases that torment mankind also invade our bodies, bringing them down to the grave. The same tornadoes and earthquakes, droughts and floods that sweep across the land also come upon God's children.

We share the same basic human nature with others too. We can all say with Paul: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). Even though we have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light, we still need to pray daily: "Forgive us our trespasses."

And it is just because we share these problems with all mankind that we can be so sure about what others really need! As one man put it: "I preach as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men."

Especially during Lent do we make a point of facing these realities in our lives. We can afford to face them too, for we are looking forward to Easter. Our faces are turned toward the Light!

We know that the trials that overtake us are common to people everywhere, but we also know that God is faithful—uncommonly faithful! There is an end to suffering! We have His Word on it. And the darkness that we see in ourselves has already been punished on Golgotha. The gloom is doomed!

Now, in the world of darkness, we face the Light. We know that the Light is for us, because it is for all. We know we need it because of the darkness we share with all. What a grace if God would use us to help another in the darkness to be turned to the Light!

—*Pastor Paul Schaller*
(*Currently Professor at ILC*)



Chapel Talk on Chapter Nine of the Book:

OUT OF NECESSITY: A History of the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Dear Friends in Christ,

Today I want to talk to you about the first convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession in August of 1960. It was held in a brand-new church building in Watertown, South Dakota. My wife and I had just become members of Messiah Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, and the congregation sent me as a delegate to Watertown.

The group was known at that time as the Interim Conference, but it was hoped that at this meeting a new church body would be organized, united in our confession of God's Word, particularly with respect to two doctrines that had been in controversy, the doctrine of church fellowship and the doctrine of church and ministry. It was hoped that at this convention a constitution could be

FROM THE EDITOR:

The *Spokesman* has been running this series of ILC chapel talks by Pastor David Lau on the respective twenty-two chapters of the synod history book he has been writing.

Attentive readers will notice that the name of the CLC History book has changed from what we have previously called it in the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

Earliest versions of the book identified the book's title as *The Church of the Lutheran Confession—Fifty Years*. The final draft of the book reveals that the book title has been changed

to read: *OUT OF NECESSITY: A History of the Church of the Lutheran Confession*.

From this point forward, this name change will be reflected in these chapel talk titles.

As we write this, the synod's Board of Education and Publications announces that the book's pre-publication price is \$24.95 (regular price to be \$29.95). Those interested in procuring the book should contact the CLC Bookhouse, 501 Grover Rd., Eau Claire, WI 54701; 715-836-6623; clcbookhouse@ilc.edu.

The book description below is from the Book's cover leaf.

***OUT OF NECESSITY: A History of
the Church of the Lutheran Confession***

By David Lau

Anyone reading this book will find a systematic approach to a story our Lord Jesus has written over the last fifty years. It is the history of a church body born out of necessity and dedicated to the inerrancy of the scriptures. It is a history containing not only the successes but also the struggles of the formation of a scripturally conservative group of like-minded Christians. It is the story of each of the congregations in the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) along with the schools, pastors, and teachers of the church body.

OUT OF NECESSITY: A History of the Church of the Lutheran Confession is an important read for anyone in the CLC. For those who lived this history, it is a great reminder of our Savior's goodness over these fifty years. For those who have not lived it, it will serve as a lesson in perseverance and a clear look at what our Triune God can accomplish with "clay pots" and what some would call very few resources.

The arrangement of the book allows for easy access to any section of the history. Each chapter deals with a single aspect of the development of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. A few examples would be chapters on origin, charter congregations, schools, missions, and controversies.

Throughout all twenty-two chapters of this writing the author never loses track of the power of the Spirit and the love of our Triune God in the formation and the preservation of the CLC. The spreading of the truth contained in the Scriptures has been, and we pray always will be, the purpose of the CLC.

For those who wish to understand the origin of the Church of the Lutheran Confession and its growth, this book can serve as a beacon.

—Ronald Roehl (Professor Emeritus, Immanuel Lutheran College)

adopted so that the group would have an orderly way of carrying out our business. For the command of the Lord was still in effect: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

There were forty-five pastors and teachers present at this convention, along with twenty-three congregational delegates like myself, and fourteen

visitors. Only a few of those that were present then are still alive. These are the names of those that I know to be still alive: Ronald Roehl, Richard Kuehne, Gordon Radtke, Rollin Reim, Arvid Gullerud, Jonathan Schaller, Alvin Sieg, Gerhard Mueller, Elton Hallauer, Robert Dommer, Robert Rehm, Duane Riggert, Walter Romberg, and Orville Noeldner.

We were all there as persons who had terminated our membership in synods that we believed were guilty of tolerating false teaching. We believed that in order to be obedient to God's Word we had to leave those other organizations, but we still wanted to do the Lord's work: proclaiming the Good News of Jesus, teaching our children, training future leaders, spreading the Word to other places. There was much work to be done, and it seemed to be the right time to get organized to do this work in the best way possible.

For several years the group had been working on confessional documents that were intended to summarize our teaching on the issues that had caused confusion and turmoil. The documents were available and ready for adoption. Would we be able to agree on them?

I was placed on the committee on church fellowship. There was a heated debate in our committee and also on the convention floor with regard to some of the wording in this document. For a while it looked as though we would not be able to adopt a confession on church fellowship at this convention. There were even charges of false teaching directed towards some of the participants in these debates. But after more discussion it was realized that the problem was based on a misunderstanding of what was being said. Our committee changed some of the wording in the document, and the convention adopted it. What a relief it was, what an occasion for joy it was, when the confession "Concerning Church Fellowship" was adopted as our confession on Friday, the last day of the convention. The vote was unanimous.

The theses or paragraphs on church and ministry were also adopted unanimously. The constitution was likewise adopted unanimously. Surely

the hearts of all those present were filled with gratitude to God for blessing this convention with unanimity on all points of doctrine and basic procedure.

One of the decisions of this convention was the choice of a name for the new church body. Many names were proposed. On the first ballot the name "Church of the Lutheran Confession" came in second. The name with the most votes at first was "Immanuel Lutheran Conference," to match the name of the school already in existence, Immanuel Lutheran College. But on the third ballot, with only two names on the ballot, Church of the Lutheran Confession received 39 votes, and Immanuel Lutheran Conference received 29 votes.

One of the things I remember most about this convention was the singing of Hymn No. 477 in *The Lutheran Hymnal*, especially stanzas 2 and 4. The words of this hymn seemed to match exactly what this convention was all about. Listen to these words: "O Lord, let this Thy little flock, Thy name alone confessing, Continue in Thy loving care, True unity possessing, Thy Sacraments, O Lord, And Thy saving Word To us e'er pure retain. Grant that they may remain Our only strength and comfort."

In stanza 4 we sang these words: "And for Thy Gospel let us dare To sacrifice all treasure; Teach us to bear Thy blessed cross, To find in Thee all pleasure. Oh, grant us steadfastness In joy and distress, That we Thee ne'er forsake. Let us by grace partake Of endless joy and glory."

Many of those present at this convention had experienced in their own lives what it means to sacrifice treasure and bear the blessed cross, for some of those present had been rejected by their former congregations. Their testimony against false teaching had been silenced. Many of them had lost their jobs



and their incomes. They had lost the friendship of many members of their own families. They had been accused of being troublemakers because of their desire to hold fast to sound doctrine and

Scriptural practice. But now the Lord God had brought them all together in this new fellowship. It was time to praise the Lord with joyful hearts.

—Pastor David Lau



“Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you...” (Deuteronomy 32:7).

“...Rehearsing the Lord’s leading”

As a fiftieth anniversary undertaking of the *Lutheran Spokesman*, we have invited charter members of the CLC to write personal accounts of their experiences in becoming members of a new synod and fellowship.

The intent is to allow individuals to speak for themselves. The first-hand historical perspectives which they provide—theological and otherwise—are just that, those of the individual writer.

“...We as God’s children have been on a journey—and yes, we have memories. Let us strive to keep the younger generation in contact with our Lord’s leading us on our journey. Remember, the Israelites were directed more than once to rehearse the Lord’s leading them OUT of Egypt and INTO the promised land—and that was meant to be training lest the experience of their parents/grandparents be lost to them. All anniversaries should serve this good and edifying function.” (*Spokesman* staff writer)

With such good thoughts in mind, this month we offer in our *JUBILEE JOURNEYS & MEMORIES* series the memoirs of **Richard Kuehne** and **Ronald Roehl**, hoping you find them interesting and informative.

Jubilee Journeys & Memories *1960-2010—A Half Century of Blessings*

“Remember those who...have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow...”—Hebrews 13:7

Memoirs of Richard C. Kuehne (age 78)

Personal Information:

Attended most CLC Conventions as delegate. After graduating in May 1956 from Bethany Lutheran Seminary: taught 7-8th grades (1956-57) at Immanuel Lutheran School, Mankato, Minn.; pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Winter Haven, Fla. (1957-1964, 1981-

83), Supply pastor at CLC, North Port, Fla. (various months in 1989, 90, 91)

1. What circumstances or persons(s) did the Lord use to influence you to leave your previous church affiliation, and how did the Lord make all things work together for good in doing so?

Pastor G. W. Fischer, Dean Norman

A. Madson, Pastor Gordon Radtke, and my parents influenced me to leave the Wisconsin Synod and affiliate with the CLC. In accepting the call to Winter Haven, I packed up (typewriter, theology books etc.) in my old Ford for a place I'd never been, a few members I'd never met, traveling over 1600 lonely miles, but the Lord went with me and blessed me.

2. What discovery/lesson can you share with the younger generation about that difficult time?

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." A retired couple and their unmarried daughter came to our little church, had instruction classes and became members; several months later their daughter and I were married. Though she had health problems, the Lord blessed us with four healthy children and now nine grandchildren. The Lutheran School which I helped start was also a blessing for our children. For five years I had lived in a small apartment at the back of the chapel; now the Lord has blessed us with two houses. For seven years I received \$150.00 per month plus "housing." Now we have sufficient retirement income. My family was never without food, clothing, or shelter. The Lord has provided for all our needs (see Psalm 37:25).

3. What message/testimony would



R. Kuehne ordination, Oct. 20, 1957, Immanuel, Mankato; G. Radtke, N. Madson, E. Reim, Kuehne, G. Fischer

you transmit to the current generation as to the value/importance of continuing in the Lord's pure Word?

Nearly everyone now knows about having good water to drink and healthful foods. Most are agreed that a continued "junk food" diet is bad for physical health. Likewise, many of the additives, coloring, and even preservatives detract from the quality and health value of food. Now, if we are concerned with the purity of the food for our temporal body, much more should we be concerned with the spiritual food, God's Word, for our immortal souls. So Jesus warns us to beware of false teachers and compares false teaching to leaven, where just a little affects the entire loaf. Likewise the apostles warn us to judge the teachings and avoid false teachers. (Revelation 22:18-19 also applies.)

Memoirs of Ronald Roehl (age 76)

Personal Information:

After graduating from Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn. in 1954, Mr. Roehl started a grade school in Los Angeles and taught there until he was called to teach at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis. in 1956. He and Eunice (nee Naumann) were married in July, 1957. Mr. Roehl resigned from the Wisconsin Synod and from his teaching position in 1959. He was called to serve as professor at Immanuel Lutheran High School and College half-way through its first year, in January of 1960, and continued until



Ronald and Eunice Roehl

retirement in May of 2007. He served as Coach, he says, "more years than I can count" (but later gives the dates as 1960 through 1997); besides coaching, his

continued, p. 24

CLC EXPLORATORY SERVICES

Last revised: December, 2009

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

LOCATION	PASTORAL CONTACT	LAY CONTACT
Alaska, Anchorage	Rev. David Fuerstenau 907-225-2842	
California, Pasadena (L.A. area)	Rev. Neal Radichel 650-964-5915	Mr. Mike Collins 818-883-1749
California, Modesto	Rev. Steven Karp 510-581-6637	Mr. Roy Cameron 209-772-0934
Florida, Orlando	Rev. John Schierenbeck 863-299-4084	Mr. Paul Kuehne 407-595-5589
Iowa, Sioux Center	Rev. James Albrecht 507-853-4417	Mr. Roger Ver Mulm 712-722-2805
Michigan, Cadillac	Rev. Tim Holland 616-532-0198	Mr. Bob Remus 231-832-2097
Michigan, Iron Mountain	Rev. Ed Starkey 906-265-2124	
Minnesota, Eden Prairie (SW Twin Cities area)	Rev. David Schierenbeck 651-454-1915	Mr. Allan Johnson 952-474-6671
New Mexico, Albuquerque	Mr. Robin Vogsland 505-892-6934	
Ohio, Cleveland	Rev. Walter Schaller 248-677-7242	
Oklahoma, Oklahoma City	Rev. Matthew Hanel 973-733-4535	
Tennessee, Monterey	Rev. Nathanael Mayhew 866-962-9034	Mr. Wayne Everhart 270-618-4387
Texas, Austin	Rev. Luke Bernthal 281-353-2533	Chuck Kurth 512-794-8991
Virginia, Fairfax (Washington DC area)	Mr. Glenn Oster 803-926-0603	Mr. David Loop 703-250-2020
Washington, Withrow	Rev. Terrel Kesterson 509-327-4203	Mr. Ray Lillquist 509-683-1192
Wisconsin, Green Bay	Rev. Paul Krause 920-398-2778	

service included Athletic Director (1960-1976), Dean of Students (1970-1991), and Registrar (1991-present).

[**Editor's Note:** The *Spokesman* offered a series of questions as "standard formatting" for these memoir articles, though writers were free to choose other formatting. In the following words Prof/Coach/Dean Roehl fills us in on some perspectives and details of his multifaceted earthly journey . . .]

I wish I could say that there was one great event in my life that led me to break with my former church affiliation. What I can say is that it was a long string of events in my young life which brought me to the realization that to break was necessary. It becomes evident that early life influences, Christian education, and the company you keep play a very important role in one's life. My Lord and God used all of these and I am sure more that I don't even know about.

Starting with something from my family life which told me that "if a thing is right, you had better do it," and continuing with a pastor who told me "if Scripture says it, you had better do it," you might say that from early on I was primed for the action I needed to take. In a Lutheran high school I was reminded over and over of the importance of Scripture. This led me to a college where the Lord didn't want me to stay, and then led me to a different college where I was exposed to many more "Scripture alone" based schoolmates, professors, and pastors.

My first teaching call put me into the midst of some co-workers who were theologically conservative and some who were theologically liberal. This again drove me back to study the conflicting views that were becoming increasingly obvious in the Synodical Conference.

My next teaching call brought me into a group of Christians who were questioning and studying the stand of our church body. Our meetings were very helpful in solidifying my belief concerning what I would have to do. It was also helpful and necessary that my newly acquired wife was of the same mind. The rest is "Church of the Lutheran

Confession" history. — Respectfully submitted in Christ, Ronald Roehl

INVITATION

Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac, Wis., is celebrating God's grace for the last 50 years in a special anniversary service at 10:00 a.m. Sunday, March 21, 2010. A dinner and 50th Anniversary program will follow.

With an emphasis on "homecoming", we are especially welcoming all those who grew up at Luther Memorial, all past members and all who served as called workers. We would be honored to have you join us on this day as we give thanks to our gracious God.

—Pastor David Naumann



Middleton Parade, see p. 10

Cover: Matt Schaser