

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

“...The Scripture Cannot Be Broken.” — John 10:35



Report on the 31st Convention of the CLC

THEME:

God Our Savior Desires All Men to be Saved!

1 TIMOTHY 2:3-7

*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God
our Savior, who desires all men to be saved
and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*



Above: It's becoming a Convention tradition, depicting the "delegates on the hill" outside the ILC auditorium.

Photo by Pastor John Hein. To see more photos from Pastor Hein go to cclutheran.org

Reprinted in this issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman*:

The first two (of eight) pages of our synod president's address to delegates at the 31st Convention of the CLC held June 16-19, 2014, at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

We are confident that the 160 delegate attendees (65 pastors, 18 teachers, 12 professors, 65 lay-delegates) will testify to how the holy assertion "Turning the World Upside Down...By Using the Word of God" was on wonderful display all four days of the Convention—

- + From Chaplain Pastor Mark Bernthal's devotions on 1 Corinthians chapter 15;
- + To Pastor Neal Radichel's Convention Communion Service sermon based on God's Word in 2 Peter 3:9-13;
- + To Prof. John Reim's Memorial Service meditation using Acts 15:13b-17 as text;
- + And then also in both Convention essays based on 1 Timothy 3:2-7. Under the overall theme "God our Savior desires all men to be saved!", Pastor Paul Krause led the body in considering that "Jesus is the one Mediator of that truth!"; Pastor Michael Gurath followed that up with an essay titled, "We are appointed to proclaim that truth!"

Simply put, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the 31st Convention of the CLC was indicative of King David' expressions in the 133rd psalm:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing—life forevermore."

This issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman* gives a taste of the Christian fellowship enjoyed and some of what the delegates enacted on the "church business" side of things (see highlighted items on coming pages).

Readers are advised that they can find video of the Convention floor sessions at <http://www.youtube.com/user/ilcvideos>. The Convention communion service, held at Messiah, Eau Claire, can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/p4jm57x>.

Dates for the 32nd CLC Convention will be June 23-26, 2016 (Thursday-Sunday).



CLC PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE 31ST CONVENTION

“Turning the World Upside Down”

Pastor Michael Eichstadt • Hales Corners, Wisconsin

DEAR SAINTS IN CHRIST AND FELLOW WORKERS IN HIS KINGDOM:

Does it matter? Does what we do here make any real, significant, positive, lasting difference? If it does, we have reason and incentive to get to work; if not, what's the point? From a human perspective we have little chance of accomplishing anything lasting. We are a small group with no political capital to spend and few material resources. What could we possibly do?

However, that could also have been said of the Apostle Paul and Silas when they arrived in Thessalonica in the course of Paul's second missionary journey. There was nothing impressive about these two itinerant missionaries of Jesus. Yet before long, the Jews were accusing Paul and the other Christians of “*turning the world upside down*” (Acts 17:6). Sent out from the living Lord of the Church, they upset the status quo. Hearts and attitudes were completely changed. Without question, they made a difference.

Isn't that our assignment too? Jesus says, “*Go and make disciples of all nations.*”



Pastors Mark Bernthal and Michael Eichstadt, CLC Vice President and President respectively

CLC Convention — President's Report:

WE ARE THANKFUL for President Eichstadt's message encouraging us to "turn the world upside down" (Acts 17:6) by using the Word of God, proclaiming Christ, and trusting the unchanging Word to be effective. We pray that we, like Paul, depend on this message of God's Word rather than our own wisdom to turn the world upside down.

"Turn the world upside down" is another way of phrasing it, for repentance involves a total change of heart within the sinner. By ourselves we cannot effect anything out of the ordinary. Like all others, we were dead in sin by nature, enemies of God, unable and unwilling to do anything about it. Yet by His grace God uses His people to truly turn the world upside down.

By Using the Word of God

To make a real difference we need something outside of ourselves. What did Paul use? He was a highly educated man. He could have boasted of his studies under the renowned rabbi Gamaliel. He was well acquainted with Greek poets and philosophers. He could have held his own in any debate based on the rules of logic. But instead, when he came to Thessalonica,

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CLC Convention—Standing Worship Committee:

THREE HYMNALS were considered and compared to the commonly used Lutheran Hymnal of 1941. These were *Christian Worship*, the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, and the *Lutheran Service Book*... Although each hymnal has its strengths and weaknesses, the committee feels that all three of the newer ones considered present God's Word faithfully in Law and Gospel and could find use in our congregations.

CLC Convention—Membership:

RESOLVED, that the following be accepted as voting members of the CLC: Pastor-elect Peter Evensen, Teacher-elect Ross Kok, Pastor Douglas Priestap, Pastor-elect David Ude. We thank the Lord of the Church for providing these laborers for His harvest.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education and Publications develop media (for example, pamphlet, video, etc.) encouraging greater lay delegate participation. The media would discuss the process, responsibilities, importance, and blessings of attending a Convention.



Pastor-elect Peter Evensen and Delegate Robert Ruegge (Redeemer, Cheyenne, Wyo.) address the delegates



CLC Convention—Missions:

WE REJOICE that the Lord has “let His work appear to His servants,” in both our domestic and foreign missions fields, and we pray that He would continue to “establish the work of our hands for us” (Psalm 90:16-17).

WE APPRECIATE the evangelical encouragement from President Eichstadt’s address reminding us of the many doors the Lord continues to open for our fellowship.

RESOLVED that we authorize the Board of Missions to provide funding through the Mission Development Fund (MDF) for necessary missionary visits during the coming biennium to the Democratic Republic of Congo, [to] Zambia, and [to] Zimbabwe.

“Paul, as his custom was” went into the synagogue “and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures” (Acts 17:12). Paul counted on the Word of God to make a difference.

What a contrast to our age. Many religious leaders and churches have given up on the power of the Word. Some are embarrassed by it and explain away Jesus’ miracles by saying that the disciples were ignorant men prone to exaggeration when it came to their claims about the Lord. Some view Scripture as ancient literature which may be of some historical value but which has no practical relevance for today’s society. Some pick and choose what they are going to believe, making their own human reason the judge over the Word. To make a difference in people’s lives,

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Top left: Board of Missions Chairman Pastor Todd Ohlmann, Missionary David Koenig at the wall of flags from foreign countries where the CLC is doing mission work.

Top: Convention service servants: Liturgist Paul Nolting, Speaker Neal Radichel, Convention Chaplain Mark Bernthal

Bottom: Pastor Emeritus Paul Fleischer with missionary Ed & Mrs. Starkey.

CLC Convention—Doctrine Committee:

RESOLVED, that we ratify the president's declaration of fellowship with Pastor Olvera and the *Iglesia Luterana Confesional-Mexico* [Confessional Lutheran Church-Mexico]... with the Church of the Lutheran Confession of Tanzania, [of] Kenya, and [of] Zambia...with Pastor Edwards and the National Lutheran Church of Myanmar.

WE ARE THANKFUL for the efforts of the Board of Doctrine and Pastor Emeritus David Lau on both the three-sentence summary and the popular edition of *Concerning Church Fellowship* thus far. We direct them to complete both projects and present them...to our pastors for discussion at the General Pastoral Conference in 2015.

they believe the Word should be replaced with new ideas more suited for our times.

But Paul was right. To turn the world upside down, we need something other than man's wisdom, for no matter how they are packaged or presented, man's thoughts and views cannot be better than man himself or extend beyond his severely limited reach. Because it cannot overcome sin and death, man's wisdom cannot make any significant difference in his fate. Every attempt is a tired recycling of what has been tried and failed in the past.

The Word has no limits, for God Himself has none. By His Word the



heavens were formed and by His Word all things hold together. He has given us that Spirit-breathed Word which is “*useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness*” (2 Timothy 3:16). Man’s wisdom is turned upside down and proved to be foolishness when exposed to

(continued on page 10)

CLC Convention—Immanuel Lutheran College:

WE THANK the Lord for moving individuals to supply creative ideas, diligent oversight, designated offerings, and many hours of volunteer labor toward the maintenance and improvement of our campus.

WE GIVE THANKS to the Lord for the blessing that the Student Aid Fund is to our students and families. We offer thanks to the Lord for moving the hearts of those who have contributed to this fund.

WE APPLAUD the faculty of Immanuel for opening up a new avenue for Biblical training in the form of online courses... We thank the Lord for giving those at Immanuel zeal to tackle this exciting new area of our educational institution and to move forward with it carefully.

WE JOIN President Eichstadt in encouraging parents, pastors, and teachers to instruct “young people about the blessed nature of the public ministry” and to encourage them to prayerfully consider pursuing the public ministry.

WE ALSO JOIN with President Eichstadt in encouraging our young members not considering the public ministry to consider the AA degree program or the program in Religious Studies “to help ground them more firmly on Christ.”

Aaron Gullerud was in charge of videoing the Convention floor sessions and placing them on youtube

the light of the Word—that powerful, saving Word which the Lord has entrusted to us.

Therefore, ongoing study of the Word and a strong education program in it are essential for us as individuals, congregations, and as a church body. I thank the Lord for the freedom we have in our nation to preach and teach it without interference. Some of our overseas brethren face much more difficult and dangerous conditions. We are blessed with Sunday schools, TVBS and VBS programs, and dedicated teachers who freely give of their time not only in presenting lessons but also in hours of unnoticed preparations each week. Our Christian day schools are a special blessing in providing our children with daily instruction in the Word and its practical application to life. It is encouraging to note that after the school closings of recent years, a growing number of congregations are expressing renewed interest in opening schools. The spiritual benefits far outweigh the material and monetary costs.

Immanuel High School, College, and Seminary continue to serve an essential role in the training of new generations of teachers and pastors. We thank the Lord for our two seminary graduates and our two graduates from the teaching program this spring. After fifteen years or so of relative stability and few pastoral changes in our congregations, we are now facing several pastoral vacancies—with more to come in the near

Dr. James Sydow, CLC treasurer, with Board of Regents member Pastor John Hein



CLC Convention—Finances:

RESOLVED, that the operating budget of the CLC for Fiscal Year '15 be as follows:

Board of Education	\$10,000.00
Board of Trustees	\$115,000.00
Board of Missions	\$305,000.00
Board of Regents (subsidy)	\$474,000.00
Board of Regents (student revenue)	\$873,000.00
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	\$1,777,000.00

CLC Convention — Elections: (Presidium)

CLC President — Pastor Michael Eichstadt

CLC Vice President — Pastor Mark Bernthal

Moderator — Pastor Paul Nolting

Secretary — Pastor Wayne Eichstadt

future due to retirements. As in the past, the Lord will certainly provide servants for His Church. Still, the current need underscores the importance of parents, pastors, and teachers instructing our young people about the blessed nature of the public ministry and encouraging them to go to the Lord in prayer and ask whether He might desire them to serve in the pulpit or classroom.

Immanuel also aids in equipping young men and women for faithful service as lay members of their congregations. While ILC is not able to provide the variety of courses that secular institutions offer, the additional grounding in the Word on the college level will strengthen the believer for life in an increasingly hostile environment. I urge young people who are planning a career other than that of the public ministry not to rule out Immanuel as a starting point but to consider how the AA degree program or the program in Religious Studies could help ground them even more firmly on Christ. Paul encouraged the Colossians: *“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness”* (Colossians 2:6-7).



For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (1 TIMOTHY 2:3-7)

CONVENTION ESSAY

“God Our Savior Desires All Men to be Saved!”

Essay Title:

Jesus is the One Meditator of that Truth!

(abbreviated by the editor)

THE YEAR WAS 1976, AND I WAS TEN YEARS OLD, GROWING UP
JUST OUTSIDE OF FOND DU LAC, WISCONSIN.

The company where my Dad worked was a union shop, and a strike was called because of a disagreement between management and the union. The strike lasted for at least a year. No doubt the union workers were not 100% satisfied with the fact that non-union workers were allowed in the shop. But the mediators, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), had spoken, and that was it.

The fact that the Apostle Paul uses the word “Mediator” in our text assumes that there were two sides which are separated. And now that a Mediator was on the scene—the ONE Mediator, the ONLY One there is or even could be—would both sides be satisfied with His work, with His solution to the impasse?

In seeing the Lord’s solution we rejoice—for we are brought face to face



Essayist Paul Krause, pastor at Faith Lutheran Church, Markesan, Wis.

once again with the astounding, astonishing, amazing grace and love of God!

The IMPASSE

In the case of the 1976 strike, there was plenty of fault on both sides. Not so with the impasse between “God and men.” The reason for this separation was sin on the side of mankind. The truth of this situation is well documented in Scripture!

Initially the created world was just like its Creator—“good”—even “very good.” There was no taint, no imperfection anywhere to be found in what God had made. It wasn’t until the man and his wife disobeyed God that “*sin entered the world*” (Romans 5:12). Through their sinful act “*death [came] by sin; and so death has spread to all men, for all have sinned*” (Romans 5:12). And that “all men” means “all men.” “*There is not one who does good; no, NOT ONE*” (Psalm 14:3).

There is nothing intrinsic in man, no innate ability which could change things. The passage of time did not bring with it any changes for the better, either. Even after God washed the world clean with the Flood, the stubborn stain of sin remained. “*I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake,*” the Lord said in His heart, “*although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth*” (Genesis 8:21).

God had said that one sin is all that it would take—“*For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all*” (James 2:10).

God and mankind were at an impasse of epic proportions—all due to man’s rebellion! On the one hand is God in His holiness demanding perfection, and on the other hand is mankind with his utter lack of perfection.

Is there a solution to this impossible situation? Yes! *“The things which are impossible with men are possible with God”* (Luke 18:27).

The SOLUTION

Both sides in the 1976 strike came to the conclusion that mediation was needed. Both admitted that finding a solution to their impasse was beyond their ability. Both needed outside help to come up with a solution.

Such an admission of need for help or lack of ability to solve the impasse between God and sinful mankind would never be forthcoming—not from sinful mankind. Only when a person has been brought to faith is he able to see how utterly lost he is in his sin. Only when the Holy Spirit has enlightened man with the gospel is he able to see both how black is the darkness of unbelief in which we were born, and at the same time the incredible glory of God’s gracious plan of salvation!

History is full of examples of sinful man’s efforts to deal with sin, from “sweating sin out” in the steam lodges of the Nez Perce of Idaho, to the extreme of human sacrifice such as was practiced in Old Testament Bible times, when heathens *“caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech”* (see 2 Chronicles 33:6). The sadly mistaken idea behind such actions is that if I but sacrifice something of importance, then “god” will certainly be pleased with me.

“It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). There is no solution to sin if things are left in the hands of sinful humans! The one and only Solution to the impasse of sin is Jesus Christ, as the theme passage of our Convention states: *“God our Savior desires all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

God knew that if anything was to be done to take care of sin, He would have to do it! Sin and its guilt could not just be swept under the rug. God could not just look the other way. So God *“gave His only begotten Son,”* (John 3:16)—the Son who as Paul says here in 1 Timothy *“gave Himself a ransom for all.”* “[God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is in Christ that the price for sin has been paid!

As the Son of Man, Jesus came to Earth as our brother. The life the

Son of God lived was holy, and as a result the Passion He endured was substitutionary, as Isaiah put it so well, *“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; ...and by His stripes we are healed....The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”* (Isaiah 53:4ff). Jesus is the *“Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29).

Jesus is the SOLUTION! Jesus stands in the middle! He is *“the one Mediator between God and men.”*

The SATISFACTION

Was the NLRB’s work as mediator satisfactory? Well, my Dad finally did get to go back to work, but not everyone did. The NLRB solution was far from perfect.

How about Jesus? Was the redemptive work He did to solve the impasse of sin satisfactory? Is He qualified to be the *“one Mediator between God and men”*?

Satan would have us doubt the sufficiency of God’s solution. He would have us wonder if there is not something that must be added to what Christ has done, some works or deeds on our part to supplement or even replace the salvation work of Jesus.

How wonderful to have the testimony of the true, faithful, reliable God in His Word!

That Word teaches that there is nothing that we need to add to what Jesus has already done: *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast”* (Ephesians 2:8-9)

How many people on Earth did God not only desire to save (*“ALL men”*) but also for whom did He give Himself a ransom (*“for ALL”*)? That *“death He died”*—who was it for? *“He died to sin once for ALL”* (Romans 6:10).

Jesus is the satisfactory Mediator because He was the satisfactory sacrifice! *“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [satisfactory sacrifice] for our sins...and not for ours only but also for the whole world”* (1 John 2:2, 4:10).

(Note: The second Convention essay *“We are appointed to proclaim that truth!”* will appear in abbreviated form next month.)



Praise Be to the Paraclete!

Pastor Thomas Schuetze • Coloma, Michigan

“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.”

(John 14:16, NIV 1984)

PARACLETE—It’s a name we probably don’t use too often in our prayers. It may ring strange in our ears when we sing it in hymns at church.

What does that name mean and why is it ascribed to the Holy Spirit? “Paraclete” comes from two Greek words: *para* (“beside”) and *kaleo* (“call”). Putting these words together yields the word’s basic meaning: “Someone called to be at your side.”

What kinds of things does the Holy Spirit do at our side? His chief work, of course, is to create faith in our hearts. He uses the gospel message of Christ crucified and risen again to lead us to trust Christ as our one and only Savior from sin, death, and hell. The Holy Spirit uses the same gospel to keep us in faith for as long as we live in the hostile environment of this godless world.

Another special work the Holy Spirit performs for Christians is His using the gospel to help us to become more and more Christlike in our speech, actions, and attitudes. It’s true: we came into *full* possession of *all* the treasures Christ came from heaven to win for us the very moment the Spirit led us to anchor our hopes in Christ (see Ephesians 1:3-7).

But His work of empowering us to live holy lives to God’s glory is *gradual, on-going, life-long*. Through the Word that we hear and learn at church, that we read in devotions at home, that we ponder in our hearts throughout the day, the Holy Spirit helps/strengthens/inspires us to pattern our lives more and more after the holy example of Jesus and less and less after the unbelieving people of the world.

All this is to the praise of our Savior-God (read 2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 2:13, John 15:8)

It’s a case of ‘already and not yet.’ We are *already* holy because of Jesus’



Memorial service preacher Prof. John Reim of Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wis.

righteousness that our heavenly Father has credited to our respective accounts by faith. But we are not yet holy in our walk of Christian discipleship until we are with Christ in heaven.

Until then we rejoice in the knowledge that the Father's promised Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, is standing at our side eager and ready to serve as our spiritual Helper/Comforter/Counselor.

We pray with boldness, as dear children of God:

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
And make our hearts Your place of rest;
Come with Your grace and heavenly aid,
And fill the hearts which You have made.

Praise we the Father and the Son
And Holy Spirit, with them One;
And may the Son on us bestow
The gifts that from the Spirit flow!

(Lutheran Service Book, #498:1,7)





Camp Koyquin 2014

“Campers gather together after a fun and faith-filled week at Camp Koyquin 2014 in Pillager, Minnesota.

158 campers and 31 staff members made up the largest youth camp that has been put on in the many years it has been running. What a blessing to everyone involved to be able to spend a week in Christian fellowship and love.”

— Abby Sydow - Camp Koyquin counsler



God at work—FOR US!

Pastor Andrew Schaller • Watertown, South Dakota

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:38–39)

We live in a ‘look at me’ egocentric age.

It isn’t just the athletes who pound on their chests in a show of pride and who hold their hands out palms up as if demanding to be recognized and praised for something as trivial as catching a thrown ball.

Blatant self-promotion has taken hold of the masses with the advent of social media like Facebook. While there are those who use such media to give glory to the Triune God and to thank Him for His gifts, some seem to forget the One who gave them their gifts but declare in word and post, “Hey, look at me!” Sad to say, some don’t even consider that what is said can even hinder Christian witnessing!

This “Hey, look at me!” attitude is even gaining foothold among those who call themselves Christians.

It isn’t just the Billy Graham types who call upon spiritually dead and powerless sinners to ‘make their decision for Christ’ (as if the spiritually dead can do anything to aid in their conversion). It’s also those who subtly—and sometimes not so subtly—strip the sacraments of their true power and make of them something that THEY DO FOR GOD rather than a means of grace, something that GOD DOES FOR THEM.

In the ultimate coup the glory that belongs to the Spirit of God is stolen by increasing numbers of those calling themselves Christian... for themselves. For example, in some cases Baptism is no longer called *Baptism* but a *Dedication*. That isn’t a subtle change...it is a blatant turning of the spotlight from the Spirit of God...to man.

Am I overreacting?

What is Baptism? How should we look at Baptism? When we bring our children to be baptized, are we seeking the blessing of the Triune God

for our children, or is it a good work that we do— something we do for God?

And when we come to the Lord's Supper, is it a good work that we do—a meal we dedicate to Christ? Or is it a meal served by Him—a spiritual blessing offered to us by the Christ?

In both cases, it is the latter. The Triune God is at work in Baptism. The Triune God offers the spiritual blessing in the Lord's Supper.

It's NOT about us but about Christ and His amazing love and mercy. It's about Christ, whose selfless sacrifice and powerful word of promise make Baptism what it is—a gracious water of life and a washing that regenerates (See Titus 3:5). It's about Christ, whose glorious resurrection makes the Lord's Supper a personal confirmation of sins forgiven.

There is no 'I' or 'me' in the sacraments...because Christ is the power and active force in these spiritual blessings. Thus we shouldn't think of them as works we do FOR GOD, but as acts in which He works FOR US.



Top Left: Bd. of Education & Publications: Pastor David Naumann, Teacher David Bernthal, Prof. Ross Roehl; missing Mr. Rick Nelson. **Top Right:** Bd. of Regents: Pastors John Hein & Theodore Barthels, Mr. David Aymond; missing Mr. Craig Ryan. **Lower Left:** Bd. of Trustees: Pastor Michael Roehl, Teacher Sherman Carstensen, Mr. Philip Radichel, Mr. Tom Lentz. **Lower Right:** Bd. of Missions: Pastor Todd Ohlmann, Mr. Larry Hansen, Mr. Joel Krafft; missing Pastor Nathanael Mayhew

MEDITATIONS ON JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT:
MATTHEW'S GOSPEL, CHAPTERS FIVE THROUGH SEVEN

Christ's Rock-solid Foundation for Life

Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer • Spokane, Washington

Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall. And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (MATTHEW 7:24-29)

There was a boy who enjoyed building toy forts in his backyard; they didn't last long.

We see people doing that all the time, don't we? People are constantly building and rebuilding their lives as they think best. Everyone is trying to build his life on some concept, some ideal, some set of principles. From the Muslim extremist to the avowed atheist, each is conducting business, looking for a spouse, raising a family, and going about daily living on some set of principles.

And such principles are always changing. How many times don't we hear of "new" secrets to a happy marriage or a "better" way to raise children? Educators, students, and parents alike can tell you how our educational systems continue to change, seemingly every year.

Man's principles in life are constantly shifting because they come from the flawed, sinful mind of man.

In Matthew chapters five through seven Jesus has been preaching to His disciples, His followers—to you and me! He has not directly been talking about the way of salvation, but about the way His believers live their lives.

Treating topics such as the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, marriage,

divorce, loving our enemies—and seeking first the kingdom of God rather than worrying about tomorrow—are Jesus’ way of addressing our lives in this world as His redeemed children.

Now at the close of chapter seven, He concludes His sermon with the comparison of two builders. Note that both are building a house for themselves, and both homes are beat upon by raging storms.

What is the difference? The foundation, the base of the entire building project! The foolish builder built his house on the sand. Sandy soil is not a solid foundation for a home. When the winds blew, the rains fell, and the winds beat against that house, it collapsed. *“And great was its fall.”*

Jesus says such is the foolish builder who *“hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them.”* The scribes and Pharisees heard the words of Jesus but refused to follow them and do them. Judas Iscariot repeatedly heard the words of Christ but instead built his life on the love of money. They were building their lives on the shifting sand of man’s philosophy and religion. As is the case with all who hear and do not follow the words of Jesus Christ, great is their fall when the storms of life—especially the violent storm of death—strikes.

But Jesus does not want it to be so with you. Jesus who loved you and purchased you with His own life-blood wants you to have a solid foundation against the storms of life. He who is “the Truth” wants you to hear the truth of His Word and build your life on it. His “sayings” are rock-solid because they are the perfect word of God Himself, not the empty opinions of sinful man.

Storms will come for believer and unbeliever alike. Finances may fade. Nations will fall. Cancer may strike. Death will come. But Jesus, His Word, His will, His sayings will be the solid foundation which will hold firm amidst all those storms. *“Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.”*

May the Holy Spirit help us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only (James 1:22). May He bless our life-long building project on the Rock, the Word of Jesus Christ! *“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it”* (Psalm 127:1). Amen!



LAST OF FIVE PARTS OF A SERIES ON THE SECOND ARTICLE

“This is most certainly true!”

THE APOSTLES' CREED

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

*I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.*

(TLH, p. 12)

Serving the Servants' Servant

Teacher David Bernthal • Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

The life-debt. We've all probably seen a movie with this type of plot. One character, usually the protagonist, saves another character's life. This second character—usually dimwitted, unlikeable, or terribly obnoxious—can't seem to do enough for his savior and most likely is going to be in the way or in some other way disrupt the best-laid plans.

The Five SECOND ARTICLE Installments:

- 1) Jesus is true God
- 2) Jesus is true Man
- 3) Jesus has redeemed me
- 4) Jesus has made me His own
- 5) Jesus calls me to serve Him**

Sound familiar?

Jesus, the Anointed One of God, came into this world in order to save us. He was, and is, the perfect Hero. Sinless, unstainable, and unswerving, dedicated to His duty with an actual martyr's zeal—He sacrificed Himself for mankind. And what of you and me—the ones for whom He sacrificed Himself? We were not just dimwitted or socially awkward, but downright belligerent, hateful, spiteful, and stiff-necked enemies of God. His

life-blood was poured out to redeem us from sin, eternal death, and the devil.

How could we ever pay back such a debt? What “payback” does the Lord expect of us? Simply faith and trust in Him and His Word—and our service. The Scriptures encourage us to “*serve the Lord with gladness*” (Psalm 100:2). He has directed us to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...” and “teaching them to observe all things...” (Matthew 28:19-20). He asks us to serve Him by being a light in this dark and evil world, by letting our good works lead to the glorification of our heavenly Father (see Matthew 5:16).

Like the “saved” individual in the scenario above, we are often inept in our service to the Lord. So often we seem to be working against Him and His will rather than furthering His kingdom. Yet Jesus does not reject our feeble efforts to perform His tasks but rather equips us for the duties He has planned for us. Earthen vessels that we are, He makes up for our inefficiencies, compensates for our weaknesses, giving us the courage and strength to carry out His will.

Yet the gratitude and desire for service is a natural outgrowth of focusing on what has been done for us. Thinking of this joyous service to the Lord, Dr. David Livingstone of African medical-missionary fame once stated that “if a commission by an earthly king is considered



Left: New CLC Voting members: Pastor Douglas Priestap, Pastor Peter Evensen, Pastor David Ude, Teacher Ross Kok

Right: Presidium pastors: Moderator Paul Nolting, Vice President Mark Bernthal, President Michael Eichstadt, Secretary Wayne Eichstadt

an honor, how can a commission by a Heavenly King be considered a sacrifice?"

But this isn't the whole story. Although Christ's salvation was a 'one and done' event, yet He continues to serve us! (Hebrews 7:27) Ever since His ascension into heaven, our Lord has been *servng us* at the right hand of His Father. He is ruling all the universe for the good of His Church. He blesses us with His presence daily, especially when we gather around His Word. He sends His angels to watch over us. He supplies us with food and shelter so we can set our minds on "*things above*" (Colossians 3:2).

He continues to serve as our ultimate Prophet, Priest, and King, and He is preparing a place for each of us to live with Him in His world to come. We have the privilege and honor of serving this servants' Servant!

When Jesus gathered with His disciples to celebrate the Passover, no one was of lowly enough position to wash their feet. This was, after all, a servant's job! So, as eternal God and sinless Man, Jesus stooped to perform this humble task.

When presented with opportunities to serve our Lord and fellow man, may God grant that we take up His example of loving and humble service.



THE SECOND ARTICLE

(About Redemption)

[We print Luther's Explanation only.]

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. He did this that I should be His very own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy; just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns in eternity.

This is most certainly true.

(Martin Luther's SMALL CATECHISM, Sydow edition, 2000)

Looking in All the Wrong Places

(Ninth of a Series)

Missionary David Koenig

Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good?

No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"
The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

(Matthew 19:16-24)

There were those on the Areopagus [in ancient Athens] who sought the answers to life in their philosophy, speculation, and reasoning. It was clear on that mount that they contemplated the products of the human mind. Those who seek to justify themselves in our Lord's day or in ours appeal to God for their work-righteousness. They would use the Ten Commandments which, they say, God gave as the means for reward after this life.

That was the approach of this rich young ruler when he asked, "*Good Teacher, what good deed shall I do that I may have eternal life?*"

To us this is so pathetic, for this was not just an aberration of the Jews of Jesus' day; it is also the way of the prestigious lodges. This 'works' religion is also basic to the largest visible Christian denomination, the church of the Antichrist. Even among numerous Protestant denominations, it has established a beachhead.

The Lord is gentle with this fellow, who is looking for the answer to the question and not just trying to test Jesus or trip Him up. When Jesus refers him to the commandments, the ruler states he has kept

them. Jesus does not point out that he has not done so but moves on to a requirement that would show whether the man really wanted eternal life. *“If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”* Oh, oh! Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The man went away sorrowing, for he had great possessions.

SERIES Backdrop

With examples from Holy Scripture we are trying to learn ways and attitudes which will better enable us to witness to our Lord. These examples, drawn from the four Gospels and from the book of the Acts of the Apostles, are by no means exhaustive.

As with the basketball strategy of one-on-one, we are looking at examples of one Christian witnessing to another individual. We are not considering what was said to individuals already in the faith, though that is also applicable. We are not considering what was said to groups, though that also is applicable as a witnessing technique. We will be considering various situations where it was one-on-one, and the one being witnessed to was living in unbelief...

The ultimate goal in all witnessing is to be like John the baptizer and point to Christ as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. While we want to try earnestly to develop our skills in this area, we don't want to forget John's motto, *“He must increase, but I must decrease”* (John 3:30).

No matter what spiritual gifts we have and how we develop them, we are not looking for glory for ourselves. We are looking to have another soul join us in glorifying our Savior-God.

The immense wealth and prosperity of our society is both a blessing and a curse. We Christians have more to give for our Lord's work. The technology of our society can be harnessed for His purposes. But for so very many people, wealth is a trap. They fall in and are taken hook, line, and sinker. It is to such materialists that we want to speak.

When we do, we must make clear the dichotomy between Christ ruling life or mammon dictating, in effect, disaster; between eternal life or eternal death; between forgiveness from above or work righteousness from man. We don't want to mince words lest one get the wrong idea and suppose he can serve both Christ and mammon. Neither should we be daunted if our prospect goes away sorrowing. Conversion can yet happen by the power of the Spirit working through the Word.

But before we depart the

encounter, we should offer opportunity for the hearer to decide. He doesn't have to, but why not give him the chance? We may have been overly cautious in this due to the error of the Reformed in their 'decision theology.' At least we want to leave the prospect with the idea that it is either-or.

So many passages warn us against materialism. Lay not up...the camel and the eye of the needle...into temptation, into a snare....

In response to his original work-righteous question of "what good deed shall I do?", we also have ample passages. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). "All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). "There is none who does good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12) ["...for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (Galatians 2:16).]

Jesus sought to show the man that his own righteousness was not as perfect as he thought, because he would not 'do good' by giving up his wealth and following the Teacher.

FROM THE FIELD

Overextending?!

Missionary David Koenig

"For we are not overextending ourselves..." (2 Corinthians 10:15).

You would be hard pressed to find another Lutheran synod that has the outreach overseas based on per capita stateside that the CLC has. We need to thank our Lord that He has given us—who are so few—so very much to do beyond the national borders of our country.

A nagging thought can arise, "Are we overextending ourselves?" And in celebration of the momentous Lutheran Reformation [first written during Reformation season 2013—ed.] let us continue to extend ourselves.

When our Lord walked upon the Earth, He decidedly extended Himself in His endeavors to do all things according to the Father's will and to fulfill all Scripture and the laws of God and man. He is our

chief example. But someone might say, “Yes, but He was God also and can therefore far surpass our humble efforts.” That, though, is really a cop-out for not focusing all our efforts on the one thing needful and delivering it to the peoples of the world.

“Come follow Me, the Savior spake All in My way abiding. Deny yourselves, the world forsake....” A good review of that Bible-based hymn #421 in *The Lutheran Hymnal* would belie any idea of “but He was God and we can hardly....” The little five-year-old follows his Daddy’s example regardless of differences in age, strength, or wisdom. And do the limitations even enter his mind? He loves his Daddy and emulates him. Remember the poignant scene of the little child placed in the midst of the apostles (See Matthew 18:1-6).

I hope you get the idea of how this pertains to our outreach. Another old saying is never trite; it cannot be worn out. “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.” Its enduring vividness is due to its reflection of Scripture. As another hymn (*TLH* #425) puts it, “Many spend their lives in fretting Over trifles and in getting Things that have no solid ground...”.

We have found the treasure in the field. It loses no luster with age. The pearl of great price retains its white brilliance. The exposure of this pearl to others captivates them by its divine power. Darkness is dispelled. The light is passed on from human breast to human breast.

That *what’s done for Christ* becomes an all-consuming passion is well-attested to by the apostles. And then there is that apostle whose thirteen epistles have their Spirit-wrought words beckoning us to extend ourselves again and again. Luke’s record on Paul in Acts does not even tell us all about how this “untimely-born” man extended himself really beyond comprehension.

What did Paul do during those years after his conversion until Barnabas brought him to Antioch? What did he do after he was released from his second Roman imprisonment, let alone what did he all do after release from his first Roman imprisonment? Did he get to Spain as he sought to speak in a clime unfamiliar with the gospel showers of grace? What did he do in those early years in Arabia? While we know he got to Illyricum [modern Bosnia/Herzegovina], we don’t know what he did there. His recorded performance was proof of what he accomplished, and this man’s words ring true, “*I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls...*” (2 Corinthians 12:15).

The question for us today is, “What will we spend?” The example of Paul is not an unattainable one; he was not a God/man but in his own estimation he was foremost of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15)—and in this way, upon personal introspection, he was remarkably like you and me. Does anyone detect even a whisper of a fear of *overextending* in the book of Acts, which is the record of extension?

As the rubber meets the road, here in India as elsewhere the opportunities beckon. As we look over what He has done through us, we may become quite breathless trying to catch up to a Lord who is always ahead of us. Just through the Mission Board we work with over 60,000 souls in twelve countries. And then there are the opportunities that our local congregations and individuals have taken in hand [Holy Cross of Phoenix working in Moi’s Bridge, Kenya; or Immanuel of Mankato working in Peru, etc. - editor]!

As it is with the athlete, ‘*Ohne Fleiss, kein Preis,*’ [No pain, no gain] so let us learn from Paul, “*reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 3:13-14).



FROM A CONFIRMATION SERMON

May Each of Us Ever Confess: “Jesus is Lord”!

(Pastor Em. Paul Fleischer)

The Word of God that deserves special attention on this Confirmation Day is: “*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved*” (Romans 10:9).

In the early days of the Christian Church “Jesus is Lord” was a fundamental three-word confession of the Christian faith. Three words—that’s a little bit easier than reciting the entire Apostolic Creed, as our confirmand will be doing as part of his Confirmation vow. By saying with lips and heart “*Jesus is Lord,*” those early Christians were saying a mouthful—in effect, saying everything you and I say when we confess Luther’s Explanation to the Second Article: “I believe that Jesus

Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is MY LORD, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature....” Yes, to say “*Jesus is Lord*” is as much as saying “Jesus is my Redeemer,” who has won eternal life for me.

Now, consider carefully the crowning event of Jesus’ work as our Redeemer. “*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved!*” The resurrection from the dead is cited as the grand climax of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His victory for us over sin, death, and the power of the devil! Earlier in this same letter St. Paul wrote that “*Jesus our Lord...was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification*” (4:25). There too Jesus’ resurrection is referred to as living proof that we sinners—who could never in a million years do enough good works to earn God’s favor—have been justified, declared righteous, and forgiven of all sins! Those who so believe “*will be saved,*” says the Lord’s apostle. There’s nothing left for us to DO; it’s all been DONE! Hallelujah!

Dear confirmand, this is what you have been taught and what you and we all believe—but it is nonsense to human thinking!

Let me explain. I recently read a book in defense of our Christian faith in which this is said: “...The stuff of God...doesn’t just sound strange, it is strange.” The author went on to say, “The centerpiece of Christian theology states that God became human in the person of Jesus. Listen to how crazy that sounds: God had a Son who came to Earth as a human. He was completely God and completely human at the same time. This means He could get hungry and tired, but also walk on water. Though He was beaten, He could raise people from the dead. As if this isn’t confusion enough, God died on a cross. Read it again—*God died!...God sent Himself to pay Himself for the sins against Himself*” (*No Argument for God*, John Wilkenson, p. 13).

Dear confirmand, this nonsense—these holy truths which don’t make sense to human reason—you and I and all Christians believe because the Holy Spirit “has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith...” (Third Article). Paul put it like this to the Corinthians, “*Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit*” (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Yes, to the unbelieving world this is all nonsense. By nature man looks to his own good works rather than to Jesus for his salvation. That’s what Paul is getting at in the rather strange words of the text which follow: “...

The righteousness based on faith, says, 'Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim)..." Paul here is describing the absurd notion of sinners thinking they can be their own saviors—as though they have to go up to heaven and bring Christ down to Earth, or else go down to the underworld to bring Christ back from the dead...which is not only foolish, but impossible.

Dear confirmands of this and former years, what the Bible teaches and what we proclaim is not some “far out,” cryptic, hidden message that comes from a few disciples who have ascended to heaven or descended into hell to discover it. Rather, the gospel of Jesus Christ is as close as in our mouths and in our hearts!

How sad that so many people don't know the gospel that you, dear confirmand, and we all are confessing this morning. How sad that, though the Bible is so readily available, many in our “advanced” society and culture fall for the lie—the devil's nonsense—that sinners have to win or can win forgiveness and salvation with their own good works.

God be praised that you and I know the gospel of Jesus which, far from nonsense, is the only true wisdom there is!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Great Lakes Pastoral Conference • September 30-October 2, 2014 (Tues-Thurs)
Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Agenda:

- + Old Testament: Introduction to Habakkuk and Exegesis of Habakkuk 2:1-4
—Pastor Joel Fleischer
 - + New Testament: Introduction to Revelation and Exegesis of Revelation 20:1-6
—Professor Steven Sippert
 - + Comparison of the term “Son of Man” as used in the Old and New Testaments, and what it meant then and now—Pastor Michael Wilke
 - + Homiletics Topic (Essayist's Choice)—Pastor Walter Schaller
 - + Evangelism Topic (Essayist's Choice)—Pastor Neal Radichel
 - + Justification as it Relates to Christ's Resurrection—Pastor Paul Tiefel
 - + Hermeneutics Study (part one of a series)—Pastor Michael Eichstadt
 - + Church History 1545-1580: Formula of Concord Era—Pastor Mark Bernthal
- Chaplain: Pastor Richard Kanzenbach
Communion Service Speaker: Pastor David Pfeiffer
—Pastor David Pfeiffer, Secretary

GRADUATION 2014

Graduating with the Spirit

Pastor Wayne Eichstadt reporting

“The same, but different” is an oxymoron—two ideas that are seemingly contradictory. Yet when one talks about our unchanging, eternal God in the context of a changing world, “the same, but different” often applies.

An example of “the same, but different” was evident at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato on June 8, 2014. In the morning worship service the congregation remembered and celebrated the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the first New Testament Pentecost. The *same* Spirit was present and actively working in that worship service just as He was among the apostles and the gathered crowd so many years ago. However, there was no sound of a rushing wind, no tongues of fire, and no sudden multi-lingual preaching. The way in which the Spirit was working was *different*.

Later that afternoon, Immanuel Lutheran High School graduated four seniors. As the graduates, their families, the faculty, and congregation members gathered together in God’s House, there could be no doubt that the graduates had been brought to that point by the blessing of God and the working of the same Spirit.

Faith which the Spirit had created through Baptism had been nurtured by the Spirit during eighteen years of instruction with God’s Word. Gifts given by the Spirit had been recognized and encouraged through the years of Christian education. The nurturing and growth accomplished by the Spirit in the years leading to graduation will likewise continue throughout the years that stretch out in front of each graduate. The same Spirit is demonstrably active in the lives and hearts of these young people, but the Pentecost afternoon of 2014 was vastly different than the one that took place in Jerusalem millennia earlier.

Things in popular culture are decidedly *not* the same and are forever changing. In social media, *My Space* was the “cool” place to be, then it became *Facebook*, now it’s *Snapchat* or *Instagram*, and it won’t take long for it to change again.

In this ever-changing world of pop-culture a current phenomenon



Graduates Andrew Stelter, Harley Bode, Talon Harris

is # — the hashtag. A hashtag is a quick and brief summary of someone, something, or some facet of life and its events.

In his address to the graduates, Mr. Kyle Ochsner offered these illustrations from pop-culture and then asked the question: “What is your hashtag(#)?” Using Ephesians 5:1-2, 15-21, Mr. Ochsner offered a few examples: #imitatorsofGod, #walkinlove, #redeemthetime.

Focusing on Paul’s words to “redeem the time,” Mr. Ochsner encouraged the graduates to “Make the Most Out of Every Opportunity” by abiding in the Word of God, following Jesus’ example, and walking with Him into eternity through the blessing of the Spirit.

Valedictorian Andrew Stelter thanked the large support-group that the graduates enjoyed during their years of Christian education at Immanuel. The assembly joined with the graduates in singing the Lord’s Prayer—their class hymn. The Triune God showered His blessing upon the assembly through the Benediction, after which the assembly joyfully sang, “Go, My Children, with My Blessing.”

The comfort and security of being under God’s gracious blessing was all the more poignant for one family in particular. Graduate Axton Becker was not present at the service. He had departed a week earlier to enter

the Marine Corps. How blessed we are to know that the LORD'S shining countenance is not limited geographically nor by life circumstances.

Three thousand souls were not baptized at Immanuel that day, so Pentecost was *different*. However, four graduates were sent forth with a foundation built on the Rock and with the unchanging Spirit of God dwelling in them, and in that way Pentecost was miraculously and graciously *the same*.



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“ . . . THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN .” — JOHN 10 : 35

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