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# lutheran spokesman

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IS  
MY  
BELOVED  
SON



CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

## **WEATHER AND WHETHER**

In January comes the cold winter blasts in a good share of our country. And this causes difficulty in attending church and church functions. But there is something strange about it. We recall the account of a small-town church in Kansas which did not hold services one blizzard Sunday because no one showed up. Later in the day the church caught fire and everyone in town, including most of the members of the congregation, gathered round to watch it burn down.

### **A Repeat**

Something of similar nature happened at a rural church in the open wheat lands of the Northwest. It was an extremely cold, wintry week-end with an inhuman wind-chill. Still, on Saturday evening, in a poorly-heated gym, the church basketball team played a game which was well-attended by the church members. The next morning, although the pastor was on deck and had the church fires going, no one came to worship. Supposedly, it was too cold and the roads were bad. But on Monday there was a woman's gathering, and again representatives from a good many member families of the congregation were present. Such goings-on tend to raise questions about the devious workings even of the Christian mind.

### **The Flesh is Tricky**

Centuries ago, in the days of scholasticism there was this saying: "You are what you think." The essence of this proposition can be expressed in another way: "You will always do what you want to do." How many times do we not

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hear: "I wanted to come to church, I wanted to attend the meeting, but . . ." Some other activity, which can't fail to include some other thinking, intervened.

When it comes to church affairs we perhaps are unaware or are reluctant to admit how much that tricky Old Adam influences our thinking. The Apostle Paul tells us something about the nature of this devilish entity we call "the flesh." He says: (Rom. 8:7) "The carnal mind is enmity against God." And (1 Cor. 1:14) "The natural man (this includes the flesh) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Here we find the explanation for these glaring inconsistencies. If we have a family gathering, a wedding, a banquet to go to, or tickets to a Viking game, most likely the time is never forgotten, schedule adjustments are made, inconveniences and discomfort are endured, we arrange to do what we want to do. Cold weather and poor roads do not prove to be too much of a hindrance.

Our plea is to check up on ourselves. See how the thinking goes. Do we argue ourselves into overcoming obstacles for some things, but let them stand for church affairs. And remember the deceitful nature of the flesh. It will blind you to your own inconsistencies, some of which are rather pathetic and highly amusing.

*G. Sydow*

## **SOMETHING, BUT NOT ENOUGH**

Last summer's convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (August, 1977, New Ulm, Minnesota) gave consideration to the propriety of receiving funds from other sources than the synod itself. Since it is publically known from whom WELS receives such funds, we make the reasonable assumption that the reference is to fraternal benefit societies such as the Aid Association for Lutherans and the Lutheran Brotherhood. This matter came before the convention in a memorial from the Dakota-Montana District. It was assigned to a special committee of five which is to give the matter "careful study in the light of Scripture," and report to the Ten Districts in 1978.

### **A Start**

The Proceedings of the convention do not include the text of the memorial, but it is summarized in this way: "The Scriptural Principles Involving the Expediency of Requesting and Receiving Grants, Gifts, and Matching Funds by WELS for the Lord's work from organizations not of the Church." The very fact that this subject came up at all gives evidence that there are those within the synod who have compunctions about receiving such funds. This is a point in their favor. There is validity to the subject matter in question.

### **More Needed**

But this isn't the only thing that should cause concern. If we are talking about fraternal benefit societies, whose activity is openly unionistic, an even greater

question arises in connection with membership in such a group. Such membership is a formal and legal requirement. And such membership makes one responsible for what the organization does. If there is wrong-doing in receiving such funds, surely there is just as much or more in providing them and being responsible for their distribution.

Wisconsin is making a start on a good question. What becomes of it remains to be seen. The President's Report of the same Proceedings makes this admission: "We must frankly confess that unanimity concerning this matter does not exist in the Conference of Presidents." We watch with interest.

—G. Sydow

Chapel Talk, Immanuel Lutheran  
College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

## Blessing The Lord

### X

Psalm 103:19-22 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

In the text before us we have a great hymn of praise to the LORD Almighty, a hymn in which the Psalmist asks you and me and all creatures in heaven and on earth to bless the LORD. He asks this of us because He has been so good to us. In the foregoing 18 verses of this Psalm the author has portrayed the LORD to us in such a way that any believing child of God could not help but burst forth into song. Consider what David has told you about your own life, how the great Jehovah, the eternal and almighty I AM is present every day with His everlasting mercy to forgive and comfort and encour-

age, to bless you in everything you do, your eating and drinking and rising up and lying down, to sustain you in every pain and trouble: forgiving all your iniquities, healing all your diseases, satisfying your mouth with good things, showing you a mercy higher than the heavens that has no limits or bounds, and promising to keep you with a love deeper and richer than the pity of the most devout father toward his children. I say, consider all these truths, and you not only will want to bless the LORD with a full and happy heart, but you, like David, will appeal to people everywhere and especially His

people to join you in blessing Him.

The goodness of God, His everlasting mercy, so overwhelmed the Psalmist that he not only urges all believers everywhere, but all of God's creation, all His works in all places of His dominion, yes, even the angels in heaven, to bless the LORD. In this text he pictures the LORD, in princely splendor, sitting on His throne in heaven above (as we pray to Him in the LORD'S Prayer, "Our Father, who art in heaven") from which He rules over everything according to His good pleasure, a throne from which He directs the lives of everyone of us, and governs the activities of the world for the benefit of His children. Now David appeals to that multitude of creatures that surround that throne of the Almighty in heaven. Those creatures of unlimited strength, angels and archangels and seraphim and cherubim and the whole host of heaven, creatures whose purpose and joy it is to fulfill the bidding of the LORD Almighty, these creatures are called upon to bless the LORD.

It almost seems presumptuous, does it not, that a lowly sinful mortal should ask the holy host of heaven to join him in blessing the LORD on His throne. And yet it is not presumptuous because David believed in angels and understood them. He was acquainted with those incidents recorded in Scripture in which the angels came to men to fulfil God's purposes, he was aware of the role of angels in his own life, he knew how the angel of the Lord had come again and again to the Old Testament faithful to keep alive the Gospel hope and

to encourage them in dark moments. He knew the excitement of the angels in Jacob's dream, ascending and descending the ladder to heaven to assure the patriarch a safe return to his homeland and the eventual fulfillment of the Savior's promise—an excitement that you and I see later on in the fields of Bethlehem, and that our Savior pictures to us when He speaks about the joy in the presence of the angels over a single repentant sinner. David knew these heavenly beings as creatures who rejoice in man's salvation, and intently watch over the life of each believer, and whose great pleasure it would be to join any believer in blessing the LORD. That is why he does not hesitate, as he closes this Psalm, to invoke the whole host of heaven in a grand doxology.

Psalm 103 is truly a magnificent Psalm, a glorious Psalm of praise that begins with the quiet reflection of the Psalmist on the everlasting mercy of God, climaxes with a triumphant and confident appeal for all creatures everywhere in heaven and earth to praise the merciful LORD, and ends as it once began, with the Psalmist once more quietly speaking to himself, "BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL." After studying this Psalm it is my confident assurance that you who have joined me in meditating on this word of Scripture will have found it the purest Gospel and comfort and strength for your daily life, and will also inescapably join David in saying to yourself, "Bless the LORD, O my soul."

—R. Dommer

# OUR BAPTIST NEIGHBORS—I

Some time ago one of our readers suggested a series of articles on the history and teachings of the mainline denominations in the United States: the Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, etc. The idea is good, for we have neighbors who belong to these churches, and we ought to have a general idea of what they teach and believe and why they do so. We also ought to know some of the reasons for our own non-participation in their activities.

Nevertheless it is very difficult to do justice to any denomination's teaching in a few pages. For one thing, American churches for the most part have become increasingly less confessional. A church of one Protestant denomination is very much like a church of another Protestant denomination. In fact many churches accept members from other denominations without any instruction or orientation. Then too there is wide variation within every denominational family. It is safe to say that conservative Baptists and conservative Presbyterians have more in common with each other than with the liberals of their own denomination.

In spite of these difficulties we shall attempt to present in a brief way the history and teachings of some of the major denominations. Since the president of our nation is a Baptist and Baptists are much in the news these days, we begin with them.

## **The Anabaptists of Luther's Time**

There is no direct organizational

link between the Baptists of today and the Anabaptists or Re baptizers of Luther's time. Yet they are one in their opposition to infant baptism. The Anabaptists taught "that children are not to be baptized until they have attained the use of reason and can confess their faith themselves." (*Concordia Triglotta*, p. 1099) The Baptists of today profess the very same belief.

When Martin Luther was asked his opinion on the Anabaptist principle of believers' baptism, he replied: They say "that no man should be baptized before he believes. . . . How and when they can ever know that for certain? Can they discern the hearts of men and know whether or not they believe? . . . Whoever bases baptism on the faith of the one to be baptized can never baptize anyone." (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 40, pp. 239-240)

Luther himself based baptism on the sure foundation of Christ's command in Mt. 28:19: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them." Since children are a part of all nations, there was no doubt in Luther's mind that they also should be baptized.

Luther regarded the Anabaptist teaching on baptism as heresy. Yet he conceded that the Anabaptists "have the Scriptures and the Word of God in other doctrines. Whoever hears it from them and believes will be saved, even though they are unholy heretics and blasphemers of Christ. It is not a minor grace that

God gives His Word even through evil rogues and the godless." (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 40, p. 251)

We too are confident that some who followed Anabaptist teaching in those days and some who support Baptist teaching today are part of Christ's invisible Church of true believers. The Lord will surely recognize some of them as His own on Judgment Day, in spite of their delusion with regard to baptism.

Sad to say, the Anabaptists were deluded on other doctrines as well. Because of radical objections to all oaths, to capital punishment, and to the possession of property, and because of their opinion that a Christian cannot in good conscience hold any government position, they were persecuted by the government and the people. Many were even burnt to death or drowned because of their beliefs.

The Mennonites, the Amish, and the Hutterites of today are the successors of the Anabaptists, professing many of the same beliefs.

### **John Smyth and Roger Williams**

The Baptists of today trace their beginnings to the leadership of John Smyth, an Anglican clergyman who separated from the Church of England and established the first Baptist congregation in Holland in 1609. John Smyth taught: "Infant baptism seems to us the most unreasonable heresy. . . . Infants cannot have repentance. . . . Infants' baptism is folly and nothing." (from *A Baptist Treasury*, Sydnor Stealey, editor, 1958) Since John Smyth did not accept his own baptism as an infant, he rebaptized himself as well as his

followers. It is interesting to note that these early Baptists did not stress the *how* of baptism, but only the *who*. In fact, they probably baptized by pouring rather than immersion.

Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, was associated with the early beginnings of the Baptist Church in America. Like Smyth, Williams was an Anglican clergyman who left the Church of England. When he came to New England in 1631, he refused to serve in the Puritan church at Boston because it had not completely separated from the Church of England. Later he did serve as pastor in Salem, but he continued to disagree with the Puritan officials. Williams did not believe that Sabbath-breaking should be punished by the government. He did not believe that Christianity should be taught or extended by force, but only by persuasion. In fact, Williams contended for the complete separation of church and state at a time when this was still a novel proposition.

In 1636 Williams escaped from his Puritan opponents in Massachusetts. Helped by Indian friends, he established a colony in Providence, Rhode Island. Soon he began to doubt the validity of infant baptism. For a short time he became a Baptist and founded the first American Baptist church. His colony became a refuge for Christians of all stripes and even for Jews and Moslems. Williams contended that "permission of the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or Antichristian consciences and worships should be granted to all men in all nations and countries; . . . and they

are only to be fought against with the Sword of God's Spirit, the Word of God." (from *A Baptist Treasury*) Rhode Island was the first of the American colonies to grant religious liberty.

The principle of the separation of church and state is taught in the Scriptures, (Mt. 22:21; Jn. 18:36; 2 Cor. 10:4). It was rediscovered in the Lutheran Reformation and proclaimed to the world in the Augsburg Confession of 1530. Article XXVIII of this confession states: "The two authorities, the spiritual and temporal, are not to be mingled or confused." In practice, however, the Lutherans in Germany did not succeed in carrying out a complete separation. Complete religious freedom was unknown in Europe, and Martin Luther was unable to organize a Lutheran church body that was completely separate from state control.

For this reason we Lutherans ought to be especially thankful to our God for using the testimony of Roger Williams and other Baptists in this country to lay the groundwork for the religious liberty granted to our citizens by the First Amendment of our national constitution in 1789.

When the Saxon Lutherans arrived in this country in 1839, they were able to establish an orthodox Lutheran church body without interference from the American government. This was something new for them, even as it was new in the entire history of Christianity. C. F. W. Walther rejoiced in this blessing of God, assuring his fellow-Lutherans: "The church's independence of the state is not a defect or an abnormal

condition, but the right and natural relation which ought always to obtain between church and state." (*Form of a Christian Congregation*, p. 6)

On the separation of church and state Baptists and Lutherans are in substantial agreement.

### **General Baptists and Particular Baptists**

Although almost all Baptists agree in their opposition to infant baptism and the control of their churches by the civil government, they are not at all agreed in other matters of doctrine. They themselves say: "Christian fellowship is founded upon something more than agreement in doctrine. . . . Within certain limits there is room for differing viewpoints. . . . We are bound to work and pray together as brothers, notwithstanding differences which may exist among us." (*A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice*, 1963)

One difference which has existed among Baptists from their very beginning is the difference between the *General* Baptists and the *Particular* Baptists. John Smyth in Holland, John Bunyan ("Pilgrim's Progress"), and Roger Williams in the United States were *General* Baptists, believing in the atonement of Christ for all men without exception.

But another group of Baptists arose in England around 1638, maintaining John Calvin's doctrine that Christ died only for the elect. A number of these Baptists, called Particular or Regular Baptists, settled in Pennsylvania in the 1680's and adopted the *Philadelphia Confession*



of Faith. The Calvinism in this document is very pronounced. Double predestination is taught. The claim is made that Christ redeemed only the elect. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are called ordinances "appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only Lawgiver." The body and blood of Christ are spoken of as being "spiritually present to the faith of believers."

The specific Baptist doctrines are also maintained, of course, namely, that "immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance;" and that "those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to our Lord Jesus, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance," thus eliminating infants from this blessing.

The extreme Calvinism of the Philadelphia Confession has been somewhat modified in recent years. Most likely very few Baptists today would speak like John Gill, an English Baptist (1697-1771), who taught: "God has rejected some of the race of Adam from His favor. . . . If the decree of election was from eternity, that of rejection must be so too, since there cannot be one without the other." (from *A Baptist Treasury*) We certainly would not expect the Baptist Billy Graham to proclaim such a doctrine in his crusades today. Nevertheless extreme Calvinism is still prevalent in smaller Baptist groups, such as the Primitive or Hard-shell Baptists.

### **Baptist Growth and Baptist Schisms**

As a result of the Great Awaken-

ing in the eighteenth century many churches were added to the Baptist fold. These new Baptists were revivalistic and mission-minded. They were particularly successful in their mission work among the lower classes in the South. These Baptists disdained an educated clergy and salaried workers. Their preachers were common laborers, and their emotional, dramatic preaching appealed to the common people. In spite of or because of persecution by the established Anglicans, the Baptists made tremendous gains in Virginia and the Carolinas. After the Revolution the Baptists were very successful in meeting the religious needs of the pioneers on the western frontier. The Baptists became and have remained one of the largest denominational families in our country.

The Baptists have always been known for their emphasis on individual religious liberty and the autonomy of the local congregation. In fact F. E. Mayer maintains in "The Religious Bodies of America" that this "theological individualism" is the *basic* Baptist principle on which all Baptists are united, even more so than the principle of believers' baptism. Therefore it is understandable that a unified national federation of Baptists could not develop without opposition. A small beginning was made in 1814, when a general missionary convention was held to drum up support for Adoniram Judson, Baptist missionary in Burma, and other foreign missionaries.

But Baptists had a difficult time working together. One historian says that Baptists have had a major

schism or split at least once every twenty years. There were the Anti-mission Baptists that objected to the formation of mission societies. There were the Disciples of Christ who split from the Baptists and formed their own group, which subsequently split into two on the issue of whether churches should have organs. There were the Anti-Sunday School Baptists. There was of course a split between North and South on the issue of slavery that has not yet been completely healed.

There was a split among Baptists on the issue of Sabbath worship, the Seventh Day Baptists insisting on Saturday as the proper day. More recently there have been splits between the so-called "landmark" Baptists and the larger bodies on the issue of separation from false teachings. Another conservative group, the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, seceded from the northern or American Baptist group in 1933 and continues to uphold the doctrine of Bible inerrancy and

separation from error; unfortunately this group is also entangled in premillennialism, the error that Jesus will return to set up a 1000-year kingdom of God on this earth.

There are also two very large black Baptist church bodies. As we know from recent events in Plains, Georgia some Southern Baptist churches have had difficulty accepting blacks into membership, and more schisms have resulted from this issue.

The largest association of Baptist churches in our country at the present time is the Southern Baptist Convention. For years the Southern Baptists have been battling over such doctrines as verbal inspiration and the creation account in Genesis, and they have steered clear of full involvement in such ecumenical ventures as the World Council of Churches. There is much evidence, however, that liberalism has been gaining ground, and that the Southern Baptists will soon resemble every other large Protestant association.

—David Lau

## The Church You Can't See

Yes, there is a Church you cannot see. It's not a building made of wood or stone. It's not a congregation. It's not a denomination. Yet, it is a Church. In fact, it is THE Church in the proper sense of the word. We are speaking of the Holy Christian Church. This is the Church you cannot see.

### By Faith, Not By Sight

The sceptics will say, If you can't see it, how can you say it exists? Seeing is believing, they say. Well sometimes that is true, other times not. A person would not believe that there is a wall in front of him unless he could see it with his eyes, or at least touch it.

But, when it comes to spiritual matters, then we say with St. Paul: "We walk by faith, not by sight" II Cor. 5:7. In the Apostolic Creed we do not say, I *see* the Holy Christian Church, but "I *believe* in the Holy Christian Church." To believe is to have faith, and the Bible says: "Faith is the substance of things *hoped* for, the evidence of things *not seen*" Hebr. 1:1. That kind of faith is the faith the psalmist expresses: "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope" Ps. 130:5. That kind of faith is the basis for the Christian's hope of eternal salvation spoken of by St. Paul: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" Rom. 8:24-25.

### **Membership of the Church**

The membership of the Holy Christian Church is made up of all true believers in Christ. One of our Lutheran Confessions gives this definition: "Wherefore we hold, according to the Scriptures, that the Church, properly so called, is the congregation of saints (of those here and there in the world), who truly believe the Gospel of Christ, and have the Holy Ghost" (Apology of the Augsburg Conf., Art. VII-VIII). It is on the basis of Holy Scripture that we confess our faith in "the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints." St. Paul told the people who trusted in Christ at Ephesus: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God"

Eph. 2:19. The apostle addressed the Christians at Colosse with this salutation: "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" Col. 1:2. The Holy Spirit has made all Christians members of one body, as St. Paul says: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . ." I. Cor. 12:13. To the Romans Paul wrote: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" Rom. 12:4-5. The Holy Christian Church is also called "the body of Christ" Eph. 4:12. "Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Savior of the body" Eph. 5:23. "He is the Head of the body, the Church" Col. 1:18. The members of the Holy Christian Church are also called the sheep in Jesus' fold: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd" John 10:16.

### **Invisible Church**

This Holy Christian Church described in the above Bible passages is invisible, and that for a very simple reason—faith is invisible. The faith in Christ Jesus that makes one a member of the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints, is not visible to our eyes. When we were baptized and thus became God's dear children in Christ, the water applied to our head was visible. The Gospel Word spoken together with the appli-

cation of the water could be heard. But the faith which the Holy Spirit worked in our heart was not visible. When the Lord Jesus, King of the Holy Christian Church, rules in our heart through the Gospel Word, that kingly activity is not visible. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" Luke 17:21. When Elijah in the wicked days of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel was so depressed that he wanted to die and thought that he alone was left to believe in the Lord, God told him: "Yet, I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" I Kings 19:18. The Holy Christian Church is invisible to us, but God knows everyone who truly believes in Him. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" II Tim. 2:19.

### **Basis For Our Faith**

If the Holy Christian Church is invisible, why then do we believe that it exists? We believe there is a Holy Christian Church because God in His Holy Word tells us that where the pure Gospel is preached and the two Sacraments are rightly administered, there His Church is sure to be. These we call the "marks" of the Church. The Lord commanded: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" Mark 16:15. He commanded: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" Matt. 28:19. He commanded us to receive His body and blood in the Sacrament

of the Altar: "This do in remembrance of Me" Luke 22:19. The Gospel Word which is preached and which is used in the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper is the means of grace. "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" Rom. 1:16. That powerful Gospel Word accomplishes what God wants, namely, that people come to faith and abide in that faith in Christ Jesus. He has given this wonderful promise concerning His Word: "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" Is. 55:10-11. On the basis of this promise we *believe* in the Holy Christian Church, even though we can't see it.

### **Practical Applications of This Teaching**

This teaching of the doctrine of the Church is absolutely essential to the right of understanding of the doctrine of church fellowship. It is the false teaching that the Holy Christian Church is visible, that has given rise to the modern Ecumenical Movement. Those who support the Ecumenical Movement believe that church fellowship (worshipping, praying and communing together) should be practiced with all believers in Christ. How would that work out, if we attempted to practice church fellowship on the basis of faith in

Jesus as our Lord? Everyone who says that he or she believes in Jesus would then have to be fellowshipped. On that basis we could fellowship with Roman Catholics, Baptists, Episcopalians and any who call themselves Lutheran. For, surely many in these various denominations would confess that they believed in Jesus. But, how can we tell for certain that any individual has faith in Jesus in his heart? Are we going to play God and pretend that we have the power to look into the hearts of other people and see their faith? The Bible says: "For Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men" I Kings 8:39. Therefore, we cannot point at any person, even one very well known to us, and say with absolute certainty that that person has faith in Jesus Christ in his heart. Our CLC confession "Concerning Church Fellowship" says: "The Holy Christian Church consists indeed of all believers in Jesus Christ, of all who have been begotten of the Father through the Word of Truth and are members of His family. But since faith is invisible, these brethren are invisible, and we are assured of their existence only by the Word and promise of God" (page 15).

Since faith in another's heart is not visible to our eyes, the basis for fellowship must be something else than faith in Jesus Christ. The true basis for fellowship is complete agreement in doctrine and a church practice which is in accord with the doctrine taught. Where such agreement is lacking, the Lord says: "Come out from among them, and

*be ye separate*" II Cor. 6:17. The name "separatists" is applied to us in a derisive way, but wrongly so. We are not separatists in the wrong sense that we separate where God has commanded fellowship. We are separatists in the Scriptural sense, being obedient to God's command to separate from error and those who teach it. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and *avoid them*" Rom. 16:17.

When we practice church fellowship in accordance with the true doctrine that the Church is invisible, then we are not attempting to do something beyond our capacity as human beings. God *has* given us the ability as well as the command to judge teaching and teachers: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but *try* the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" I John 4:1. When we ignore this command of God and do not test the teachers by that one infallible rule, the Holy Scriptures, but attempt to practice church fellowship on the basis of faith in Jesus, we are going beyond our human ability and contrary to the command of our Lord. He says: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the consels of the hearts" I Cor. 4:5.

### **In Conclusion**

"We believe that Jesus is our only Savior and that only in His precious Gospel do we find peace and joy and

comfort and hope. With Him we would ever be in fellowship. We yearn for the day when we shall experience the fullness of that fellowship and see Him face to face. There, with the great cloud of witnesses that has gone before, we shall be in fellowship with all believers in Him. All visible fellowships on earth shall pass away, and are as the grass which

withereth. His Word shall never pass away. Though we be separated from all human beings, but united with Christ and His Word, we shall be rich in His fellowship, and through Him, with the Father. Deliver us from evil! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" (Concerning Church Fellowship, p. 39).

—M. H. Eibs

# DAILY DEVOTIONS

## THE COMMUNION LITURGY

In the OFFERTORY, our OFFERINGS, and the PRAYERS, we have offered ourselves to God in response to the gospel. On those Sundays in which our service includes Holy Communion our Lord gives Himself to us—blessing us with His own body and blood. We rightfully speak of "celebrating" the Sacrament, for in the miracle of the Lord's Supper our Savior gives each believer a foretaste of heaven's joy—the joy of intimate communion with our Risen Savior, the joy of coming to the Lord's own Table together with our fellow believers.

Usually we begin to move toward the Sacrament with the HYMN which follows the PRAYERS. We then continue our journey to the Lord's Table with prayers of Thanksgiving and songs of adoration. These are introduced by the PREFACE which consists of the SALUTATION and two ancient Communion versicles. In the PROPER PREFACE we give thanks before partaking of the Lord's Supper, even as Christ did before instituting this sacred meal. This prayer of Thanksgiving includes the "proper," that is, a thought appropriate to the day or season of the church year. (Hymnal, p. 25.) In the SANCTUS we join with the entire communion of saints in earth and heaven, and with all the holy angels round the throne, in singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy." To the angels' song we join the Hosannas of the Palm Sunday multitude. Hosanna means "Save now, I beseech Thee."

Before we come to the Lord's Table we pray the prayer which the Lord Himself taught us to pray. In the WORDS OF INSTITUTION our Lord commands us to keep this Supper and assures us that in the Sacrament He will truly give us, together with the bread and wine, the very body and blood which He gave and shed on the cross for our redemption. With these words the Pastor also consecrates the bread and wine, setting them apart for holy use. In the PAX DOMINI (Peace of the Lord) the peace our Lord promised His disciples is announced to present-day believers. The AGNUS DEI (Lamb of God) turns our thoughts to Calvary's cross as we turn our steps to the Table of Forgiveness. We sing of the Lamb of God who sacrificed Himself for us, and then we partake of His body and blood as He comforts and strengthens each of our hearts with the words: "Given and shed FOR YOU." As Christ once gave Himself for us on the altar of the cross, so He now gives Himself to us on the altar of the Sacrament. In the assurance that it was a sacrifice for our sin that He once offered up His body and blood we possess every precious blessing the Lord gives. "Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."

Feb.	1 Psalm 23	The LORD be with you . . . and prepare His Table before you.
	2 1 Corinthians 4:1-5	And with thy spirit . . . as you minister to us.
	3 Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-34	Lift up your hearts.
	4 1 John 3:18-24	We lift them up unto the Lord.
	5 Psalm 103	Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.
	6 Psalm 92	It is meet and right so to do.
	7 John 1:32-42	Discuss the Proper Preface for Advent. (Hymnal p. 25)
	8 John 1:1-14	Discuss the Proper Preface for Christmas. (Hymnal p. 25).
	9 John 2:1-11	Discuss the Proper Preface for Epiphany.
14	10 Genesis 3:1-15	
	1 Peter 2:24	Proper Preface for Lent.

- 11 I Corinthians 15:1-8, 17-26 Discuss the Proper Preface for Easter.  
 12 Acts 1:1-11 Discuss the Proper Preface for Ascension.  
 13 Acts 2:1-11 The Proper Preface for Whitsunday (Pentecost).  
 14 Matthew 3:14-17 Discuss the Proper Preface for Trinity.  
 15 Ephesians 4:7-16 Discuss the Proper Preface for the Days of the Apostles and Evangelists  
 16 Isaiah 6:1-8 We join with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven in the SANCTUS.  
 17 Matthew 21:1-9 Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.  
 18 Luke 11:1-13 We come to our heavenly Father as His children through His Son who comes to us in the Sacrament.  
 19 John 14:1-14 In Christ and what He has done is our comfort and strength.  
 20 John 15:1-11 To abide in Christ is to abide in His forgiving love.  
 21 Matthew 26:26-35 The Lord would have us go forth from His Table with true spiritual strength.  
 22 John 14:1-3, 27 The peace of the Lord be with YOU always.  
 23 John 1:19-31 Behold the Lamb of God,  
 24 I Peter 1:13-21 which taketh away the sin of the world.  
 25 Luke 23:32-43 O Christ, have mercy upon US.  
 26 Revelation 5:1-14 Behold the Lamb of God NOW!  
 27 John 20:19-31 O Christ, Thou risen Lamb of God, grant us Thy peace.  
 28 I Corinthians 10:14-17 The Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament makes this a high and holy meal.  
 March 1 I Corinthians 11:23-32 Who, then, receives this Sacrament worthily?  
 2 I Corinthians 11:23-25 . . . then read Hymn 304 as a meditation.  
 3 I Corinthians 11:25-26 . . . then read Hymn 306 as a meditation.

*W. V. Schaller*

## Treasurer's Report

July 1, 1977—December 1, 1977

RECEIPTS	NOVEMBER	TO DATE
Offerings	\$ 29,297.71	\$ 94,630.15
Memorials	—	68.00
Interest Earned	—	26.02
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$ 29,297.71</b>	<b>\$ 94,724.17</b>

DISBURSEMENTS:		
Retirement Benefits	1,581.00	7,905.00
Capital Investments	1,672.79	8,895.43
General Administration	1,102.51	3,380.35
Missions and Administration	6,885.31	34,313.61
Immanuel Lutheran College	7,756.75	38,783.75
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$ 18,998.36</b>	<b>\$ 93,278.14</b>

CASH BALANCE FOR PERIOD	\$ 10,299.35	\$ 1,446.03
CASH BALANCE, JULY 1, 1977		<u>\$ 14,783.61</u>
CASH BALANCE, DECEMBER 1, 1977		<u>\$ 16,229.64</u>

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 SCHALLER, PAUL REV MRS  
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 94541

**OTHER OFFERINGS RECEIVED:**

ILC Expansion Fund	\$ 284.00	\$ 2,059.82
CEF-Mission Investment Fund	2,257.46	4,395.40
Udo Educational Fund	20.00	144.10
Nigerian Fund	45.00	400.40
Nigerian Visitation Fund	50.00	50.00

**COMPARATIVE FIGURES**

	NOVEMBER	FIVE MONTHS
BUDGET OFFERINGS NEEDED	\$ 23,178.00	\$115,890.00
BUDGET OFFERINGS RECEIVED	<u>29,297.71</u>	<u>94,724.17</u>
Surplus for the Month	\$ 6,119.71	
Deficit for the Year		(-\$ 21,165.83)

BUDGET OFFERINGS, 1976-1977	\$ 33,080.73	\$ 91,949.42
INCREASE (DECREASE), 1977-1978	(-\$ 783.02)	\$ 2,774.75

Respectfully Submitted,  
 Lowell R. Moen, Treasurer  
 B. J. Naumann, Chairman

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