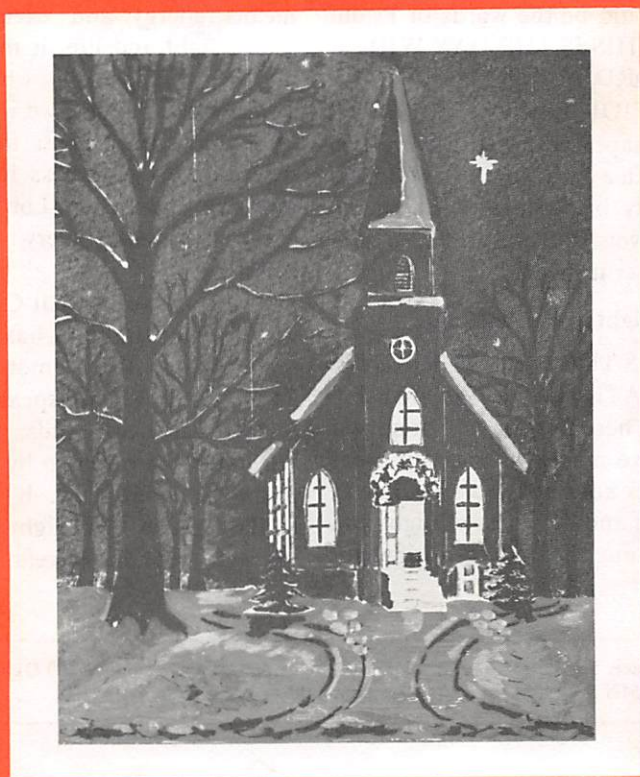


Lutheran SPOKESMAN

December 1979
Vol. 22, No. 6
(ISSN 0024-7537)



Silent Night... Holy Night

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

A Christmas Greeting

A chapel talk at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

If I were going to send each of you a Christmas card, I would have the cover designed with a picture of the shepherds of the fields of Bethlehem. Inside would be the words of Psalm 118:24: **THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HATH MADE; WE WILL REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT.** A chapel address, however, is better than a card, for in this address I not only bring this Word of the Lord to you, but we can also talk about what it means.

Light in the Darkness

THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HATH MADE. We are using this verse here to refer to Christmas, but can we not say this about every day? Does not our Lord sweep away the gloom and darkness of night and gladden our hearts with daylight

every morning? Has He not promised to do this as long as the earth remains? There is something invigorating about the approach of day. It means energy and excitement, it means light and life, it means work and play. Especially when we lie awake sick at night, we wish for the long hours of darkness to pass and we look with eagerness for the new morning. Indeed, our Lord has made every day, and every day is a blessing.

But when we say that Christmas is the day that the Lord has made, we are talking about more than a 24-hour day. We are speaking about a day that never ends, about the "day star" referred to by St. Peter, or the "star out of Jacob" spoken of by Balaam, or "the bright and morning star" of the Revelation of St.

Postmaster: Send notice on Form 3579 to the Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. Second Class postage paid at Lake Mills, IA 50450.

The Lutheran Spokesman, published monthly at 204 N. 2nd Ave. W., Lake Mills, IA 50450, is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, the issues appearing during the first week of each month.

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Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor D. Lau one month before the date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent directly to Editor D. Lau.

Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. Associate Business Manager: Peter Sydow. Subscriptions: \$3.00 for one year; \$5.50 for two years; \$8.00 for three years. Group subscriptions to congregations: \$2.50.

John, or "the dayspring from on high" mentioned by Zacharias. You see, we are talking of none other than our Savior Jesus Christ, who is brighter than day itself "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (2 Pet. 1:19; Num. 24:17; Rev. 22:16; Lk. 1:78-79)

Light in Bethlehem

Think, if you will, of the shepherds on the fields of Bethlehem. It was dark and quiet all around as they watched their flocks by night, when suddenly the glory of the Lord appeared, and those fields became brighter than the brightest day. It is hard to imagine the scene: the grass, the sheep, the bushes all as distinctly visible and plain as if they were shined on by the brightest of floodlights. With a light as dazzling and pure as the white of snow, the glory of God shone round about them. They saw what mortals can see of the holiness and purity and perfection of almighty God Himself, and they were sore afraid.

In the middle of the night day had come, the day of Jesus' birth; and no night was dark enough to hide it. Note what the angel said in this moment of day: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord." What a moment of pure joy it was as a multitude of angels burst forth into splendid song: "Glory to God in the highest . . ." This was the day the Lord had made; they did rejoice and were glad in it.

Spreading the Light

Yet almost as suddenly as the glory of the Lord appeared, it was gone. All was dark and quiet on the fields of Bethlehem again. But the new day was not gone. The day star had come into their hearts and filled them with a light and joy that moved them to go at once with haste to Bethlehem to worship their Savior. But more than that! Once they had seen the Savior, they made known abroad far and wide what they had seen and heard, speaking perhaps like this: "This is the day the Lord has made. Rejoice and be glad in it. The dayspring from on high has visited us. He has removed the shadow of death from our hearts. He has guided our feet in the way of peace."

Although the people to whom they spoke shook their heads and wondered at what these men were saying, to the shepherds a new day had really come. The light of the Word had shined in their hearts and there was no more night, no more dark corners or even shadows. The greatest shadow of all, the shadow of death, had disappeared in the light, and only peace and the good will of God was on them.

Now what about you and me? Would we not like to have been at Bethlehem's fields to see the glory of the Holy God shining round about us, to hear an actual angel speak, to listen to the chorus of thousands of the heavenly host praising God? The truth of the matter is that we have been there. We have been there this morning. The day star has again to-

day shined in our hearts through the more sure Word of prophecy, and you and I have every reason to be as joyful as the shepherds, and to encourage one another this Christmas and every Christmas with the words

of our text: THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HATH MADE;WE WILL REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT.

—R. Dommer

The Names of Our Lord and Savior

What's in a name? It is no doubt very true that the names the American Indians gave their children had much more to do with their characteristics than the names we usually give to our children today. In the ancient days when Scripture was first written, names were often given which carried with them a far deeper and more discerning understanding of the individual, his work, and his temperament.

Sometimes these names were given to the individual by the Lord Himself. In these cases they brought out a very special meaning and showed forth the special characteristics of that individual. A good example of this was the name John—given to John the Baptist—which had that very important meaning: Merciful is Jehovah. This naturally emphasizes what John had to announce—the coming of the promised Messiah, the Christ.

Another such name is that given to our Lord by the angel to Joseph: "And thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Here the meaning is completely given and we have the full picture of Him before He was ever born in Bethlehem.

The numerous names of our Lord were not chosen in a haphazard fashion, nor were they without special meaning to the people that heard them. We find that sometimes a certain name made them very angry because they did not want to accept Jesus as the One and Only Savior from sin. The reason they were often upset, however, was because *He* made the claim of a certain name and it fit Him so perfectly.

For this reason and others the meaning of these names has an application to our lives today and our eternal future. We would like to share with you a study of some of these names and their personal applications.

The Bright and Morning Star

One of the most beautiful names ever given to our Lord is the last one given in Holy Scripture—the Bright and Morning Star or the Bright Morning Star. The name is found in Revelation 22:16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR."

The thought of a brilliant star having something to do with the Christ

comes from the Old Testament prophecy of Balaam: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob." (Numbers 24:17) When the Magi came to Jerusalem after having seen a special star in the East, it was not difficult for the teachers, rabbis, and Pharisees to find the promises concerning the Messiah's birth—which no doubt also meant the message of the star. In fact, in the writings of the Jews which appeared in the period between the Old and New Testaments, there are two extensive passages speaking of the star as the Messiah. They are a part of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs.

"And after these things shall a star rise to you from Jacob in peace,
And a man shall arise from my seed, like the sun of righteousness,
Walking with the sons of men in meekness and righteousness,
And no sin shall be found in him." (*Testament of Judah*, chapter 24:1-6)

"And his star shall rise in heaven as of a king,
Lighting up the sun of knowledge as the sun the day.
And He shall be magnified in the world.
He shall shine forth as the sun on the earth,
And shall remove all darkness from under heaven." (*Testament of Levi*, chapter 18:3ff.)

These words show us that the Jews had in their minds this idea of the Messiah as a star who would disperse the darkness of sin's night from their world. Even after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. by the Roman armies under Titus—when not one stone was left upon the other—we find that this thought of the Messiah rising as a brilliant star was not forgotten. They would not

accept Jesus as the Christ, but they looked for a new one who would heal their ruined lives.

Bar-Cochba

In 132 A.D. a highly experienced and brilliant rabbi arose by the name of Rabbi Akiba. He was not only an expert in the law of God but a great man of kindness—a lover of his people. This was true to such an extent that he was renamed "The Hand of the Poor." This popular leader saw the great need of his people and was sure that the Messiah was about to come.

Just then a new popular leader arose and Akiba decided he was the promised Messiah, so he named him Bar-Cochba, which means "The Son of the Star." At first it did seem that this man would fit their ideas of a political messiah, for he was highly successful in his battles against the few Roman soldiers in Palestine, and the Syrian representative Publicius Marcellus was unable to subdue him. The Emperor Hadrian, seeing that this man was a real danger, called Rome's greatest general of the day home from Britain—Sextus Julius Severus. Bar-Cochba and his renegades were not able to stand up against the might of Rome and millions of Jews perished and the survivors flooded the slave market of the East in those days. Many others were starved out of underground caverns and passages—often becoming cannibals before they came out. The resurrection was broken and Bar-Cochba, the Son of the Star who claimed to be the Messiah, was executed and Jerusalem deliberately de-

stroyed. The name Judea was wiped out and the province was called Syria Palaestina. Temples to heathen gods replaced all religious shrines and Israelites were not allowed to enter the city except once a year to weep at the wall on the day Titus had destroyed the Temple.

Only Jesus

Yet the name did not die—the Bright and Morning Star. Early fathers of the church like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Cyprian all applied it only to Jesus. Its meaning was evident: the morning star was known to be so brilliant because it would appear just before dawn. All other stars became pale and insignificant in the heavens. This star had the definite function of being the herald of the dawn and thus the glory of a new day—the morning. When the morning star was visible, then the full and brilliant day was not far behind. Princes would apply this title to themselves because it was such an outstanding phenomenon.

How it applies brilliantly to our Lord was evident to Christians of all times. Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, was more than any other teacher. He taught them with authority and not as the scribes. The scribes became pale and insignificant, yes, even the great prophets, in contrast to Jesus, the Morning Star who brought the supreme light of God to men.

Jesus is more than a mere son of David. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords in His own right. Jesus came to drive out the darkness of sin in

this world, even though the darkness comprehended it not. He brought the light of life to men. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men." (Jn. 1:4) He brought with Him the glorious full day of salvation and peace with God.

And just as a star is not something that one nation can claim for itself, since anyone can look into the heavens and see it, so also Christ is not the Savior of one nation only but of all mankind. As Simeon said, He is "a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel." (Lk. 2:32) He is the Bright and Morning Star to bring the Day to all men.

—Ralph Schaller

Most Precious Name

Oh that precious name of Jesus!
It illumines all the soul;
It is the promise of salvation;
It is the balm to make us whole.

Oh that precious name of Jesus!
It shines far above all others;
It leads to the eternal Father
And makes of all believers brothers.

Oh that precious name of Jesus!
I would engrave it on my heart!
I would hold to it forever!
God, let its blessings not depart!

—Elsa Romberg

DOCTRINAL THEMES in the

Book of Concord

Confession and Forgiveness

Is it good to feel bad about something you've done?

Is it healthy to foster a sense of guilt in people?

One psychoanalyst, Dr. Theodore Rubin, calls it "a destructive form of self-hate." Another, Dr. Willard Gaylin, characterizes guilt as "guardian of our goodness." Most clinicians, however, distinguish between guilt that is normal and that which is neurotic. The one is a sign of health, the other a hazard to emotional well-being. Guilt gone underground, they say, may emerge as anxiety, a sense of worthlessness, fear of impending disaster, or simply a general feeling of discontent.

Christian churches today seem unsure of themselves about this, an area in which they should be specialists. Sometimes you hear prominent preachers decry all talk of sin and guilt as being "negative" and "emotionally unhealthy." More often, the Law simply lies buried beneath a whip-cream overlay of positive thinking talk which has no reference to grace and forgiveness. Many a secular psychologist would chide them

for this, and brand them as a threat to mental health, if not civilization.

The Problem Faced

The Reformation Fathers had to deal with the question carefully. Yet they faced it squarely, and the answers they formulated in our Book of Concord still serve us well:

"Since ABSOLUTION or the POWER OF THE KEYS is also an aid and consolation against sin and a bad conscience, ordained by Christ Himself in the Gospel, CONFESSION or ABSOLUTION ought by no means to be abolished in the Church, especially on account of tender and timid consciences and on account of the untrained. . ."

Smalcald Articles, III, VIII

You can sense the pressures that would have done away with the practice of CONFESSION. And it is no wonder. Like Luther, who wrote these words, most of the people concerned with the Book of Concord had cruel memories of the confessional booth, which was something like a modern traffic court. Plead guilty and you may get off with a lighter sentence. According to the common practice, the confessing Christian

had been led to believe that he could expect forgiveness only of specific sins that were remembered and recounted, and for which suitable satisfaction was rendered. In this people could never find peace; for very many sins they neither see nor can remember.

Full Disclosure

There is an answer to this problem. The Augsburg Confession picked it up from the venerable church father Chrysostom (347-407 A.D.), who had this splendid counsel:

"I say not to you that you should disclose yourself in public, nor that you accuse yourself before others, but I would have you obey the prophet who says, 'Disclose thy way before God.' Therefore confess your sins before God, the true judge, with prayer. Tell your errors, not with the tongue, but with the memory of your conscience, etc. . . ."

So the Reformers protected confession from another kind of abuse, *grandstanding*. It is that style of "witnessing" which recounts in lurid detail all the bad things I used to do "before I took Jesus into my heart." Thus a shamefully wrong impression is given, namely that I have no sin to confess since I was born again. This writer knew a Pentecostal missionary who would skip the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer. That was for those who still had trespasses to forgive. Not for him!

Lutheran liturgical worship services enable the worshipper to make "full disclosure." "I confess unto Thee that I am sinful and unclean, and that I have sinned against Thee by thought, word, and deed." This

covers the whole sordid list of our falling short of the glory that God would rightfully expect of us. It grants that in my flesh dwells no good thing. This is the honest truth of the matter. It witnesses to our sinnerhood, even as we would witness to the Saviorhood of Jesus. As it should be.

Make it Personal

To enjoy the saving health of such confessing, we need to practice being *specific* in our minds about our known failures.

When David said, "I have sinned against the Lord," he certainly had the specific of adultery and murder in mind. Nathan had helped him become conscious of those particular sins with Bathsheba. It was necessary for him as it is for all of us to confront those particular sins which burden us with a sense of guilt. Here the practice of private confessing to a trusted Christian counsellor is often useful. For it allows for that which does the healing,—

The Forgiveness.

The Reformation re-introduced what had been lost in Confession:

"Confession embraces two parts; the one is, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the confessor, as from God Himself, and in no wise doubt, but firmly believe, that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven."

—Small Catechism V

The second part, obviously, is the more important. It is the Gospel of forgiveness which does the healing, not our admission of wrong. Only when I am assured, authoritatively,

that "the Lord hath put away your sin" (Nathan), am I relieved of the guilt-burden. Christian counsellors have the only truly effective therapy for the troubled spirit. May they use it with confidence!

The trouble is that we tend to be more occupied with what we might do (the confessing) than with what God does (the forgiving). Luther was so confident of the latter, that he announced (on Maundy Thursday, 1523) that the usual practice of confession would be suspended. Instead, communicants were to announce for Communion to the pastor for an examination of Gospel understanding. Luther declared, "I have said that the Sacrament shall be given to no one except he be able to give an account *of what he receives*, and why he is going." (F. Bente, Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church, p. 75) Luther, apparently, believed in the practice of what we sometimes call "close" Communion. The concern was for the communicant, that he should not fail to find in the Sacrament of the Altar its glorious and powerful message of forgiveness. Away with the guilt!

Is a sense of guilt a good thing?

Evidently it is, if it is properly resolved. For it is a guardian of goodness in the sense that it brings some psychic pain to sinning. But it is a deadly thing, this guilt, if it is not dealt with in God's own way. The Reformers found that way again. They gave it to the world in their teaching and practice of Confession with Absolution. We thank them for it today, when so many are disconsolate. They know guilt. Let them also know grace!

—Rollin A. Reim

The Love Dilemma And Us

True Love

True love is more than affection. It surpasses the mere emotion of the parent who refuses to deny his child anything and will not beset his bottom sometimes for fear that tears will flow. It is more than the permission of a moment. Love in its highest sense includes an accurate understanding of the greatest needs of the loved one and the selfless devotion to pursue his best interests.

The inspired writers of the New Testament make an important distinction between mere affection or passion (Greek *philia*) and a higher love involving understanding and a saving purpose (Greek *agape*). The Holy God could not regard the sinful world of men with an affectionate love (*philia*), but He did and does love the world with that higher comprehending love which desires to save the sinner (*agape*). In passages such as John 3:16, "God so loved the world . . .", and 1 John 4:16, "God is love", we do not find *philia*, but *agape*.

This love which concerns itself with the eternal life and happiness of mankind above every earthly consideration is the love we are to have for fellow sinners whether friend or foe, kin or acquaintance. For "Beloved, if God *so* loved us (*agape*), we ought also to love (*agape*) one another." (1 John 4:11) This love is of God!

Permissive Love

There is another kind of love which people often mistake for the love which is of God, but which is indeed a counterfeit produced not by the Spirit of God but by the spirit of natural man. We will call it "permissive love". Permissive love's greatest concern is to refrain from hurting another's feelings, cramping his style of living, or causing other difficulties for him. This is that "live and let live" love of our age, that soggy fleshly emotion which will condemn nothing and no one as wrong, but seeks to justify and permit nearly everything. Thus the children of our society are learning from little on that love equals permission to do as they please. In the name of love homosexuals and their sin are receiving ever wider acceptance by clergymen and churches. A permissive love had brought the practice of church discipline, commanded by Christ and His Apostles, to near extinction in many Christian Churches.

The Love Dilemma

It is when such permissive love determines the posture and activity of a person or group that a dangerous "love dilemma" develops. For such a concept of love contradicts the commandments of God. Love becomes opposed to the Truth!

With all deception and confusion this too began in the Garden. Satan suggested to Eve that God did not permit the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because He wanted to restrict their intelligence lest it become as complete as His. Thereby the Deceitful One implied that true love would have permitted what God forbid!

But God *is* LOVE! He is also TRUTH (Jn. 14:6) and His Word is TRUTH (Jn. 17:17). Accordingly, it cannot be that God's love is ever opposed to the truth of His Word. God does not contradict Himself! Those who see a conflict between the application of God's principles and commandments and a certain "love" which they feel for someone have devised their own dangerous dilemma. They are operating with a love of permissiveness which may seem godly, but which is not of God at all!

In his commentary on Galatians 5:9 ("a little leaven leavens the whole lump") Luther denounces that "love" which would yield a single teaching of Scripture for the sake of "getting along".

"The sectarians who deny the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper accuse us today of being quarrelsome, harsh, and intractable, because as they say, we shatter love and harmony among the churches on account of the

single doctrine about the Sacrament . . . A curse on a love that is observed at the expense of the doctrine of faith, to which everything must yield—love, an apostle, an angel from heaven, etc.” (*Luther’s Works*. Vol. 27, pp. 37-38)

And Us

We may well understand Luther’s position. Not so many years ago we were exposed to “a little leaven” of error in our former fellowship. Once again “love” was made to oppose a clear teaching and command of God: Romans 16:17-18. In separating ourselves from this fellowship we denounced such a love as a lie, a counterfeit, because it was not consonant with the truth of Him who IS LOVE.

Satan proved in the beginning how masterfully he can manipulate our hearts and emotions to mistake permissiveness for godly love. But he can do nothing with the unchanging recorded Word of Truth. There we are reminded that the true love, the love which is of God, is, above all, strong to save the sinner from everlasting torment. The entire truth of our God, the Holy Scriptures, is meant to serve this loving purpose. Therefore we who have been born again through this truth ought to “speak the truth in love”! (Eph. 4:15)

In order to faithfully practice the fellowship-separation principle set forth in Scripture we must encourage our brother to surrender an insurance policy which involves him in the religious unionism forbidden by God. Let us do so with the same loving concern which moved our Lord to set forth the command: “Be ye separate”. (2 Cor. 6:17)

If the homosexual needs to hear the truth of God’s Law which condemns his perversion, let us preach it to him with the loving hope that a broken spirit may be made to rejoice and live through faith in the Gospel of forgiveness!

If a friend or relative is caught up in the confession and support of false teachings which by their cancer-like nature threaten the entire doctrine of Christ and therefore the soul’s salvation, let not a weak permissive love move us to pray with him. Rather by refusing to fellowship with him, according to our Lord’s command (Rom. 16:17-18, 2 Cor. 6:14-18, 2 Tim. 2:17-19), let us sound the alarm in loving concern for his eternal safety!

Or again, can we improve upon the love expressed for the erring brother in such Scripture directives concerning church discipline as Mt. 18: 15-18 and 1 Cor. 5:1-11? Jesus would have us go so far as to eliminate the unrepentant sinner from the congregation, if need be, in order to “gain” our brother, that is, return him to his Savior through repentance and faith.

At Corinth an unrepentant sinner was continuing in his soul-destroying ways while the congregation refused to deal with him according to Christ’s command. Paul condemns such permissive love and admonishes them to eliminate this leaven of unrighteousness from their midst lest it “leaven the

whole lump"! He shows us that "delivering such a one unto Satan" is truly evangelical and loving, since it is for the purpose of destroying the flesh "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

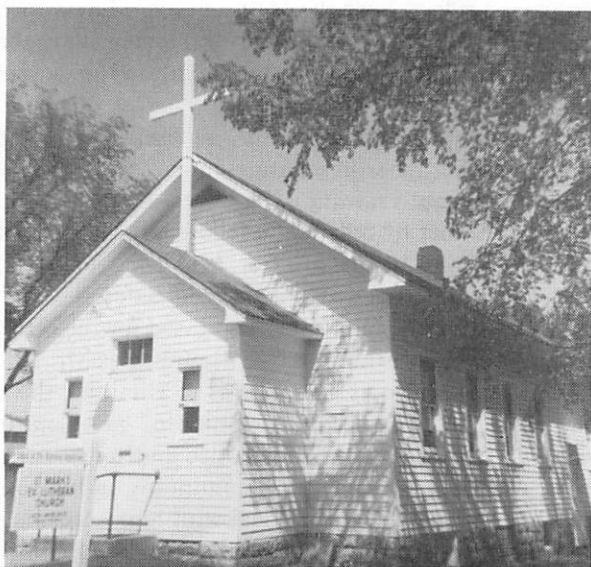
Who of us would want to presume to show a "better" love toward our fellowmen by refusing to apply the doctrinal principles and commands which God's perfect love has given? Let us beware of the permissive love which drags us into dangerous love dilemmas, remembering that true love does not choose its own way, nor lie against the saving truths of God in the process. For "This *is* love, that we walk after His commandments." (2 Jn. 6) May God the Holy Spirit grant every Christian an ever greater abundance of such love, for it is of God, the One who loves to save sinners.

—Vance Fossum

TWENTY YEARS AGO

The summer and fall of 1959 will not easily be forgotten by a number of congregations in the Church of the Lutheran Confession. For it was at that time twenty years ago that these congregations were organized by

pastors and individuals who were bound in their conscience to obey God's Word in Romans 16:17 and "avoid" the synods of the Synodical Conference as causers of divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine



St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Onalaska, Wisconsin



St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Stoddard, Wisconsin

which they had learned.

Among these twenty-year-old congregations are two small churches in the La Crosse area of southwestern Wisconsin: St. Mark's Lutheran Church of Onalaska, organized on October 9, 1959; and St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Stoddard, organized on November 16, 1959.

At the present time these two congregations are both served by Pastor Arthur Schulz. Therefore it was natural for them to celebrate their twentieth anniversaries together. The service was held at Stoddard on September 30, and Professor Roland Gurgel of Immanuel Lutheran College was the guest speaker. Former pastors John Lau and Jonathan Schaller were also able to be present for the service, the noon meal, and the slide presentation that brought back treasured memories of former days.

But it is significant that these two

congregations combined their anniversary celebration with a mission festival. At an anniversary we look back to see God's blessings in our past history and bless His holy name. At a mission festival we look forward to the future, and ask God to make us a blessing to others by word and example and mission activity. The guest speaker pointed out that a church which has no interest in missions is a dead church. So also an individual who has no interest in missions has a dead faith; that is, he has no faith at all.

May all of our congregations, whatever their age, recognize that the blessings of pure doctrine are not meant to be hoarded but shared. "Freely ye have received; freely give." (Mt. 10:8) "God lets us live here on earth in order that we may lead other people to believe, doing for them what He has done for us." (Martin Luther, *W. A. XII*, 267)

—D. Lau

The October Coordinating Council

The CLC Constitution provides for a fourteen-man Coordinating Council to coordinate the work of the various boards of the CLC. In due time our congregations receive full reports of all these council meetings through their pastors. What follows is not intended to be a complete report of the October meeting in Eau Claire, but just some reflections on some of the major items of business.

Budgetary Matters

The 1978 CLC Convention adopted a cooperative budget plan with three phases: 1) the information phase; 2) the subscription phase; 3) the distribution phase. We are now involved with the information phase for the 1980-1981 budget. The boards of the CLC submitted their programs, the Coordinating Council made suggestions, and the results are now being submitted to every CLC congregation through their pastors.

The proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1980 is as follows:

CONTINUING NEEDS:	Board of Education	\$600	
	Board of Missions	122,750	
	Board of Regents	130,875	
	Board of Trustees	73,102	
		<hr/>	
		327,327	327,327
URGENT PROJECTS:	Board of Missions	41,200	
	Board of Regents	29,400	
	Board of Trustees	2,040	
		<hr/>	
		72,640	72,640
WIDER OPPORTUNITIES:	nothing submitted at this time		
TOTAL BUDGET			\$399,967

We must understand that this is the *proposed* budget. According to the cooperative budget plan, it is the individual congregations themselves that determine the *actual* budget. How do they do this? They study the proposed budget in December and January. After due consideration of the Lord's blessings in the past and the doors He is opening at present, every congregation subscribes a certain amount for the work of the CLC.

We wish all of our readers could have heard the earnest discussions of our CONTINUING NEEDS, our URGENT PROJECTS, and our WIDER OPPORTUNITIES. When we hear of small groups of fellow-confessors in Portland, Oregon, in Pasco, Washington, in Austin, Texas, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and in other places as well, then we see the urgency of the Board of Missions request for money for a new mission. If we were to total up all the wider opportunities, we would come up with a huge figure indeed.

The New Boys' Dormitory

The Coordinating Council is hopeful that the required amount of \$186,000 (half of the original total estimate) will be on hand by April of 1980 so that construction of the new boys' dormitory can begin in spring and be in progress at the 1980 Convention. It was stressed that 1980 is an anniversary year, the 400th anniversary of the *Book of Concord*, the 450th anniversary of the *Augsburg Confession*, and the 20th anniversary of the CLC. One response to God's blessings would be the erection of a safe and solid dormitory for our young men, to match the girls' dormitory completed in 1976.

But it will definitely require increased contributions by our members to reach the half-way goal of \$186,000. So far \$120,000 has been received. For the last 15 months an average of \$6,729.91 per month has been received for this fund. This rate will have to double if the dormitory is to be built next summer.

—D. Lau

Daily Devotions

MATTHEW— THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

The Kingdom of God which John the Baptist proclaimed and Jesus of Nazareth established has come to us. For the Kingdom of God is nothing other than God's gracious rule in the hearts and lives of men by means of the Gospel of Christ. We call Jesus our Lord, for He is exactly that—our King and Master. He rules and controls the entire universe. He will gloriously rule His own in the world to come. But we take comfort most of all in the fact that Jesus is presently exercising His rulership in the gathering and preserving of His believers by means of Word and Sacrament—bringing people everywhere to saving faith, that they might live under the blessing and protection of His kingship, now and forever.

As we enter on a new calendar year, let us consider what a great and gracious King we have in Christ our Savior, what comfort and blessing and protection is ours as His people, and what important tasks our King gives into the hands of His loyal subjects. And since the theme of Matthew's Gospel is: "Jesus is the King," this first book of the New Testament well fits the first month of a new year. May the Holy Spirit bless our devotions so that in our hearts and lives the year ahead is truly The Year of Our Lord, 1980.

THE PREPARATION

January	Matthew	"The Good News of the King"
1	1:18-25	The Name of the King.
2	2	The Boyhood of the King.
3	3	The Presentation of the King.
4	4:1-11	The King Battles His People's Foe.

THE PROCLAMATION

5	4:12-25	"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven Is at Hand."
6	5:1-16	Citizens of the King Described.
7	5:17-48	Statutes of the King.
8	6	The Will of the King.
9	7	The Way of the King.

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| 10 | 8:1-17 | The King's Power over Disease. |
| 11 | 8:18-34 | The King's Power over Nature and over the Devil. |
| 12 | 9:1-26 | The King's Power over Death. |
| 13 | 9:27-38 | The King's Power over Darkness and Dumbness. |
| 14 | 10 | The King's Cabinet—Missionaries of the Messiah. |
| 15 | 11 | The King Questioned and Rejected. |
| 16 | 12 | The King Opposed. |
| 17 | 13:1-30 | The King Rules through His Word. |
| 18 | 13:31-58 | The King's Reign in Human Hearts Is Like . . . |
| 19 | 14 | The True King Is Not Herod, but the Creator Come to Earth. |
| 20 | 15 | The King's Opponents Rebuked, His Subjects Renewed. |
| 21 | 16:1-20 | The King's People Know the Answer to the King's Most Important Question. |

THE PROPITIATION

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| 22 | 16:21-28 | The King's Preaching Concerning His Death. |
| 23 | 17 | The King's Glory. |
| 24 | 18 | The King's Concern for the Lost. |
| 25 | 19 | The King's Preaching Concerning the Family. |
| 26 | 20 | The King Deals with the Problem of Pride. |
| 27 | 21 | The Triumphal Entry of the King. |
| 28 | 22:1-14 | The Wedding Feast of the King. |
| 29 | 22:15-46 | The King's Authority Established. |
| 30 | 23 | Pronouncements of the King. |
| 31 | 24:1-35 | The Future of the King's Old Testament People. |