

# lutheran spokesman



# The Word Made Flesh—Jesus Our Brother

Hebrews 2:14-18—Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (*New International Version*)

The Christmas story is told in many ways. In word and song, with symbols and lights, using the voices of children, we meditate on the miracle of Christmas. The Gospel writers all approached the birth of Jesus from different perspectives. Luke records the birth of Jesus from Mary's perspective. His is the familiar and beautiful recital: "And it came to pass in those days . . ." Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus from Joseph's viewpoint and presents the coming of Jesus in the perspective of Old Testament prophecy. "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled." Mark begins not with

Jesus' birth but with the beginning of His ministry. John showing that Jesus is the eternal Son of God sums up Christmas: "And the Word became flesh."

## Jesus Our Brother

God seeks to communicate to us not only the fact of Jesus' birth, but also the meaning of His birth for us. Jesus' coming is presented against the backdrop of Old Testament promise. Revealed in Jesus is God's plan of salvation for lost and dying men. Always behind the cradle looms the cross. All of this is summed up for us as the writer to the

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.

Editor: David Lau, 1534 West Ave., Red Wing, MN 55066; Artists: Waldemar Bernthal, Peter Gullerud, Randi Gullerud; Staff: F. Archer, H. Duehlmeier, M. Eibs, P. Fleischer, M. Galstad, D. Menton, Rollin Reim, R. Roehl, P. Schaller, W. V. Schaller, J. Schierenbeck, G. Sydow, M. Sydow, T. Thurow.

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.

Hebrews speaks of Christmas in terms of Jesus' becoming our Brother. This picture is used by many of the hymnwriters including Luther.

*"Your brother is th' eternal God."*  
(Lutheran Hymnal #103:3)

Christmas stresses the paradox of God's becoming man. "The Word was made flesh." Christmas stresses the humanity and the humanness of Jesus. Jesus as a tiny baby needed to be cared for, to be nursed, to be changed. He took upon Himself the form of a servant. He became our Brother. "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity." We celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Brother.

*"An infant all divine was born,  
and God Himself became your  
Brother upon this happy Christmas  
morn."* (LH #100:1)

Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers. Brother denotes a close, personal relationship. We speak of a blood-brother or a soul-brother or a brother in the faith. Jesus identified with us. "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way." We dare not underplay the miracle of Jesus' humanness. Jesus is Immanuel—God with us. John speaks of recognizing the Spirit of God: "Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not of God." (1 John 4:2-3)

*"See the miracle of love: God  
Himself from heaven above came to  
be our Brother."* (LH 78:1)

## Why He Became Flesh

The picture of Jesus as our Brother tells us why the Son of God had to become man. "Since the children have flesh and blood, he shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death." Jesus came to die for us. "But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." (Heb. 2:9) Jesus had to identify with us and all mankind so that He could stand in "for us." As our High Priest, Jesus made atonement for the sins of the people.

Christmas and the reason for Jesus' becoming man lie at the cross. Philippians connects Christmas and Calvary. "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross." (Phil. 2:8) Jesus as our Brother came to take our place under the Law (as the Man) and to taste death for us. Thus He freed us from the slavery and fear of death."

*"The Son obeyed His Father's  
will, Was born of virgin mother,  
And God's glad pleasure to fulfill,  
He came to be my Brother.*

*No garb of pomp or power He  
wore, A servant's form, like  
mine, He bore,*

*To lead the devil captive."*

(LH 387:6)

## He Understands Us

The fact that at Christmas Jesus became our Brother also means that

we can come to Him in all our needs. He is pictured in Hebrews as our great High Priest. This means that He once and for all made a perfect sacrifice for all sins—Himself. But the picture of the high priest carries with it the thought that Jesus is our Interceder. He pleads our case with a sense of understanding. He is our Brother. "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

Christmas assures us that we have a Savior who understands and who cares. Because Jesus is our Brother, He has a feeling of empathy for us. He has been there. He is not up there somewhere, untouched by our problems. The miracle of Christmas is that God has become our Brother. "For we do not have a high priest

who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Heb. 4:15-16) Or as Luther put it:

*"Let hell and Satan rage and chafe, Christ is your Brother—ye are safe."* (LH #103:4)

Jesus is your Brother. Christmas tells us that God became man, like us in every way except for sinning. Christmas tells us that Jesus became our Brother so that He could suffer and die for us. Christmas tells us that Jesus continues to care for us and identify with us. Jesus is your Brother.

—J. Schierenbeck

## ***The Most Dangerous Trend of All***

A trend is defined as a general tendency, course, or drift. It is simply the way things are going, either for good or for ill. In keeping with the constant vigilance that is expected of them ("Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves"—II Corinthians 13:5) God's people need to be kept aware of trends which need reversing, tides which need stemming, drifts which need halting.

There is a trend which, it seems to us, is as dangerous as any could possibly be. We speak of a trend away from accepting the Bible as God's verbally inspired Word and a corre-

sponding lack of knowledge of even the most basic Biblical facts.

In what is to follow, let no one imagine that we are equating mere knowledge of the Bible and its contents with Christianity. Even the devil knows the Bible. Furthermore, much of what we are about to say is based on opinion polls. Let it be granted that there are times when such polls can't tell the whole story. According to his personal poll, the prophet Elijah was convinced that he was the only child of God left on earth. The Lord, who alone can read hearts, comforted His sulking prophet by revealing that he was in

error by 6,999 persons. (I Kings 19) On the other hand, the Lord Jesus one time conducted a public opinion poll of His own, as it were, asking His disciples about what the common people were saying about His identity. (Matthew 16) We think also of the occasion when the Savior expressed His dismay at the fact that a full 90% of the lepers He had cleansed failed to respond with the proper worship and praise. (Luke 17)

### What the Polls Show

A recent poll taken by *Christianity Today* had to do, among other things, with what people think of the Bible and how often they use it. According to this poll, 42% of the general American public believe the Bible is the Word of God and never mistaken. The figure is up, though only slightly (48%), when those who profess to be Protestants were polled. As for Roman Catholics, 41% claimed to believe the Bible is the Word of God.

If we are surprised at the low percentages of people in "Christian" America who accept the Bible as the Word of God, we should be more alarmed at what the figures reveal about the number of those who read it daily. These percentages were: general public, 12%; Protestants, 18%; and Roman Catholics, 4%. The percentages of those confessing that they read the Bible less than once a month or never are: general public, 52%; Protestant, 41%; and Roman Catholic, 67%.

Would the responses be more encouraging if only those who call

themselves Lutheran were polled? In 1972 *A Study of Generations* reported that only 24% of Lutherans agreed with the statement that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God and without error. As to how often Lutherans actually read the Bible, the poll revealed the following: daily, 12%; weekly, 15%; occasionally, 50%; never, 12%; and no response, 2%. In other words, things are hardly more encouraging in the Lutheran Church (which at one time could properly pride itself on being known as the Bible church).

With all this, is it fair to conclude that this is a trend, a drifting away, compared to the way things were some years ago? Those who analyze the polls say yes. We have all seen results of other religious polls, just about all of which report a steady decline and erosion of traditional Christian beliefs and values over a wide range of subjects.

### A Drift Towards Ignorance

In his 1972 book, *Death in the City*, Dr. Francis Schaeffer makes this observation: "In the United States in the short span from the twenties to the sixties, we have seen a complete shift. Of course, in the United States in the twenties not everyone was a Christian, but in general there was a Christian consensus. Now that consensus is completely gone. Ours is a post-Christian world." In support of this strong indictment, Schaeffer suggests: "If in the twenties you had distributed a questionnaire in a place like Columbus Circle in New York, you would

have found that most of the people may not personally have been Christians, but they at least would have had an idea of what Christianity was . . . But if today you would distribute a questionnaire . . . you would find that almost every man you asked would have little or no concept of true Christianity.”

Backing up this assessment are the more current results of the *Christianity Today* poll. Among the discoveries was that “over 40% of any group did not know what Jesus said to Nicodemus, even when supplied with a multiple choice answer, and could not name even five of the ten commandments.”

How about us? We are quite confident that 100% of our CLC people would agree that the Bible is the Word of God in its every word and part. But we wonder out loud: can we be as confident that all of us know such basic Bible facts as what the Savior had to say to Nicodemus, and what the Ten Commandments are? Do you? To have and confess God’s Word in its truth and purity is one thing. But in itself that is not enough. The Bible can become a sacred cow for us unless we strive, individually, to become ever better acquainted with its contents through faithful use of it.

### **The Dangers**

What makes an ignorance of Biblical knowledge so dangerous? First of all, of course, it is dangerous for our personal faith. Faith’s Creator, Nourisher, and Sustainer, God the Holy Spirit, does His blessed work

through no other medium than through the means of grace, the read and spoken Word of God and the Sacraments. Being content with a minimal knowledge of Bible facts and teaching also hinders us in our Christian duty to confess Christ before others. The better you know a subject, the better you will be at telling others about it.

Ignorance of the Bible, its facts and teachings, makes us all the more susceptible to the poison of false teaching which abounds in our post-Christian world. We should not be surprised at how the cults, for example, are experiencing such growth in our country when spiritual ignorance is as rampant as it is. So many people, even in the churches, cannot tell the difference between truth and error. More than a superficial knowledge of the Bible is necessary for us to obey God’s injunction to “test the spirits whether they are of God.” (I John 4)

Finally, an unchecked trend away from the Bible and its rightful use will lead to the judgment of God. The form this judgment will take can be learned from Amos 8:11-12, for example. Such words ought to bestir us to begin taking steps to reverse this frightening trend away from the Bible.

### **Learning From History**

There is much that can and must be learned from history. Think of the time around the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The preceding years were known as the Dark Ages, chiefly because the Roman Catholic

Church kept the Word of God from the common people. Things had come to such a pass that, upon his return from "polling" the people in the churches, Luther gave this evaluation: "Alas, Good Lord, of all the misery I saw! The people, especially in the villages, know nothing at all of Christian doctrine; and many pastors are sadly unfit and incompetent to teach. Yet all are called Christians, have been baptized, and enjoy the use of the Sacrament, although they know neither the Lord's Prayer, nor the Creed, nor the Ten Commandments." (Luther's *Small Catechism*, Preface)

God in His merciful grace stemmed the tide. His Word, long a hidden treasure, was restored to its rightful place in the church. A main contributing factor was Luther's translating the Bible into the language of the people, who read and studied it avidly.

Today we have the Bible in our own tongue. There is no excuse for any of us not to have a Bible. There is really no excuse, either, for us not to use it—personally, as well as in the congregation of Christians, in worship services, Bible Classes, Sunday Schools. If you have gotten out of the habit of conducting family

devotions, why not start now? If you need help in doing so, ask your pastor. One suggestion is using the devotional section which appears in this, and every, issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman*. Encourage others to do the same.

While the Reformation launched a positive trend, the Reformer knew how easily the trend could be reversed again. With this in mind he wrote words which have not lost their urgency to this day: "My dear countrymen, buy while the market is at your door; gather the harvest while the sun shines and the weather is fair; use the grace and Word of God while they are near. For know this, that the Word and grace of God are like a passing shower, which does not return where it has once been. The Divine favor once rested upon the Jews, but it has departed. Paul brought the Gospel into Greece; but now they have the Turks (that is, the Moslems). Rome and Italy once enjoyed its blessings; but now they have the Pope. And the German people should not think that they will always have it; for ingratitude and neglect will banish it. Therefore seize it and hold it fast, whoever can; idle hands will have an evil year." (Cf. *Luther's Works*, Vol. 45, pp. 352-353)

—Paul G. Fleischer

## Guilty As Charged

It is a matter of public record that the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) has taken a confessional stand over against fraternal benefit

societies that function as do the Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and the Lutheran Brotherhood (LB). It thus becomes a matter of interest

to us what other conservative Lutherans do about such groups.

In 1976 the convention of the Dakota-Montana District of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) submitted a memorial to their synodical convention asking the synod to "study in the light of Scriptural principles the expediency of the current practice of WELS requesting and applying for gifts, grants, and matching funds from any source outside of WELS." The 1977 convention of the WELS resolved to appoint a committee of five to study the question.

This committee reported its findings to the 1979 convention in a rather lengthy report, fifteen pages of rather small print in the 1979 WELS Convention Proceedings. The report covers somewhat more than what was asked. It addresses itself almost entirely to the AAL, since that organization is the primary source of the grants in question. A distinction is made between the AAL and LB. Because of certain wording in the LB constitution, the report says: "Yes, we would be compromising our confession by receiving grants from the Lutheran Brotherhood and by becoming members of it."

### **Christian Liberty?**

It is not our purpose now to deal with all the argumentation, especially the Scripture passages used, in the committee report. That would take a writing of considerable length. We center our attention for the moment on the final conclusion:

"When we follow the example of the Master Teacher of Scripture, then we see that the question of whether the church may look for help to support its mission from sources outside the church ought to be removed from the context of right and wrong and placed where it belongs, in the realm of Christian liberty." They arrive at this conclusion primarily from the account in Ezra that the Jews received help from the Persians in rebuilding the Temple after the Babylonian captivity. This was also said: ". . . there are no passages which expressly prohibit Christians from accepting or requesting resources from outside the church." Again: ". . . the same silence obtains in regard to whether the church may or may not look for help from the outside."

### **Unconvinced!**

We remain unconvinced. The single, isolated incident in Ezra, a matter of the Lord's doing and not of solicitation, does not provide the answer for the sanctification expected of a New Testament believer. The Old Testament has numerous accounts of God's dealing with the pagan world. God's omnipotent overrule of the unbelieving world does not and cannot become the criterion for the behavior of the New Testament Christian. We are now in the time of maturity. Things are decided by faith and walking in newness of life, and what fits together with that. We have a feeling that it was this connotation that brought forth the memorial from the Dakota-Montana peo-



ple. If so, they were on the right track and should have stuck to their guns. Support of church work should be solicited only from those who share its confession.

To speak of "no passages" which pertain directly to the matter in question is obtuse literalism. It is a convenient device when we don't want to face up to issues. Even for Bible-bound Christians there is such a thing as mistaken literalism. It is the demand for a passage that literally says in so many words what should or should not be done. Surely, we can't do much with the Bible without making deductions. Luther acknowledged that in his well-known words at the Diet of Worms. From what Scripture says about sanctification and stewardship, valid deductions can be made about where support is to be sought. And it always comes out: First believe with us; then help us.

### **Our Confessional Expression**

We find a better answer in the statements prepared by our Immanuel Lutheran College faculty when it was confronted with the same question in November 1966. After considering a study of the matter by Professor Edmund Reim, the faculty arrived at these conclusions:

"From the foregoing it should be clear that:

- a. the work that the AAL is doing in these programs is church work, involving particularly the work of missions in the training of workers in the vineyard;
- b. the work is joint church work, in an area that involves more than externals;

- c. that even before the change that is to be in effect Jan. 1, 1966, it was joint work with such as were no longer joined in their confession of faith, hence unionistic in character;
  - d. that after the end of this year it will be work done in the name of pan-Lutheranism, and in the furtherance of its cause.
- "It is therefore evident that:
- a. as a school we cannot solicit support from this source without denying the Scriptural passages to which our CLC stands committed;
  - b. as for our students, we can for the same reason neither recommend nor endorse these scholarships, but must rather warn against the offence which could result from acceptance of this aid."

These statements were submitted to the Board of Regents of ILC and the president of the synod. Although they have never been officially adopted by a convention of the CLC, they nevertheless stand as a part of our public confessional record and an expression of the attitude found in our synod.

### **The Larger Question**

It is possible that the above propositions will be discounted with the claim that they are dated and that things have changed in the AAL since 1974. The report of the WELS committee touches upon the basic and all-important question whether membership in the AAL involves one in unionism. It is granted that at one time the wording of the bylaws said as much, but objections from the Wisconsin Synod "resulted in a removal of such expressions." In 1974 the president of the AAL said in the *Correspondent*: "It is not our purpose to be a church body, or a

Lutheran institution carrying out church work, or an arm of the church." The WELS takes great comfort in this statement. The report reads: "In view of this change, we conclude that grants received from the AAL do not bring us into religious fellowship with those who are not in doctrinal unity with us. Since the AAL has made the changes we asked for, it is not fair, just, or charitable to speak and act as though no change had taken place and as though objections on the score of unionistic involvements were still valid." Here the finger is pointed at us since we have characterized the AAL as unionistic.

### Superficial

We find this evaluation superficial, a matter of playing with words. To be sure, words are important, but as the saying goes: "A rose by any other name is still a rose." Ultimately, if things don't fit together, we have to look not only at what they are saying, but also at what they are doing. No matter what is said, we always have to deal with essence. In spite of the changed wording, if anyone reads the current issues of *Yes* and the *Correspondent*, he finds that the AAL is not just engaging in benevolences in the name of Christianity, but also is actively supporting many Lutheran synods, schools, institutions, and individuals regardless of what is taught and confessed by them. The stated purposes of the AAL still include "assistance to Lutheran congregations and their institutions" and "religious en-

deavors as the Board of Directors may determine." (Art. IV, Revised Articles of Incorporation)

The charge of the CLC still stands. When one is a member of the AAL, he is a member of a unionistic organization and thus participating in the activity of an organization "that conflicts with the Word of God." (See your church constitution.)

### A False Distinction

It might be well to say something about the organizational structure of the AAL lest a false distinction is made. In the textbook on pastoral theology, *The Shepherd Under Christ*, written by two WELS seminary professors, there is a section that deals with "organizations which in themselves have no inherent principles and purposes that make membership impossible. They may, however, at times have incidental adjuncts . . . which are not an essential part of the organization." This in contrast to an organization that "has objectionable religious elements as an intrinsic part of the organization, making affiliation on the part of members impossible." Here is where we can pinpoint our differences with WELS on the AAL. They no doubt see the religious element in AAL activity as only an "incidental adjunct." We say it is an essential.

There is such a thing in the realm of thinking processes as making a distinction between the "essential" and the "incidental" or "accidental." This distinction often does have application in our fellowship activity. At times we have to make use of it.

But it hardly can be applied to the AAL.

### **A Legal Requirement**

The AAL as a fraternal benefit society has to be and is organized under the laws of the State of Wisconsin governing such organizations. In defining a fraternal benefit society the law reads that it "exists solely for . . . 2, any lawful, social, intellectual, educational, charitable, benevolent, moral, fraternal, patriotic, or religious purposes for the benefit of its members or the public, carried on through voluntary activity of its members in their local lodges or through institutional programs of the fraternal or local lodges." Further requirements include: "has a lodge system; has a representative form of government; engages regularly in programs involving membership participation to implement the purposes." (*Wisconsin Statutes Annotated*, p. 407 ff.) This is to be kept in mind when comparison is made with "old line" insurance companies which are organized under a different legal basis. What is required of fraternal benefit societies is for the purpose of gaining certain legal advantages, especially tax exemption.

As might well be expected, the AAL is aware of all this. In the *Correspondent*, spring 1977, in connection with the publication of the revised Articles of Incorporation we read: "The wording of part IV was adopted verbatim from Wisconsin's new statute on fraternal. Strict use of the statutory language assures that AAL intends to operate exactly as contemplated by law." In this in-

stance we don't want the term "lodge" to mislead us. In order to avoid the implications the AAL uses the term "branch." But the legal requirements remain the same. To be a fraternal there has to be this "branch" system with a representative form of government which engages in some kind of benevolent activity. If anything, according to law the life insurance becomes the "incidental."

### **Not Tokenism**

We could conceive (but not recommend) that an organization could carry out only a technical or token compliance with the law just to get the tax advantages. The AAL does not do that. It enters into branch benevolent activity with both feet. And that benevolent activity is centered in support of Lutheran religious activity no matter whether false teaching is involved. And all of this is done in the name of religion, of Lutheran Christianity. The evidence is overwhelming. Both legally and practically, religious activity is an essential in the AAL. The evaluation of the CLC stands in the light of reality.

### **A Leaven Working**

Years ago, during the days of separation and the formation of the CLC, there was private speculation as to what the adopting of an unscriptural principle would do to the future fellowship activity of the Wisconsin Synod. Would it not act as a detrimental leaven? It appears to be so. We have the witness of fifteen

pages of faulty argumentation to get around the essential reality that exists in the AAL, an example of "good words and fair speeches (that

deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:18) We wish it were otherwise.

—G. Sydow

—J. Sydow, legal research

## DOCTRINALLY PURE?

The news bureau of the Lutheran Council in the United States of America has reported that J. A. O. Preus, president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod since 1969, will not seek a fourth four-year term as president in 1981. Preus has been widely regarded as a "conservative" president. In fact Harold Hecht, president of a synod in the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, the group that broke away from the Missouri Synod during Preus' presidency, is reported as having said: It is "as good a time for Preus to go as any" because he has "accomplished what he set out to do—to make the synod 'doctrinally pure.'"

We disagree wholeheartedly with this assessment. Preus has not made the Missouri Synod doctrinally pure. We doubt whether any man could do that. In fact we doubt whether Preus ever seriously attempted to restore doctrinal purity in the Missouri Synod. It is true that some outspoken "liberal" leaders like Hecht and Seminary president John Tietjen are no longer active in the Missouri Synod. But, from the very beginning, when Preus announced after his election in 1969 that he could "live with" the declaration of fellowship with The American Lutheran Church, until the present time, when numerous congregations and pastors retain dual membership in the AELC and the LCMS, it is clear that Preus has made little or no effort to uphold the "doctrinally pure" confession of the *Brief Statement* of 1932: "We repudiate *unionism*, that is, church fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine, as disobedience to God's command, as causing divisions in the Church, and as involving the constant danger of losing the Word of God entirely."

It seems that the two LCMS seminaries are somewhat more attuned to confessional Lutheranism than they were in 1969. This may turn out to be the most beneficial result of Preus' presidency. But the synod as such has a long way to go to remove the divisions and offenses with which it was charged as long ago as 1953 by the Wisconsin Synod: Scouting, the military chaplaincy, unionism. These matters, together with all the other offenses that have been added since that time, still stand as reasons enough for us to regard the Missouri Synod as a heterodox church body, and to practice no fellowship with it.

Whoever replaces Preus as Missouri Synod president can expect terrible turmoil and severe persecution, together with the Lord's encouragement and

the prayers of the Lord's people, if he truly tries to make the Missouri Synod once again "doctrinally pure."

—D. Lau

## Objective Justification in Dispute

Shortly after J. A. O. Preus announced he would not seek a fourth term as president of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, he sent to all LCMS congregations a letter (see *Christian News*, Nov. 3, 1980) in which he raised questions concerning the doctrinal position of Walter A. Maier, Jr., third vice president of the LCMS and professor at the LCMS seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This whole matter is of interest to us because the specific doctrine at issue is the doctrine of "objective justification," summarized in the *Brief Statement* of 1932 in these words: "God has already declared the whole world to be righteous in Christ, Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 4:25."

President Preus in his letter points out correctly "that in no way should faith be looked upon as *preceding* justification or as a *cause* of justification, but only as a *means* through which the justification already declared by God is appropriated by individual persons." This emphasis is necessary so that our salvation from beginning to end is understood as the working of God's grace alone.

Does Dr. Maier teach something different from this? President Preus says he is not making any charges of false doctrine. His point seems to be that Dr. Maier accepts the doctrine of "objective justification" without understanding correctly the Bible passages on which the doctrine is based.

This is hard for us to understand, for Dr. Maier seemingly accepts the following statement of the Ft. Wayne faculty: "On the basis of Rom. 4:25; 5:18; 2 Cor. 5:19 and parallels, classical Lutheran theology speaks of a general . . . justification. . . . This justification (declaration of acquittal, righteousness, forgiveness) has been *acquired* or merited for all men by Christ, is effectively *offered* to all in the Gospel (Word and Sacrament), and is individually *received* or *applied* in and by faith alone." This certainly seems to be a clear statement of the truth.

No doubt further reports will indicate whether any truth of Scripture is being compromised by any party in this dispute. One thing we can be sure of, and that is that Satan will make use of every opportunity he can to undermine the doctrine of "objective justification," which has brought comfort to so many troubled consciences.

"Of what comfort is it then to such a troubled soul to hear an ambassador of Christ say to him: Son, be of good cheer, *the moment you believe* your sins

will be forgiven? . . . Requiring faith as a condition which man must fulfill before being forgiven turns the blessed Gospel into Law. . . . The Gospel promises, to be in truth a heralding of *good news*, must always be unconditioned. . . . In Christ God already has forgiven all men their sins. Forgiveness is *not* something that awaits man's faith before becoming a reality. Rather, it is an accomplished fact. It provides the comforting assurance that *gives* faith." (Norbert Reim, in *His Pardoning Grace*, pp. 103-104, Northwestern Publishing House, 1966)

May our Lord keep us faithful in this proclamation!

—D. Lau

## Christmas Thoughts

O star of Bethlehem so bright,  
Shine into our souls' night,  
Tell us again of this dear Child  
With holy mien and undefiled.

He came to earth our souls to save;  
He wipes away our sins so grave;  
He brings us hope in His deep love  
To promise us a home above.

O Jesus, Babe, come to my heart!  
What a loving Son Thou art  
To leave Thy Father's home on high  
And live on earth and for us die!

I see Thee now, O Holy Child,  
In a manger, so meek and mild.  
The cross's shadow on Thy face  
Brings joy again to the human race.

—Elsa Romberg

## DAILY DEVOTIONS

"And when *eight days* were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called *Jesus* which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb." (Luke 2:21)

"But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us *wisdom* from God, and *righteousness* and *sanctification*, and *redemption*." (1 Cor. 1:30)

January	Theme	Scripture Reading	Prayer (Lutheran Hymnal)
1	Jesus, our Wisdom	James 1:2-8	433:1,2,4,5
2	Jesus, our Righteousness	Jeremiah 23:6-8	2:2,3
3	Jesus, our Sanctification	Ephesians 2:6-9	408
4	Jesus, our Redemption	Hosea 13:14	200:1,8
5	Jesus, the Word of God	John 1:1-14	294:1,4
6	Jesus, the Word of God	Revelation 19:11-16	81:1,6
7	Jesus, our Friend	John 15:9-16	386:5
8	Jesus, our Friend	Romans 5:6-8	552:4
9	Jesus, our High Priest	Hebrews 2:14-18	364:4-6
10	Jesus, our High Priest	Hebrews 4:14-16	37:3
11	Jesus, our Daysman (Mediator)	Job 9:32-35	6
12	Jesus, our Daysman (Mediator)	1 Timothy 2:5-6	287:12
13	Jesus, our Physician	Matthew 9:10-13	322:3,4
14	Jesus, our Physician	Jeremiah 33:6-9	521:3,6
15	Jesus, our Shepherd (David's Son)	Ezekiel 34:20-24	431:1,6
16	Jesus, our Shepherd (David's Son)	John 10:11-18	51
17	Jesus, our Example	1 Peter 2:21-24	144:5
18	Jesus, our Example	John 13:12-17	409:1,4
19	Jesus, Captain of our Salvation	Hebrews 2:10-15	410
20	Jesus, Captain of our Salvation	Jude 24-25	471:1,4-6
21	Jesus, the Covenant	Isaiah 42:6-9	129:2-3
22	Jesus, the Covenant	Isaiah 55:1-5	298:4,6
23	Jesus, our Forerunner	Hebrews 6:19-20	2:1,4,7
24	Jesus, our Forerunner	Ephesians 2:17-22	188:1,3,5
25	Jesus, our Resurrection	John 11:23-27	144:5
26	Jesus, our Resurrection	Romans 8:9-11	193:5,6
27	Jesus, our Head	Ephesians 1:18-23	411:5-7
28	Jesus, our Head	Colossians 1:13-18	477:1,3,4
29	Jesus/Jehovah	Isaiah 44:6-8/ Revelation 22:12-13	343:7
30	Jesus/Jehovah	Psalms 24:7-10/ 1 Corinthians 2:7-9	442:5
31	Jesus/Jehovah	Isaiah 43:11-12/ Luke 19:9-10	4

—P. Schaller

412 9699 2 1486  
ST JOHNS LUTH CHURCH  
C/O PASTOR  
1040 11TH ST  
CLARKSTON WA 99403

#### Old Copies Still Needed

We shall pay \$2.00 per copy for the following issues of the *Lutheran Spokesman*: Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1958); Vol. 1, No. 2 (August 1958); Vol. 1, No. 6; Vol. 3, No. 4; Vol. 4, No. 8. Send them to the editor.

—D. Lau

#### Changes of Address

Robert Mehlretter  
1529 Third Avenue  
Mankato, MN 56001  
(507) 388-7855

Pastor Glenn Oster  
Route 2  
Oronoco Estates, Lot 135  
Oronoco, MN 55960  
(507) 367-2234

Pastor Paul F. Nolting  
816 N. Loop, Apt. 111  
Austin, TX 78756  
(512) 451-1806

Pastor Paul M. Tiefel, Jr.  
Route 6, Box 412 B  
Dowagiac, MI 49047

#### Send Change of Address to:

THE LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN  
2750 OXFORD ST. N.  
ROSEVILLE, MN 55113

Please include an old address label to expedite processing.

#### Services in Austin, Texas

Services are being conducted in the Hancock Center, Colorado Travis Room; Bible Class at 9:30 a.m. and Worship Service at 10:30 a.m. Call (512) 451-1806 for more information.

—Paul F. Nolting

#### Services in Billings

Exploratory services are being held in Billings, Montana. If you know of anyone interested in the CLC in the Billings area, contact:  
Pastor L. Bernthal or Pastor D. Koenig  
6230 St. Thomas Dr. 100 4th St. N.  
Missoula, MT 59801 Lemmon, SD 57638  
(406-251-2705) (605-374-5104)