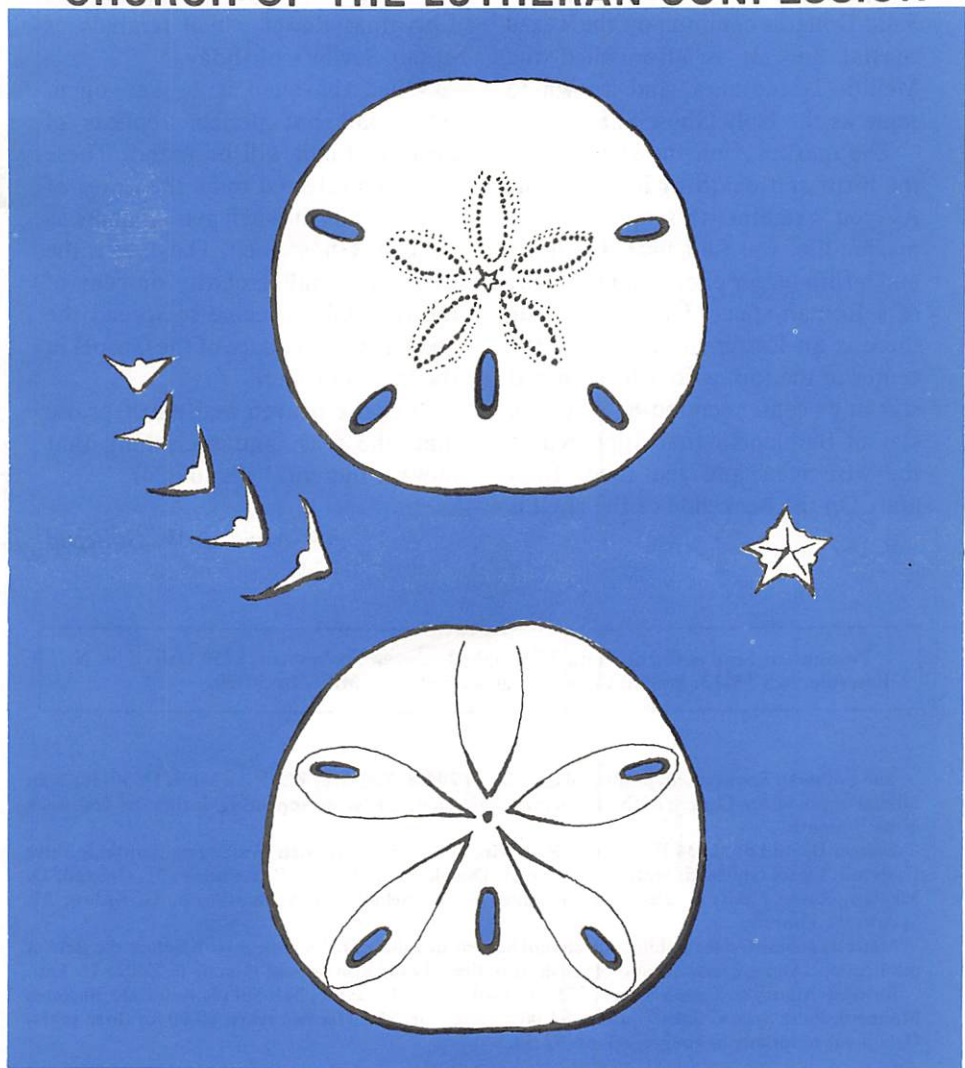


June 1981  
Vol. 23, No. 12  
(ISSN 0024-7537)

# Lutheran Spokesman

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION



*"Let the heaven and earth praise Him, the seas, and everything that moveth therein." Ps. 69:34*

# THE HOLY GHOST SHELL

(Reflections on This Month's Cover)

The Keyhole Urchin known as the Sand Dollar is common on the Texas coastal line. It is also called the Mellita Testudinata, and known to some as the Holy Ghost Shell.

The markings on the shell tell of the birth and death of Jesus Christ. As you examine this specimen of marine life, you find four nail holes and a fifth larger one, reminding one of a Roman spear. On the one side there is an Easter lily design in the center of the top, with a five-pointed star in its center reminding us of the star of Bethlehem that appeared to the wise men and led them from afar. On the back side of the shell is

an outline of the poinsettia, the Christmas flower which reminds us of our Savior's birthday.

When the shell is broken open, five small but perfect replicas of doves in flight will be found. These are often referred to as the doves of peace. Thus the shell gets its name as the Holy Ghost Shell. The dove is the Christian symbol of the descent of the Holy Ghost, come to spread the good news and peace of the Gospel in the hearts of men.

"Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and everything that moveth therein." (Ps. 69:34)

—Arvid G. W. Gullerud

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.

# CONCERNING CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

In the January issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman* the statement was made that the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) exists to uphold and proclaim the Biblical truth concerning fellowship.

What was meant is that the CLC exists *as a separate church body* because of its confession of the Biblical truth concerning fellowship. There would be no CLC today if the churches of the old Synodical Conference had retained their Biblical position on church fellowship. Because other Lutheran church bodies have permitted in varying degrees a corruption of this doctrine, one of our purposes as a church body must be to uphold and proclaim this doctrine.

## The Gospel Is Central

But the Bible truth concerning fellowship is not by any means the chief doctrine or the central doctrine taught in our churches and schools. "We preach Christ crucified." (1 Cor. 1:23) "Jesus Christ . . . was raised from the dead according to my Gospel." (2 Tim. 2:8) "Christ Jesus . . . is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. 1:30) We preach "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21) "In Christ we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1:14) This Gospel or Good News of Jesus is the center of our existence as

individual Christians and as a Christian church body. The Gospel of Jesus is our only escape from the horrors of our own sins, our only purpose for remaining alive on this earth, our only refuge in the hour of death, the only source of spiritual life and godliness.

But let no one think that the doctrines of fellowship and separation from error have no connection with the Gospel of Christ. Everything in Scripture has a connection with the Gospel of Christ, and the doctrine of fellowship is a teaching of Scripture. *Concerning Church Fellowship*, the confession adopted by the first convention of the CLC, explains the relationship in this way:

"God's plan of salvation carried out in Christ indeed embraces all sinners. It is all-inclusive. He who would have all men to be saved has placed this life-giving message in the Bible. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' (2 Cor. 5:19) 'By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' (Rom. 5:18) Only these good tidings of God bring hope and comfort and peace to every sinner . . . .

"False doctrine is always a threat to the very universality and completeness of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. It is in the interest of the preservation of the Good News that God is so explicit in forbidding fellowship with error, no matter how

minute or trivial it may seem to be. Here Paul is our great teacher. No one will deny that he believed in the all-inclusive nature of the Gospel of Jesus. All his efforts were bent toward bringing this peace of God to every corner of the world. Yet it is Paul in particular who wages constant warfare against each and every effort of man to change, pervert, or mutilate that Gospel. For when men change the Word of God, they are attacking Christ Himself." (*Concerning Church Fellowship*, pp. 17-18)

### **The Danger of Unionism**

This issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman* is to a large extent devoted to the doctrines of church fellowship and separation from error. Not that unionism (cooperation with false teachers) is the only danger that faces us at this time. One speaker at the April 1981 CLC Coordinating Council called attention to the breakdown in morals in our nation and the world, and deplored the fact that our church body has not seriously addressed itself to this calamity. Unionism is not the only sin. What about disobedience to authority, lack of discipline, abortion, fornication, gambling, cheating, pornography? All these things are prevalent in our world and have an effect on us who want to be Christians. It may seem that in comparison with such evils unionism is a minor problem and hardly worth mentioning.

But let us remember that sins against the First Table of the Law

strike at the very source of true morality. As long as the First Table stands, sins against the Second Table can be corrected. But when the First Table goes, no correction is possible. Martin Luther said in his *Large Catechism*: "The greatest abuse (of God's name) occurs in spiritual matters, . . . when false teachers arise and peddle their lying nonsense as the Word of God."

So we again make our testimony against the sin of unionism. We want to present the Bible teaching to those readers who are not members of our church body, so that they can begin to know the reason for our existence as a separate church body. Then also we need to remind our own members of the teachings of God's Word, for we are continually deluged by satanic arguments against the principles here set forth, and in fact we ourselves are in danger of either compromising this teaching or trying to apply it without remembering its connection with the Gospel.

We have chosen in this issue to present various aspects of the teaching of fellowship through excerpts from material originally prepared by CLC pastors for their own congregations or conferences. The first excerpt is from a paper by Pastor Mark Gullerud of Stambaugh, Michigan, prepared for a councilmen's conference. Pastor Gullerud discusses the blessings of fellowship we enjoy in our church body as Christians with a common confession.

The second excerpt was prepared by Pastor Eugene Rutz of Houston,

Texas, to help his members apply the principles of church fellowship in their daily lives.

Pastor Daniel Fleischer of Fridley, Minnesota, is the author of the third excerpt, which applies the fellowship principle to a wedding service. This is only a small part of a 6-page pamphlet on the marriage service that Pastor Fleischer prepared especially for the benefit of those contemplating marriage.

The final excerpt is Pastor L. D. Redlin's personal testimony of why he withdrew from the Aid Associ-

ation for Lutherans (AAL). It was originally presented to his congregation in Mankato, Minnesota.

God's name is hallowed among us "when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God lead a holy life according to it. To this help us, dear Father in heaven! But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches, profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, Heavenly Father!"

—D. Lau

## *Fellowship - A Blessing From God*

When one considers the sinful and lost condition which man has by nature, one would surely have to say that it is a miracle of God's grace that anyone can be brought to faith in Jesus and share in the fellowship of Christ's Church. To begin with, man is spiritually blind, being totally unaware of a God of love who would have all men to be saved in Christ. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Cor. 2:9—NIV)

Secondly, man by nature is totally opposed to God and continually resists and rebels against Him. "Those who live according to their sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires . . . The mind of sinful man is death . . . because the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's

law, nor can it do so." (Rom. 8:5-7—NIV)

Finally, man cannot by his own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ nor come to Him. "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit." (1 Cor. 12:3—NIV)

God, however, graciously calls and gathers people into His Church to be a part of His spiritual fellowship. Using frail human vessels as His instruments, God sends out His gracious invitation through the preaching of His Word. Through that Word the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of people and completely transforms them, making them new creatures so that their outlook on life and their perspective of God is changed. They learn that all their sins have been forgiven for Christ's sake. They have the sure hope that God will grant them for Christ's sake

eternal life with Him in heaven. Instead of seeking to gratify their sinful flesh, they now seek to do the will of their Father. Instead of looking to the world for direction, they look to the precious truths of God's Word. Those then who walk in the light of God's Word are truly blessed with a fellowship one with another and with God. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

### **A Special Unity**

There is a very special unity and oneness which exists in the fellowship of Christians. The apostle Paul writes: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28) In Christianity no discriminating distinctions exist as to nationality, race, color, sex, intellect, or social background. In our present-day society it can be seen that various factors have caused people to be divided. But these barriers are broken down and eliminated when people of every walk of life look to Christ by faith. In Christ all are joined together as one, one people of God.

This unity is no external superficial unity. Christians are joined together, being of the same mind and the same spirit. They are united in total agreement with, and in total commitment to, the teachings of God's saving Word. Paul writes to

the Philippians: "If you have an encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being likeminded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." (Phil. 2: 1-2—NIV)

The oneness which Christians possess one with another is described in Romans 12: 4-5: "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (NIV) Christians are so closely joined together in unity that they are here described as each being a part of one body, the body of believers in Christ. The human body has many members, each having a different function, but each jointly working together for the common good of the body. So also the Church is made up of people with differing gifts and abilities who work together for the common cause of serving Christ and His kingdom.

### **The Privileges of Fellowship**

Being united together with Christians who are of the same mind, we are blessed with many privileges within the framework of fellowship. The first Christian converts of the New Testament experienced and enjoyed such privileges. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers . . . And all that believed were together,

and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people." (Acts 2: 42, 44-47)

It is surely a privilege to be able to gather together each Sunday morning in the house of God to join in worship with others who share the same confession. There is a special feeling that warms the heart in knowing that we are united in faith. It is with good reason that hearts are so warmed, for there is not only a fellowship with fellow-believers, but also with Christ as well. Jesus tells us: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mt. 18:20) As we lift up our voices in songs of praise and thanksgiving, we are not only singing the same words with our lips, but our hearts are also singing in unison.

Another privilege which we possess in Christian fellowship is prayer. With united hearts and minds we can approach the throne of grace together, offering up our prayers of thanksgiving, petitions, and praise. Because we share the same faith, we know that we are praying to the same God in heaven, who has promised to answer our prayers. Jesus says to us: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." (Mt.

18:19)

When we come together once a month to celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are blessed by the Lord with yet another privilege of fellowship. The apostle Paul writes: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor. 10: 16-17) Sharing a common need to receive the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, fellow-believers are drawn together to approach the Lord's Table. Having a oneness of faith, they participate together in a blessed communion with our Lord and Savior as they receive His precious body and blood.

There are surely many benefits which we reap in being able to be in Christian fellowship with one another. Being a small minority in a world where God's Word is scorned and Christian faith is buffeted, we can look to one another as a source of strength and support. When we are suffering under any affliction of this life, we can count on our brethren to comfort us and give us reassurance. When we are in need, we can look to our brethren for help. And when our hearts are filled with joy concerning blessings which God has given us, we can share that joy with others, who will join us in thanking and praising God.

Because we want others to experience the blessings of Christian fellowship, we join forces with other

congregations of the same confession in the mission of spreading the Word of God. Together we can make it possible for others to hear God's saving Word and thus be brought to faith. As others are brought into the

family of God, sharing that oneness of faith in Christ, together we will be able to lift up our hearts and voices in unison to God.

—Mark Gullerud

## A Necessary Distinction

“Satan always inserts this thought that since there are believers also in heterodox churches (which we have readily and happily admitted), Christians should not separate from such bodies, or should fellowship with them at least to a certain extent. Here it is necessary to distinguish between Christian brotherhood and Christian fellowship. 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. That is the brotherhood. Christian fellowship, on the other hand, is a fruit of this brotherhood—and an essential one. Since we belong together as brothers in Christ we show this by joint worship, prayer, and work.

“Now the basis for this fellowship cannot be the same as that for the brotherhood, which is regeneration and true faith . . . Confession is the basis for Christian fellowship, for when a man's confession is in accord

with 'teachings which we have learned' we can recognize him as a brother.

“We know, of course, that our fellowship is not identical with the spiritual brotherhood. Behind a good confession may lie a hypocrite. And on the other hand, we know that there are Christians also in those church bodies which confess error together with the Truth. We cannot recognize hypocrites in an orthodox body, nor can we recognize the believers in a false church. Moreover, we do not separate ourselves from the children of God among the false sects, but from the sects as such. The sects separate these dear children of God from us. We believe that it is for the benefit of the true believers among the heterodox that we are to refuse fellowship to these churches. Thereby we are constantly reminding them that they are in the wrong place. Time and again people have thereby been led out from the false church into the true, where God wants them to be.”

*(Concerning Church Fellowship, pp. 15-16)*



# SEPARATION FROM ERROR

Since many churches and church people in our day do not understand the Scriptural doctrine of church fellowship and separation from error, there is a great temptation for us to be careless in applying these principles in our congregational life and in our personal lives.

## The Scriptural Principle

The Church of the Lutheran Confession was born out of the application of the doctrine of church fellowship and separation from error. A confessional document written at that time (*Concerning Church Fellowship*) correctly explains the positive and negative aspects of this doctrine. Positively: "Complete doctrinal agreement is the Scriptural basis for church fellowship." 1 Cor. 1:10—"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Negatively: "Church fellowship is forbidden with all who deviate from the Word of God in their teachings. Suspension of an established fellowship is to take place when it has been ascertained that a person or group is causing divisions and offenses through a false position in doctrine or practice." Romans 16:17—"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences

contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

All of us have learned these principles and accept them as the truth of God's Word. But sometimes we are not sure exactly how to apply them in our congregational and personal lives.

## A Little Error

Various arguments have at times been presented against the Scriptural principle. For example, human reason argues that certain errors are "not so bad," or that the difference between us and others is "minor" or "non-divisive." Such an argument is sometimes brought up with reference to the differences between the CLC and other conservative Lutheran church bodies. But the Lord does not ask us to determine the relative seriousness of a false teaching. He simply asks that we "beware . . . withdraw . . . come out . . . be separate . . . touch not . . . and avoid." Every false doctrine is a leaven that will spread and grow if not removed. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (Gal. 5:9)

## A Little Fellowship

Others recognize the differences in doctrine between the CLC and other church bodies, but they still feel "a little fellowship can't hurt." It should be obvious that the passages listed above rule out every manifestation of fellowship with those who teach or tolerate error. "Beware . . .

withdraw . . . come out . . . be separate . . . touch not . . . and avoid” cannot be taken to allow partial fellowship.

Those who feel that complete religious separation will hinder the cause of the Gospel should keep in mind several points: 1) The Lord knows better than we do what will hinder or help the Gospel. 2) To give the impression of unity where there is none cannot help the cause of the Gospel. 3) To comfort a person in his error cannot help his soul.

Lest someone think that we are speaking of complete isolation from the rest of society, it should be pointed out that we are speaking of *religious* separation, not cultural, economic, or civic relations. The apostle Paul points out that we cannot avoid keeping company “altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.” (1 Cor. 5:10) Nowhere does the Lord command us to set up a society apart from the rest of the world. On the contrary, we are to be in the world but not of the world.

### **Our Practice**

It is because of these Scriptural principles that we in the CLC do not join those of another faith and confession in worship and church work, and we do not invite those of another faith and confession to teach us God’s Word or lead us in worship.

God has told us to have religious fellowship with those—and with those only—who are agreed with us

on the doctrines of Scripture. Now it is up to us to make the application to the various circumstances in our lives. If we have difficulty doing this, let us consult our fellow-Christians. But let us not allow our reason and emotions to blind us to the clear Word of God.

We should keep before ourselves this question: Am I having religious fellowship with anyone with whom I am not united in the same faith and confession? It will not always be easy to answer the question. In some cases we will have to discuss the situation with our brethren and conferences and conventions. But when the question is answered, and the answer is “yes,” then there is only one course of action to follow, namely, to avoid the activity in question.

### **Some Difficulties**

Some have difficulty seeing the difference between (a) inviting and welcoming people of other confessions to *our* services (at which time they may sing and pray with us), and (b) our doing the same thing in *their* churches or homes.

When people come to our services and join us in worship, they are placing themselves, at least temporarily, under our leadership and spiritual care. Any possible false belief or confession on the part of such people does not come into consideration in such cases. Furthermore, God has not forbidden them to have fellowship with us, if indeed our confession is true to God’s word.

But if we worship with people of another faith in *their* church, we are

aligning ourselves with *their* confession. And if we worship with them in their homes, we are at the very least weakening our confession of the truth and leading them to believe that the differences between us do not matter.

Some also have difficulty seeing the difference between (a) inviting and welcoming people to our services, and (b) inviting them to sing a solo or play the organ at our services. Here the difference is one of position. When they sit in the pew in our church, they are in a learning position. But if we invite them to sing a solo or play the organ in our church, we are placing them in a position of leadership.

The Scriptural principles of

church fellowship and separation from error are not vague or obscure. If we do not let our human reason and emotion get in the way, we will be able to apply these principles to all the various situations that arise in our lives.

The very Gospel is at stake—the Gospel of justification by the grace of God through faith in Christ Jesus. That is the unleavened lump which must be kept unadulterated, that is, free from error. And remember: “A little leaven leaveneth the *whole* lump.” May God continue to send His Holy Spirit to keep us in the one true faith and lead us into all truth. And may He work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

—E. Rutz

## Participants In The Wedding Service

Since a marriage service is also a worship service, the Scriptural principles regarding fellowship are observed in our practice. In keeping with the Word of God (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10) participants in the teaching and preaching part of the service are to be members of our own congregation or another congregation of our church body.

These include: (a) the pastor who preaches the Word of God. At a wedding service also the pastor is to “preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” (2 Tim. 4:2)

(b) The soloist or choir who preach

the Word of God in song. “Sing forth the honor of His name: make His praise glorious.” (Ps. 66:2) “I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.” (1 Cor. 14:15)

(c) The organist who leads the preaching and teaching in song. “I will also praise Thee with the psaltery, even Thy truth, O my God: unto Thee will I sing with the harp, O Thou Holy One of Israel.” (Ps. 71:22)

The couple about to be married should therefore keep these principles in mind in asking a soloist to

sing at their wedding or an organist to play. The pastor should always be consulted.

Attendants at a wedding, ushers, bridesmaids, groomsmen, etc., are not participating in the conduct of the service, but serve an honorary or

legal function. Their faith or confession is not a concern of the pastor or church insofar as participation in the wedding is concerned, although attendants of similar faith are certainly to be encouraged.

—D. Fleischer

## WHY I WITHDREW FROM THE AAL

As a former policy holder of insurance with the Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) I must confess that I was rather surprised when I learned that I was a member of a society. I was further surprised when I learned that the support for the religious activity of this society was attributed to me as a member of this society. In addition to the *Correspondent*, published by the AAL, a little magazine entitled *Yes* began coming. In this magazine I was given examples of "how all our members said 'yes' in so many ways through their fraternal benevolence grants . . ." (*Yes*, Vol. 2, p. 1)

I was informed, for example, that "we all said yes together" (*Yes*, Vol. 2, p. 3) with \$1,500,000 to help support 5,900 people, students in their education at religious colleges and seminaries, pastors in their continuing education, faculty members in Lutheran colleges and seminaries, parochial school teachers and parish workers, etc.

I was told I was saying "yes" to assisting "the 14 seminaries of the four major Lutheran Church bodies." I was involved in "Funding a

Center for the Study of Campus Ministry at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN." (*Yes*, Vol. 2, p. 4) Valparaiso is one of the most liberal colleges affiliated with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, having permitted false teaching for many years already.

### Supporting False Teachings

With a full understanding that many of the Lutheran churches of today do not accept the Scriptures as the inerrant, inspired Word of God, and question the reality of the miracles, the accuracy of some of the words of Christ, the historical truthfulness of creation, the teaching of the virgin birth of Christ, and the sinfulness of abortion on demand, I concluded that I was indirectly fostering teachings to which I could not in good conscience say "yes."

Up to that point I had regarded my insurance policy as strictly a business arrangement with no concern for such matters as surplus funds. But they were telling me: "Oh, but you are involved beyond a business arrangement. You are involved in everything that the AAL

sponsors.” In some of it I rejoiced. I was happy to say “yes” to helping the handicapped, the aged, and families in critical need. I was glad to see surplus funds used for well-founded humanitarian purposes. But I could not continue to say “yes” to fostering “Lutheranism” which opposed the Word of God.

In 1972 I cashed in my policies. It was my conviction that only in that way could I say “no” to supporting the false teaching of various “Lutheran” churches served by the AAL.

The Good Shepherd says: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” (Jn. 10:27) He teaches us of our need to stay close to His Word when He admonishes: “If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (Jn. 8: 31-32)

It is by following Him and listening to His words that we are able to analyze any and every teaching and practice. The benevolence program of the AAL openly and un-

ashamedly uses the surplus funds of its members in supporting the false teachings of heterodox church bodies.

The AAL is not a church but is a society which lists as its constitutional purpose the “assistance to Lutheran congregations and their institutions.” Some of these “Lutheran” congregations and institutions foster teachings that are false and are an abomination to the Lord. AAL members are involved in this whether they like it or not.

The Lord admonishes through the apostle Paul: “Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light; for the fruit of the Sprit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (Eph. 5: 8-11)

May the Lord God who loves us and by His infallible Word keeps us as His dear people guide us in our teachings and practice that we may continually give all glory to His name and follow Him faithfully as sheep of the Good Shepherd.

—L. D. Redlin

## Viewing Some Bible Overviews — V

*Some New Testament Echoes of Genesis 3:15.*

In previous articles Genesis 18:16 and I Samuel 28:1-7 have been examined and treated in the light of Genesis 3:15, which as the first Messianic prophecy is also one of the

Bible’s rich and broad overviews. Glancing at some significant New Testament echoes of Genesis 3:15 shall be our purpose in this article.

### Luke 3:7

**“Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, ‘O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’”**

We know the role of John the Baptist. The people who heard him did not go away smugly smiling in the deceptive afterglow of the superficial message: “You are good Christians.” Those who took his words to heart wondered how awareness of the dread power of sin had faded so far back in their minds. They marveled at the stinging eloquence of the wilderness herald in exposing their wickedness. They crumbled under the impelling urgency of his demand: “Bring forth fruits therefore meet for repentance.” And they put themselves eagerly on alert for the coming Savior.

John was not one to mince words. “Brood of vipers” (NIV, NASB) or even “offspring of snakes” better and more clearly expresses the thought. The choice of words was anything but accidental. We discern an echo of the seed-of-the-serpent concept revealed in Genesis 3:15. John was saying: While you boast of your descent from Abraham, you are really, through your self-righteousness, in the camp of the devil.

### John 8:44

**“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.”**

This merciless (and yet so merciful) indictment is directed by Jesus

against the Pharisees. On a separate occasion He had used the very words of John: “You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.” (Mt. 12:34 - NASB) Now, in John 8:44, He becomes even more explicit. John the Baptist had not been exaggerating.

The Gospel of John is really a larger unfolding of this entire thought, following as it does the progressive development both of belief and unbelief. It traces, for example, the growth in Nicodemus, who first went to see Jesus at night and was stunned by the demand for a second birth (ch. 3); who later cautiously put in a good word for Jesus (7:50-52); and who finally was present helping at His burial (19:39). And the climax of this Gospel account is the confession of the overwhelmed Thomas: “My Lord and my God.” (20:28)

On the other hand, the ever deepening hostility and hatred of the Pharisees, erupting ultimately in the murder of God’s Son, is also traced. For there are always only two camps: the camp of the devil and the Son of God with those who are His. It was also John who wrote: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 Jn. 3:8)

### Revelation 12:3

**“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns**

upon his heads.”

The interesting thing about this section of the children's book in the Bible is that we were supposed to be at the end. That had been promised in 10:7. And the seventh angel does indeed sound his trumpet, 11:14-15. But though we are at the end of the world, some half-dozen and more chapters are then required to fill in the picture, to sketch the vast dimensions of the spiritual struggle, and to astound us with the drama and finality of the culmination.

And behold! The build-up to the last things in the last book is given in terms of the first things in the first book. The dragon (v. 3), also known as “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan,” (v. 9) is there. Also the “man child” (v. 5), the expulsion of the dragon (v. 9), and the ensuing persecution (v. 13). The Victor? None other than “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

(19:16) The loser? “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.” (20:10)

### Romans 16:20

**“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”**

Christ won the victory on Calvary. There He conquered the devil. To His Holy seed He says: “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” (1 Jn. 4:4) And: “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Rev. 2:10) At our falling asleep the God of peace puts an end to all attacks which the devil can mount, and ushers His elect into the eternal fruits of victory. The final consummation of Genesis 3:15 is ours.

—R. E. Wehrwein

## BIBLE READINGS FOR JULY

| July | Scripture               | Theme                     | Hymn      |
|------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1    | 1 Thessalonians 3       | Comforting One Another    | 534:1,4,6 |
| 2    | Matthew 13:18-23        | Hearing and Understanding | 49        |
| 3    | Hebrews 11:1-16         | Trusting God's Promise    | 614       |
| 4    | Hebrews 11:17-31        | Walking by Faith          | 396       |
| 5    | Hebrews 11:32-12:2      | Running the Race          | 656       |
| 6    | 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8   | Called for Holiness       | 398       |
| 7    | 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11  | Destined for Salvation    | 449       |
| 8    | 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 | Commissioned to Serve     | 234       |
| 9    | Psalms 13               | Trust Vindicated          | 555:4,5   |
| 10   | Revelation 3:1-6        | Strengthen What Remains   | 446       |
| 11   | Revelation 3:7-13       | Keep My Word              | 516       |
| 12   | Revelation 3:14-22      | Be Cold or Hot!           | 650       |
| 13   | Revelation 4            | Give Glory to God         | 246       |
| 14   | 2 Thessalonians 1       | Be Worthy of His Call     | 522       |
| 15   | 2 Thessalonians 2:7-17  | Stand Firm in Faith       | 261       |
| 16   | Titus 2:11-15           | Declare These Things      | 293       |

### CLC Pastoral Conference

Time: July 7-9, 1981, beginning at 10:00 a.m.  
Place: Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

#### Program:

Keeping the Unity—Professor C. M. Gullerud;

What Constitutes an "Evangelical Manner" in Dealing with Members of the Congregation?—Pastor George Barthels;

Marriage and Polygamy—Pastor Robert Reim;

A Study of Jeremiah 31: 31-34—Professor Robert Dommer;

Exegesis of James 1:13ff.—Pastor Paul Schaller;

What Does Scripture Say Concerning Our Call to Witness in Connection with Members of Heterodox Churches?—Pastor John Johannes;

A Study of the Term "Teleios"—Pastor Vance Fossum;

Lutheran Liturgy: Suggestions—Pastor Walter Schaller;

Reports of the Boards.

Preacher for Communion Service: Pastor Leland Grams

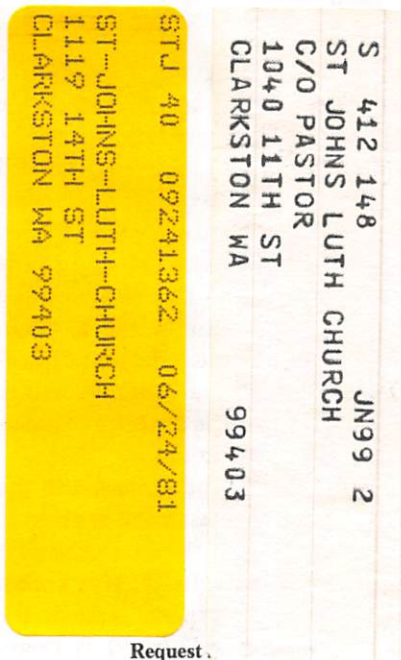
Chaplain for the Sessions: Pastor Wayne Mielke

—Paul F. Nolting, Secretary

#### Installation

Authorized by President Egbert Albrecht, I installed Paul Mark Weis as pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church, East Bay, San Francisco, on April 5, 1981.

—G. B. Kesterson



Request

The Rev. George W. Price of Naples, Florida, formerly of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the preaching ministry of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. The Board of Doctrine will meet with him during the week of the General Pastoral Conference in July. Correspondence pertaining to this matter should reach the undersigned by July 3.

—Egbert Albrecht, President

|    |                      |                                      |           |
|----|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 17 | Amos 2:6-8; 3:1-2    | God Holds Us Responsible             | 325       |
| 18 | Amos 5:18-24         | Empty Worship Is Rejected            | 270:1,3,5 |
| 19 | Amos 8:1-6           | Greed and Materialism Condemned      | 442       |
| 20 | Acts 18:24-28        | Apollos Proclaims Christ             | 483       |
| 21 | Acts 19:1-10         | Paul Instructs Believers             | 489       |
| 22 | Acts 19:11-22        | The Gospel Confronts Paganism        | 408       |
| 23 | 2 Corinthians 10:1-8 | Authority to Build Up                | 632:1-2   |
| 24 | Psalms 137           | Longing for Jerusalem                | 462       |
| 25 | Psalms 125           | Trust God Amid Danger                | 474       |
| 26 | Acts 20:1-12         | Paul Travels Among Friends           | 296       |
| 27 | Acts 20:17-35        | Responsible Leadership               | 493       |
| 28 | Acts 21:7-14         | Intimations of Danger                | 424       |
| 29 | Acts 21:15-26        | Paul Reports to the Jerusalem Church | 387:1,10  |
| 30 | John 15:18-27        | The Hazards of Discipleship          | 430       |
| 31 | Acts 22:6-16         | Paul Explains His Call               | 461       |

—P. Schaller