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lutheran spokesman



THE MINISTRY

THIS IS A TRUE SAYING,
IF A MAN DESIRE THE
OFFICE OF A BISHOP,
HE DESIRETH A GOOD
WORK.



CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

—In the *Spokesman* 25 Years Ago—

The Old Lutheran Way

“We Missourians only then consider a church body, as a body, as orthodox when the pure doctrine is proclaimed from all pulpits and professors’ chairs and in all writings that become public within the communion, and when on the other hand every erroneous teaching is *stopped* in the manner directed by God as soon as it makes its appearance. We Missourians must and will be satisfied to be judged by *that* doctrine which is held by our individual pastors, whether it be in San Francisco or New York, Saint Paul or New Orleans, or in our periodicals, whether they are published officially or unofficially. If it were shown us that even only *one* pastor were preaching false doctrine, or that even only *one* periodical were in the service of false doctrine, and we would not put a stop to this false doctrine, then we would thereby have ceased being an orthodox synod, and we would have become a unionistic fellowship. In short, it is the earmark of an orthodox fellowship that throughout it only the pure doctrine is not only officially recognized, but actually also prevails. It is on this that our whole church practice rests. . . . Perhaps the reporter will say, these are utopian ideas regarding doctrinal unity; such unity is impossible. Such unity can, of course, by the grace of God be maintained only when *doctrine* is diligently and unceasingly studied at pastoral conferences and at synodical gatherings, and when doubts or differences of opinion which may arise are subjected to the light of God’s Word and removed.” (Franz Pieper in *Lehre und Wehre*, Aug. 1890, Vol. 36, p. 261f; reprinted from the March 1959 *Lutheran Spokesman*)

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OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY THEME:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 5:14-16.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE!

Anniversary Series, No. 4—

The first light of a new day can be an experience to behold. The bursting forth of the first light on the very first day must have been an even more breathtaking sight. Where there had been nothing but utter and total darkness, suddenly radiant light spread far and wide. While none of us were there to observe the drama of the first day of creation, every Christian has experienced a creation even more remarkable. "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). God has replaced the spiritual darkness in our hearts—the darkness of sin and death—with His light, so that we "who were once darkness, are now light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8).

The Lord Commands It

The Lord of Light has commanded us to shine as "lights" (Mt. 5:16), to

be instrumental in spreading the light of the knowledge of God's love in Christ. The light in our hearts is not to be hidden there, for its blessings are intended not only for us, but for many others who now walk in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Jesus lived, suffered, and died for our redemption—and rose from the dead so that there might be no doubt that the forgiveness we sinners need has been secured. Jesus has told us, His disciples, to tell others this Good News, and these people then will in turn tell others, so that the Word will be passed from person to person, town to town, country to country, and generation to generation.

Sometimes we Christians act as though our Lord has some other plan for bringing His light to human hearts, some method that doesn't call for our personal involvement in sharing Christ with others. But the fact is that there is no other plan.

The responsibility is ours. Christ has commanded those who have received the light to share that light. To all of us He says: "Go, . . . make disciples" (Mt. 28:19).

Not only pastors and teachers (they are simply the "supply officers" in the Lord's army of witnesses), not only adult Christians (they are simply the veterans), not only those with the ability to speak easily with others (God gives many different gifts to His witnesses); not just some of us, but all of us are to share the light. Every believer has both the command to "Go" and the Lord's promise: "I will be with you always" (Mt. 28:20).

Where shall we go? Where are we to shine? Where shall we share Christ? Jesus told the first disciples that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem*" (Lk. 24:47). Jerusalem was where the disciples were, and that is where they were to begin sharing the Gospel. Christ has come to us where we are; we are each to shine right where we are—until He directs us to go elsewhere.

The Need Demands It

In addition to Christ's clear command, the needs of our fellow-human beings should compel us to bring the light to others. Could a researcher who discovered the key to curing all forms of cancer keep quiet about it—considering the thousands whose lives are affected? Sin infects the entire population of the planet earth, afflicting the lives of everyone

and terminating not only in physical death, but eternal death as well. Can we who have God's cure in Christ keep quiet about it? The remedy all Christians have is desperately needed by all people. Sin is the poison at work in every human being and the message of Christ Jesus is the only remedy, the only antidote. There are various ways people ease the weight of sin-guilt, but only Christ actually removes that guilt.

Let us learn to remember this universal need when at the mention of Jesus people respond as though the message of Christ were not for them. ("But I'm Jewish." "I'm a Methodist." "I'm not religious." "I'm an atheist," etc.) To each one we can say, "But you are still a member of the human race, aren't you? Well then, I have a message for you." The Good News about Jesus is not intended only for some segments of society, it is for all people. All people. It is not our task to anticipate who will believe our message and who will not. We know who needs the Gospel—and we know who has told us, "Let your light shine."

The Message Demands It

A man was standing in front of the window of an art store where a picture of the crucifixion of Christ was on display. As he stood there he was joined by a young boy. Pointing to the picture, the man asked the lad, "Do you know who that is?" "Yes," the boy said without hesitation, "That's our Savior."

The boy's face plainly showed surprise and pity that the man

should have to ask such a question. After a pause, the youngster explained further, "Them's the soldiers, the Roman soldiers. That woman crying there is His mother." After a moment he added, "They killed Him, mister, yes sir, they killed Him."

The man resumed his walk a few moments later, but had gone less than a block, when he heard the voice of the lad call to him as he ran. "Mister! Wait up, mister!" He turned and waited for the boy to catch up with him.

"I wanted to tell you," the boy

said, "He rose again! Yes, mister, He rose again!"

The message of Christ's victory over sin and death for our sakes is simply too wonderful and too important to keep to ourselves. If we know about it and believe in it, can we keep from sharing it?

Once Jesus told a man not to speak to others about the cure Jesus had worked for him, but the man couldn't keep quiet about it. Jesus has not only worked a greater cure for us, He has *told us* to proclaim it everywhere. In this help us, dear heavenly Father.

—Walter V. Schaller

FATHER, FOR ALL THE LOVE YOU SHOW*

Father, for all the love You show
And all the gifts You now bestow,
Teach me to walk in Your commands
And bring me to that Promised Land.
The Son Who died so long ago,
To save all creatures here below!
He gave His life so I may live,
My life to Him I freely give.



The Holy Spirit entered in
My faith at Baptism to begin.
Continue now Your work, I pray,
And keep me steadfast day by day.
The Triune God, all three in one,
I thank You now for all You've done!
Stand by me and be still my guide
So that I may with You abide. Amen.

*This hymn, which may be sung to the tune of hymn 558 in *The Lutheran Hymnal*, was written by confirmands Jennifer Sydow and Barbara Rust of Grace Lutheran Church, Fridley, MN.

—Reflections and Impressions of a Semester at ILC—

“ . . . ONE THING I AM VERY CONSCIOUS OF: I HAVE BEEN RESTING IN GREEN PASTURES, BESIDE THE STILL WATERS. IT HAS BEEN BALM FOR MY INNER MAN, AND MY CUP HAS BEEN RUNNING OVER. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A GREAT MANY YEARS I HAVE BEEN A LUTHERAN CHRISTIAN AMONGST LUTHERAN CHRISTIANS . . . ”

. . . IN GREEN PASTURES

The campus lies silent and empty this Memorial Day 1985. Nothing stirs in the kitchen, that fortress of Walter Priebe's. No students walking to and fro the Fieldhouse. Its organ remains silent (Paul Krause training on it used to be amongst the normal sounds of daily routine here), and of course the determined *twanggg!* of the class bells have fallen silent too. From downstairs the staff room there comes the intermittent chatter of a computer, so somebody must be busy anyhow. And, indeed, there is some activity upstairs Ingram Hall also: from his office I hear Professor Kuehne talking either to a visitor or to his computer, or possibly both.

What used to be the “Sem-Men” are valiantly struggling with cardboard boxes and the accumulated flotsam and jetsam of many years at ILC—yes, it is high time to get organized for new adventures. The new pastors of the CLC are gathering their books and their courage to head for their first calls. Well, Jim (James Albrecht) and Pete (Peter Reim) also are preparing for their brides to walk down the aisle towards them, at last . . . much to think of, now that Spring Semester is but a memory.

The lawns, still in perfect shape for Graduation and Commencement, bask in the sun of this extraordinarily beautiful Spring, and the air is heavy with the pollen the breeze blows off the tree-tops, but the walkways all are deserted. The park benches stay empty. Classrooms slowly gather dust. Seminary House broods over some profound theological question, but its coffee-brewer remains cold, and the recent New Testament Exegetics papers already look like ancient manuscripts.

Indeed, we have put the last semester of the 1984-85 school year behind us, and like everybody else I try to look backwards and forwards. Backwards, to sum up—forwards, to prepare for the future. I should feel that peculiar flutter in my stomach you always feel prior to long-range travel. Another two weeks, and I should be back in Sweden. But no: I remain relaxed, somehow at rest here in my little room upstairs in Ingram Hall. It has been my home away from home since early in January, and it has been good to me—very good indeed.

Well, perhaps not the room itself, but rather what it stands for: my little

bracket in what is Immanuel Lutheran College. I came here almost from the icy shores of Greenland with two things in my mind: that I should make a real effort expanding considerably my knowledge in our Lutheran confessions of the Christian faith, and that God might use these months to deepen and to mature my personal faith. I neither could nor should pass judgement on myself in these respects. But one thing I am very conscious of: I have been resting in green pastures, beside the still waters. It has been balm for my inner man, and my cup has been running over.

For the first time in a great many years I have been a Lutheran Christian amongst Lutheran Christians. I have not had to defend myself or my beliefs, as I almost always must in Sweden. I have been a resident alien, but not a stranger in matters of faith. I have certainly been different—being almost twenty years older than most students here, an ordained pastor of a church not in fellowship with the CLC, and an European amidst Americans. But in this environment I was permitted to feel “normal” as far as matters of the faith are concerned. I was staying with sisters and brothers in Christ. Yes, suddenly I could relax, be myself, rest from strife and self-defense. It felt like coming home, at last, from a very long and weary day of labour. Suddenly there was a great calm.

It is, of course, rather grotesque that one should have to travel round half the world to get one's soul restored. That I, a minister of the Word Divine for sixteen years, should feel an outcast in my own church-body. That trying to stay faithful to Scripture and its explanation in the Book of Concord should be regarded as a mental aberration. That holy promises at ordination should be reduced to just jokes. Indeed, that the enemies of the Faith should turn out not to be the devil and his grandmother but instead the church itself and those called to serve God's flock. After a while I guess you would grasp these cold facts of contemporary life with your brains. You may struggle as hard as you ever could, but some bitter insights are unavoidable. But your heart, your warm and feeling heart? I think I understand Jesus' weeping as He beheld Jerusalem.

Now, please do not misunderstand me: the months here certainly have not been without problems and difficulties. Although I do have a fairly solid and thorough background in knowledge of the USA, present and past, acquired through reading and several summers of traveling, it nevertheless is quite a change to live here on a more or less permanent basis. Being a tourist of affluent means is rather different from being a student on a tight budget. In Sweden I move like a fish in the water, but here even small and very easy details of daily life need getting used to, have to be learnt and understood, tend to grow into complicated problems. Somehow one is reduced to the state of a child—but one inside the body of a 41 year old man, and not everybody realizes how difficult that can be. So, one has to keep asking dumb questions—or try to learn by trial and error. In Sweden I am like the Roman Centurion, but here I had to shuffle into line—no doubt a wholesome spiritual experience! It could

get a bit lonesome also, what with the wife a good ten days away (by mail). Suddenly one realizes how important the simple low-key daily exchanges of love and confidence are . . .

I imagine the arrival of Rev. Schmutzler or Schmitzler or Schmatzler or whatever did cause some concern on this campus also, among student body and faculty—to say nothing of the crew in the Sem House. Would he blend in? Would he cause trouble? How does one handle an European anyway? He might be a wise guy looking down his nose on us, making us feel bad and inferior. One might feel embarrassed and uncomfortable in his presence. And so forth, and so on. Well, this is what I imagine—nobody ever mentioned any of this to me. Wouldn't it, however, be natural to harbour these apprehensions? Certainly.

Well, as I never was made to feel any of this I dare assume I caused no problems. Life on campus just went on, and Rev. Schmutzler or Schmitzler or Schmatzler or whatever simply became part of it. Sure, he did look a bit exotic in his Sunday uniform in strict black-and-white, with bands and all. But everybody would have been a little disappointed if there really had been nothing of the exotic in him, so . . . It turned out I could be useful too. In the eyes of the high school kids any owner of a car is or should be a means of transportation to ShopKo Plaza or London Square Mall, highly desirable destinations on booooring Saturdays when nooooothing at all goes on on campus. And who could say “no” when a cute girl winks her eyelashes at you and innocently asks: Pastor, are you *very* busy at one o'clock? Before you really realize what is going on you sit behind the wheel of a car commandeered by a gang of enterprising teenagers. And why not?

The faculty of the Seminary Department, I assume, was a bit concerned I should find the academic level lower than what I was used to from Sweden, being a Master of Divinity from the Royal University of Uppsala. These, however, were quite ungrounded fears. I am, to the contrary, very pleased with the high level attained, and at least as far as the ancient languages (that is, Hebrew and Greek) and Lutheran dogmatics/symbolics are concerned the standard definitely is higher than on a corresponding level in my country. In my opinion each and every cent spent on giving future teachers and pastors of the CLC a really first class education will bear fruit hundredfold. I therefore should like to encourage all of you also in the future to put much emphasis on ILC. Here, as a matter of fact, beats the very heart of the CLC. Here is God creating the future.

The computer downstairs has ceased chattering. Someone is whistling, far away. I think it be a good idea giving this type-writer of mine a rest. Instead of flailing away at its key-board I'll venture outside into the splendid sunshine of the Memorial Day, resting myself some at the waters of Jerry Barthels' fish-pond. The goldfish also enjoy the peace of campus at end-of-semester: no shrieking girls to be dunked there. But that, my friend, is another story!

ORTHODOXY VS. MISSION GROWTH?

Editor's note: Norbert Reim, pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ wrote this article which first appeared in the August 1961 issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman* (Vol. IV, No. 3). Though a few remarks in the article are dated, the overall thrust of the contents are timely and compelling to us of the CLC as we look to the future this anniversary year!

Sometimes you have to be careful *not* to learn a lesson. Even if the lesson seems to be as clear as day. As individuals and as congregations, we in the CLC have garnered a great number of experiences during the past trying months. These should be valued as good, solid, spiritual lessons. The Holy Spirit has been covering important chapters with us in His School of Wisdom. But we must always beware of picking up false lessons together with the true.

There are some who believe that a church body must choose whether to spend its energies preserving purity of doctrine or spreading the Word in a strong mission endeavor. It is true, a church body that is "numbers hungry" will be strongly tempted to let down its confessional bars to admit more people. A group that closes its eyes to the leaven of the Pharisees and tolerates lodge or scout membership will find it much easier to show statistical growth than one that holds the line on such issues. The church that "moves with the times" will have a wider appeal than one that is considered narrow and old fashioned. Does this mean we must choose between orthodoxy and growth?

This view seems to have considerable support in recent church

history. Was it not just during the last generation, while launching powerful mission drive, that the Missouri Synod lost its confessional moorings? It is now hardly a decade since the Wisconsin Synod became earnest about its obligations toward foreign missions. Is it only coincidence that during this same period the starch began to wilt out of that synod's confessional fabric?

The lesson would seem to be: if you want to have a strongly confessional church and keep the Gospel pure, give up ideas of intensive mission activity. Be content with preserving the Truth for yourselves and your children. Resign yourselves to the idea of remaining small.

Woe is us in the Church of the Lutheran Confession if we ever learn this lesson! It is not God's Spirit but rather Satan that tries to lead us to such a conclusion. If he cannot garble God's message concerning man's Savior, he is determined to bottle it up and keep it from the masses who need it.

We should go farther back in the history of the Church for our lessons here. Nowhere do we see St. Paul yield a half inch on sound doctrine. His letters abound in warnings against false doctrines and false teachers. And yet, who has ever been such a tireless missionary as this same apostle? His passion for souls gave him no rest from tramping the earth and speaking to strangers about his risen Christ.

Must we then choose between

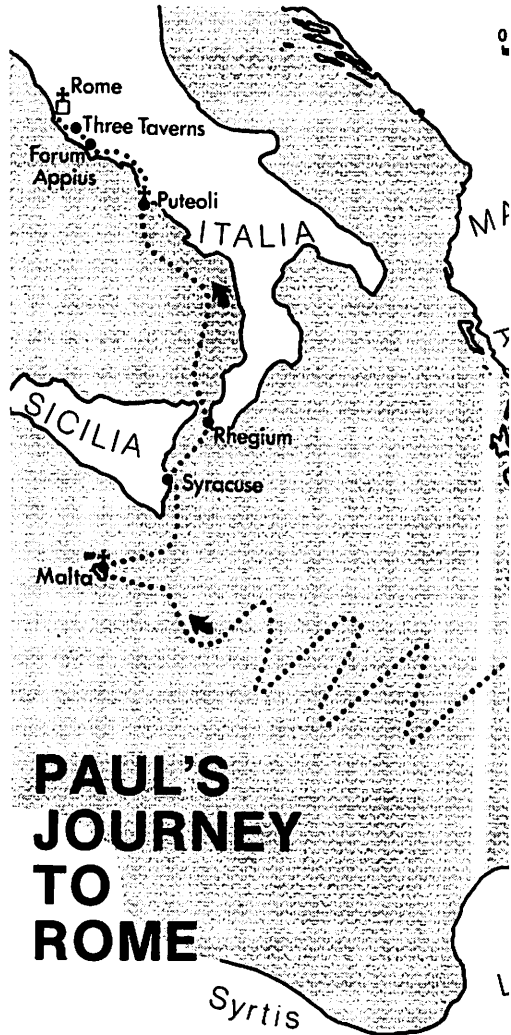
preserving doctrinal purity or carrying out an energetic mission program? Paul would be the first to answer: Do the one, and leave the other not undone!

—Norbert Reim

Daily Devotions for August 1985



From Ephesus to Rome! So travels the Gospel in these last chapters of the Book of Acts. But the way the Gospel travels is not smooth. Paul's enemies want to kill him because he insists on preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Lord has to use these very Gentile authorities to protect His servant. Only after long delays and great dangers does Paul finally arrive in Rome. He is a prisoner awaiting trial, and yet he is allowed to proclaim the Gospel unhindered for many days. Praise the Lord for all the ways by which He sees to it, even in our own times, that His Gospel is proclaimed in all the world!

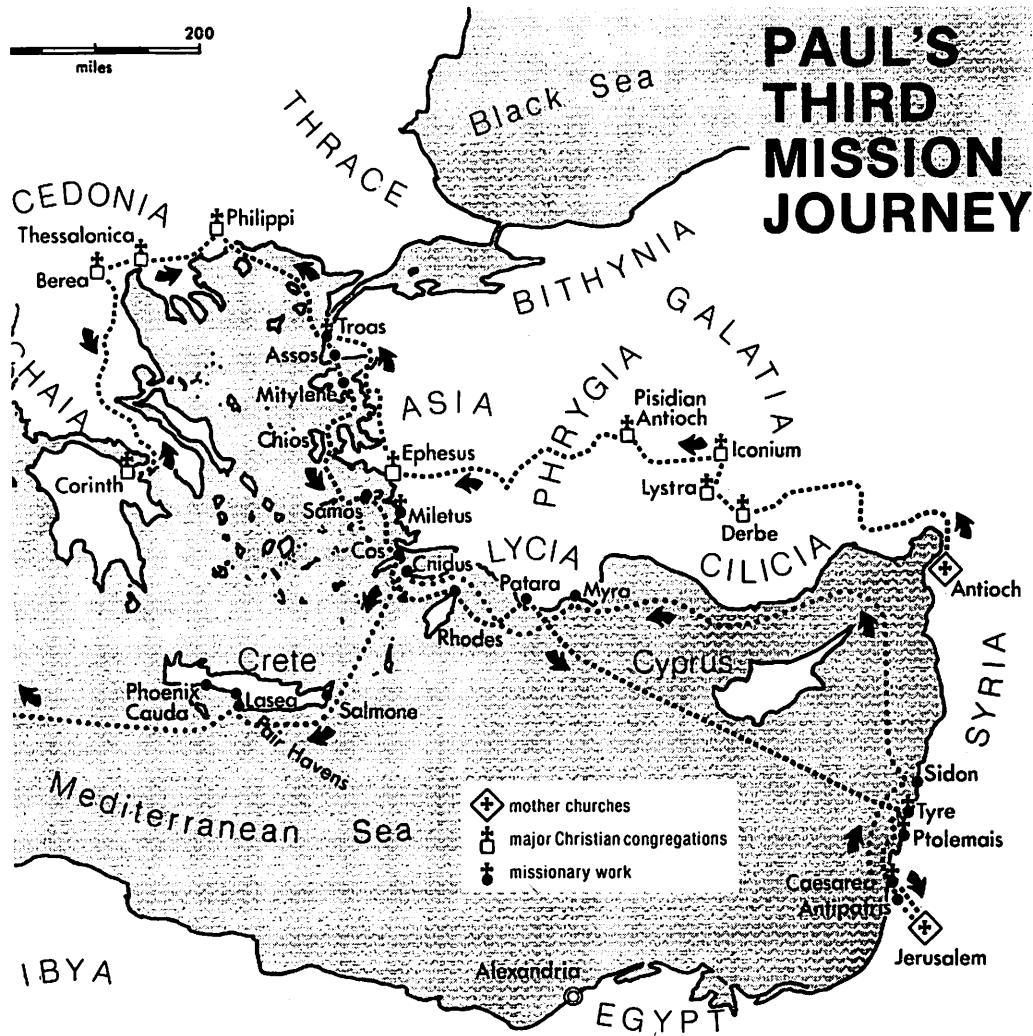


PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME

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Date	Scripture	Theme	Hymn
1	Acts 19:1-10	"All who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord."	239
2	Acts 19:11-20	"The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."	209
3	Acts 19:21-29	How angry people can get when money is involved!	207 (2-3)
4	Acts 19:30-41	Our risen Lord sometimes uses the government to protect Gospel preaching.	200 (2-5)
5	Acts 20:1-12	As Jesus rose on Sunday, so He restores life on Sunday.	206 (1-4)
6	Acts 20:13-21	Paul preached "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."	490 (1-4)
7	Acts 20:22-38	"It is more blessed to give than to receive."	442 (1-2)
8	Acts 21:1-9	What "sweet communion" there is with fellow-disciples of Jesus!	462

PAUL'S THIRD MISSION JOURNEY



9	Acts 21:10-20a	God worked among the Gentiles through Paul's ministry.	501
10	Acts 21:20b-29	Paul did what he could to avoid trouble, but—	447
11	Acts 21:30-22:2	Again the Lord used the government to save Paul's life.	269
12	Acts 22:3-21	The Lord wants the Gentiles to hear His Word.	504
13	Acts 22:22-29	The Lord used Paul's Roman citizenship to protect him.	452
14	Acts 22:30-23:11	In the midst of persecution the Lord says: "Be of good cheer!"	492 (2-3)
15	Acts 23:12-22	"The snare is broken, and we have escaped."	267
16	Acts 23:23-35	"Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth."	265
17	Acts 24:1-9	Lies, lies, nothing but lies!	258
18	Acts 24:10-21	"There will be a resurrection of the dead."	603
19	Acts 24:22-27	"He reasoned about . . . the judgment to come."	604

20	Acts 25:1-12	"You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you shall go."	577
21	Acts 25:13-22	"Paul affirmed Jesus to be alive."	196
22	Acts 25:23-27	The rulers came "with great pomp."	430 (5-8)
23	Acts 26:1-11	"Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."	342
24	Acts 26:12-23	"I send you to the Gentiles."	510
25	Acts 26:24-32	"This thing was not done in a corner."	496
26	Acts 27:1-12	"Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me."	643
27	Acts 27:13-26	"Do not be afraid, Paul."	520 (5-8)
28	Acts 27:27-37	Paul "gave thanks to God in the presence of them all."	651 (1-2)
29	Acts 27:38-44	"They all escaped safely to land."	649
30	Acts 28:1-15	"They will take up serpents" without harm.	434
31	Acts 28:16-31	"The salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles."	511
			—D. Lau

Immoral Influences—BLASPHEMY

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mk. 7:21-22). One of the most common immoral influences of our time is the sin of blasphemy.

What is blasphemy? The English word blasphemy is derived from a Greek word. When this Greek word is used in the New Testament, the usual English translation is *blasphemy*. Sometimes other words are used, such as *evil speaking* or *railing*. The verb is usually translated *blaspheme*, but sometimes other words are substituted: *defame*, *rail on*, *report slanderously*, *revile*, *speak evil of*. The Greek word translated blaspheme apparently comes from two other Greek words, one meaning *to injure*, and the other meaning *to speak*. Thus blasphemy is speaking in such a way as to injure someone. In the New Testament, however, blasphemy usually refers to speaking that is intended to injure *God* or *defame God*. Thus it is a sin against God's

Second Commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

Blasphemy Then And Now

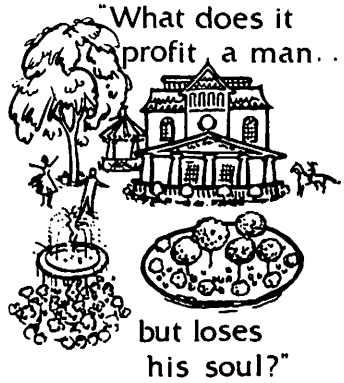
In Old Testament times, when church and state were one, blasphemy was punishable by death. We are told in Leviticus that the son of a mixed marriage (his father an Egyptian, his mother an Israelite), while fighting with an Israelite, "blasphemed the name of the Lord." He was immediately imprisoned. When Moses asked the Lord what should be done to the blasphemer, the Lord's answer was this: "Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death" (Lev. 24:10-16).

The Israelites were trained to have

such a fear of misusing the sacred name of the LORD (JHVH) that they did not use the name JHVH at all but substituted another word for it. In time they even forgot how the sacred name should be pronounced. Most likely it was Jahveh rather than the Jehovah we are familiar with. In the Hebrew language only the consonants were printed, not the vowels. Thus the name was JHVH, translated in most English Bibles by the term LORD, with all four letters written in capital letters.

No doubt the Jews carried this reverence for the sacred name too far when they stopped using it altogether. But in our times we have gone to the opposite extreme. In our land there is very little reverence for God or the sacred things of God, particularly the true God who sent His Son Jesus into the world. The very title of the musical, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, would seem to be blasphemy, even without considering its blasphemous contents. We hear of other current projects in which Jesus is portrayed as being adulterous with Mary Magdalene or even as being homosexual.

The actor George Burns was given the role of God in three supposedly humorous popular movies in which sacred things were made fun of. Archie Bunker and his son-in-law in the hit television program *All in the Family* were frequently guilty of making fun of God and the teachings of God. The British made a movie about a certain Brian who was supposedly a contemporary of Jesus, and they used this movie to make fun of the Gospel account of Jesus' suffering



and death. More recently publicity has been given to a statue of a naked female Christ crucified on a cross. Along the same lines there are those speaking of our Father-Mother God, or even speaking of God as She.

If reverence for God as He is portrayed in Scripture were more in evidence among our citizens, such blasphemy would never be attempted by these enemies of Christianity. Nowadays, just as anything goes in the area of sexual immorality, so also anything goes in a discussion of God and the things of God. Nothing seems to be sacred anymore or untouchable. But what else should we expect from a world that spit at the Son of God and nailed Him to a cross?

Jesus listed blasphemy along with pride and murder and fornication as a sin that comes out of a man's wicked heart. We realize that in our nation, where church and state are separate, blasphemy cannot be punished as a crime. Nevertheless, blasphemy is a sin that God Himself will punish in His own way at His own time. "God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

“NOTHING SEEMS TO BE SACRED ANYMORE OR UNTOUCHABLE. BUT WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE EXPECT FROM A WORLD THAT SPIT AT THE SON OF GOD AND NAILED HIM TO A CROSS?”

Jesus' Alleged Blasphemy

When Jesus lived on this earth, the Jewish leaders accused Him of blasphemy. For example, when Jesus forgave the sin of the paralyzed man lowered from the roof, some of the scribes present immediately challenged Him by saying: “This Man blasphemes!” (Mt. 9:3) What was this alleged blasphemy? That Jesus, a mere man in their opinion, forgave sins, which only God can do! Of course Jesus at once proved their charge false by unleashing His divine power and healing the paralyzed man.

But the charge of blasphemy continued to be made against Jesus because of His claims to be more than mere man. When He said, “I and My Father are one” (Jn. 10:30), they became so incensed that they picked up stones to throw at Him. When Jesus asked them why they were stoning Him, they replied: “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God” (Jn. 10:33). But Jesus refuted the charge by calling attention to His miracles. “Do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me” (Jn. 10:36-37).

There is no doubt that Jesus would have been guilty of blasphemy if He had been only a man, as they claimed.

But Jesus proved in word and deed that He was what He claimed to be, and therefore the charge of blasphemy against Jesus was in itself blasphemy, for they were speaking evil of the very Son of God.

Nevertheless, the charge of blasphemy against Jesus was renewed at His trial before Caiaphas, the high priest. Not having been able to find any other evidence against Him, Caiaphas finally asked Jesus whether He was the Christ, the Son of God. When Jesus answered in the affirmative, Caiaphas registered shock and cried out: “He has spoken blasphemy! You have heard His blasphemy” (Mt. 26:65-66). Because of this alleged blasphemy the council ruled: “He is deserving of death.”

Blasphemy Forgiven And Unforgiven

Luke, one of the historians that recorded Jesus' trial, did not agree that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy. Rather, the Jewish leaders themselves were guilty of blasphemy for speaking evil of the eternal God, who was living in their midst in the person of Jesus. “They blasphemously spoke against Him” (Lk. 22:65), says Luke, and of course he is right. What greater blasphemy can there be than to make fun of God's Son and demand that He be crucified! And those who make fun of Him today and ridicule His teachings are crucifying Him all over again and are guilty of blasphemy!

But God is merciful! Jesus said: “Anyone who speaks a word against

the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven" (Lk. 12:10). Many of those Jews who called out for Jesus' crucifixion became followers of Jesus on Pentecost and the days following. They did not blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, when He invited them to receive Jesus' forgiveness. The apostle Paul admitted that he had once been a blasphemer, but his blasphemy was forgiven. "I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. . . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:13-15).

But blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the unforgivable sin. After discussing the Bible references to this sin, F. Pieper says: "The sin against the Holy Ghost is committed when, after the Holy Ghost has convinced a person in his heart of the divine truth, that person nevertheless not only rejects the truth he is convinced of, but also blasphemes it" (*Christian Dogmatics*. Vol. I, p. 573). The Pharisees who accused Jesus of doing His miracles by the power of the devil were the ones in danger of committing this sin.

Speaking Evil Of God's Truth

Some Jews continued their blasphemy against God long after Jesus' death and resurrection. When the apostle Paul brought the Gospel to Antioch of Pisidia, "they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 13:45). This was typical of the reception given

to the Gospel by the scattered Jews. The same thing happened to Paul in Corinth. "They opposed him and blasphemed" (Acts 18:6).

In his letter to the Romans the apostle Paul charges the Jews with a sin he himself admits having committed: the sin of causing others to blaspheme. As a persecutor of Christians, Paul had tortured them until they blasphemed against God's name (Acts 26:11). By their disobedient lives the Jews had caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the God of the Jews. "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you" (Rom. 2:24; also Is. 52:5; Ez. 36:22). In other words, we can be guilty of blasphemy not only by opening our own mouths against God but also by living such ungodly and hypocritical lives that others open their mouths against our God. The apostle Peter warns against false teachers "who will bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed" (2 Pet. 2:1-2).

To prevent such blasphemy we Christians are instructed to glorify God by our Christian lives. For example, Paul says that Christian women are to be "discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (Tit. 2:5). Our Christian lives should lead unbelievers to glorify God and His saving Word, not turn against it in blasphemy.

—David Lau

A Valiant Confessor

On May 3, 1985 Pastor Carl Heinrich A. Schmutzler presented a "Declaration of Consensus in Christian Doctrine and Application for Membership" to President Daniel Fleischer and the Board of Doctrine of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. In this document Pastor Schmutzler declared himself "in full and complete doctrinal agreement" with the CLC, its Constitution, and its confessional writings. At the same time he applied for membership in the CLC "effective as soon as it shall be feasible to terminate my present obligations in Sweden."

On the basis of this declaration and subsequent, as well as previous, doctrinal discussions with Pastor Schmutzler, the Board of Doctrine declared him eligible for a call into the ministry of the CLC. In the accompanying article (in "Queen's English" he points out) Pastor Schmutzler reveals the oneness in faith and joy in the Gospel he discovered during his semester stay at ILC.

While auditing courses at Immanuel Seminary the last five months, Pastor Schmutzler was tutored by Professor emeritus C. M. Gullerud. He was born August 27, 1943 in Bremen, Germany; he was ordained May 17, 1969 in Harnosand Cathedral, Sweden; at present he is Rector of 5 Swedish churches. Pastor Schmutzler's wife, Margareta, was born March 21, 1943 in Lund,



Pastor
Carl
Heinrich
A. Schmutzler

Sweden. She is a teacher of textile arts and crafts on the grade school level.

While in the process of disassociating himself, for conscience' sake, from the Church of Sweden, Pastor Schmutzler is giving a powerful witness to the Word of Truth and to His Savior. While in the states He visited a number of our CLC churches, showing slides and giving a description of his work in Sweden. He explained in detail the difficulties involved when one seeks to be a confessional Lutheran Christian in the "Lutheran" State Church of Sweden. His presentation was not only interesting but spiritually stimulating to all who heard him.

An additional opportunity for testimony came to Pastor Schmutzler by way of an article in the Eau Claire *Leader-Telegram*. Entitled "Visiting Swedish Minister Sees Christianity Weakening," the article presented clearly and forcefully Pastor Schmutzler's biblical views. He was quoted, for example, as saying: "People are being robbed of their eternal hope" because of the notion that "the Bible is as any book." He adds: "For Lutherans the doctrine (of verbal inspiration) is of prime importance, and during the last 20 years many Lutheran churches haven't put as much emphasis on the doctrine. They

are like an apple where nothing but the skin remains." This and similar biblical views have made Pastor Schmutzler somewhat unpopular in his homeland.

It is the Spirit of God Who creates unity of Christian faith and doctrine. We give thanks to our Lord for the mutual fellowship He has created between our CLC and this isolated, valiant confessor of the pure Word

and Gospel of Jesus Christ in far away Sweden. May the Spirit attend him for tasks yet to be done. May the Lord hasten events so that Pastor and Mrs. Schmutzler might soon rejoin us in body even as they are now united with us in spirit and in confession of the Word of Truth.

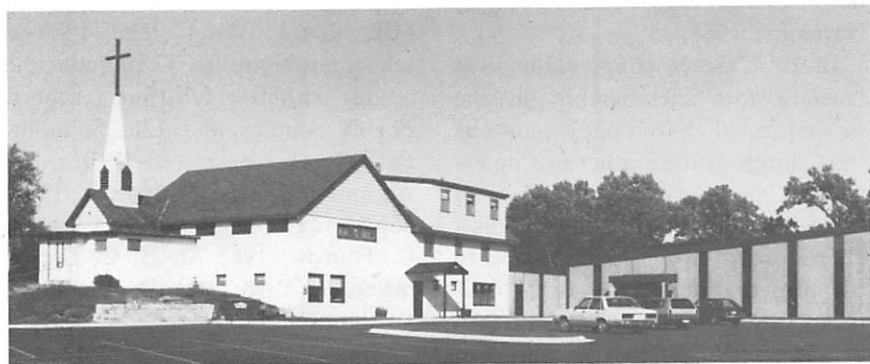
"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. 133:1).

—Paul Fleischer

* * * * *

Born With The CLC—Borne By God . . .

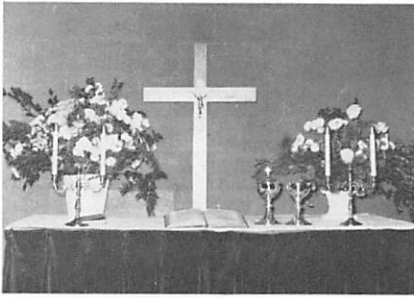
Grace Lutheran Church Fridley, Minnesota



Not all of the congregations featured in this series were "born with the CLC" exactly 25 years ago. For example, the beginnings of Grace congregation in Fridley go back to December 1954. At that time the pastors of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, North Minneapolis, initiated services for concerned Lutheran Christians in a Fridley public school (Hayes Elementary). Mr. O. Abrams, a student at what was once the Ortho-

dox Lutheran Seminary of Minneapolis*, conducted the services. After his graduation, Mr. Abrams was called and ordained as the first resident pastor of the group of some 80 souls that had been gathered.

An organizational meeting of the congregation was held at the Roger Weibye home in July 1955. Incorporation was effected in February 1957. A month later an acre of ground for a building site was purchased for



Altar in Hayes Elementary School

\$2,500, an amount which had been loaned to the congregation by an outside friend. The same year construction began on a unit which would include a place of worship, together with a wing to serve as housing for the pastor's family. Thanks to much volunteer labor, the new facility was completed by November 1958.

In 1962 Grace congregation was received into membership in the newly-formed church body known as the Church of the Lutheran Confession. A summary of the history of Grace Church describes the CLC as a church body "which is dedicated to the preservation of the Bible doctrines and practice once confessed and adhered to by the Ev. Lutheran Synodical Conference*, which has disintegrated under the influences of liberalism and rationalism in recent times."

*The Orthodox Lutheran Seminary served the Orthodox Lutheran Conference (OLC) which was organized in Okabena, MN in 1951 by a small group whose members had withdrawn from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in protest against alleged doctrinal deviations. The group took exception to the LCMS action regarding the *Common Confession* with the American Lutheran Church. The Orthodox Lutheran Seminary opened in Minneapolis in September, 1952 with Prof. P. E. Kretzmann as its president. The Seminary discontinued around 1962. Members of the OLC were received into the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1963 and the OLC ceased to exist The Synodical Conference was officially dissolved in 1967 after "charges against the Missouri Synod of improper relations with other Lutheran bodies and of growing doctrinal laxity led to the withdrawal in 1963" of the Wisconsin Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. (Information taken from the *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, 1975 edition)

Grace of Fridley has been blessed by the Lord in many ways. From the first years when it sought financial aid from the CLC in supporting its pastors, Grace has grown to a membership of 305 souls, 201 communicants, and 47 voters. The congregation has had to expand its original facilities. The original church which seats 125 is still used regularly each Sunday in two services. Construction on a new church and fellowship wing-complex continues, and mostly by volunteer labor has advanced to the point that the 1984 Christmas Eve service was conducted in the fellowship portion.

The Christian Day School was begun in 1976 with 6 grades taught by Miss Carol Heisel. The 1984-85 school term enrolled 37 students in 8 grades with two full-time teachers, Phyllis Schuler and Lila Schmidt. Pastors who have served are: O. Abrams, 1955-63; N. Harms, 1963-65; Prof. E. Schaller, 1965 vacancy; C. Thurow, 1965-70; H. C. Duehlmeier, 1970-78; and D. Fleischer, 1978-present.

Grace Lutheran Church marked its anniversary on May 5th of this year with former pastor Carl Thurow serving as guest speaker.

—Paul Fleischer

Born With The CLC—Borne By God . . .

Faith Lutheran Church St. Louis County, Missouri



In the Fall of 1960 the ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEBSTER GROVES, MO. received a post card from a member of the CLC membership application committee. It read in part: "You have the distinction of being the first congregation to apply for formal membership in the CLC." It was a happy moment in the history of this little "Big City" congregation.

At that time the congregation (17 voters, 52 souls) was being served by Pastor Julius B. Erhart (1954-1964). Over the years four other men have served as resident ministers of the Christian Gospel: Louis G. Bernthal (1965-1969); Norman F. Harms (1969-1971); Michael Sydow (1971-1978); and Vance Fossum (1978-present).

Recognizing the renewed growth and westward expansion of "Arch-City," the congregation sold its church-parsonage complex in Webster Groves in 1968, and began

holding services in rented quarters. In November of that same year a new name was adopted: FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MO. Now the little flock began what was to be a long and prayerful search for suitable and affordable property in West St. Louis County. The Lord provided! In 1971 a two-acre site was purchased for \$20,000.

The congregation continued to hold services in the parsonage and at the local grade school until the Fall of 1972, when the present chapel and



Some Souls of Faith Church

parsonage were completed and dedicated to the praise and glory of our Redeemer God. FAITH became a self-supporting member of the CLC in 1977. And just this year the congregation was enabled by the continuing grace of our Lord to completely retire its debt on both property and building. This was accomplished through the sale of about half of the two-acre parcel for the sum of \$29,000.

In this 25th anniversary year of the CLC and FAITH'S membership in this blessed fellowship we are especially thankful to our Lord Jesus for His continued grace among us. We give thanks also to our God in heaven for all our brothers and sisters in the congregations of the CLC who have supported our efforts in the St. Louis area over the years by their prayers and mission offerings.

Presently FAITH congregation numbers 11 voters and 63 souls (only five of which are charter members). As we look to the next 25 years in the Lord's service we are mindful that He alone "sets the solitary in families" (Ps. 68:6). We stand alone in a city which abounds in Lutheran churches of widely varying faithfulness to God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions. Yet we know, and we have learned, that we are NOT ALONE. For, given the fleshly weaknesses common to all Christian pastors and congregations of all times, it is a miracle of our Lord's grace and a certain testimony of His continued presence and working that our little group exists at all in this area (and in these times!) to proclaim the pure Gospel of Christ and to grow

in grace and unity before Him.

Our prayer and cheerful confidence for the future is that with faith's gratitude and love we may more zealously glory in Christ our Savior and our Lutheran-Christian heritage without boasting in ourselves or LutheranISM; that we may contend for the whole truth of Christ's Word without being contentious; that we may reach *out* to all people with the Gospel of Christ, while steadfastly refusing to let the world reach *in* and steal away the precious Word of life.

In these last days before our Lord Jesus returns in glory may we all pray, work, and wait on the Lord without "mission anxiety," trusting in His promise: "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept my word, and have not denied My name" (Rev. 3:8).

—Vance Fossum