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lutheran spokesman

**GLORIFY
GOD**

IN YOUR LIFE...

**AT
PLAY**

**AT
HOME**

**AT
WORK**

**IN THE
WORLD**

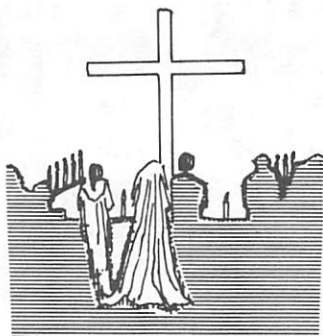
**AT
CHURCH**

**AT
CAMP**

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

—Please read Mark 10:2-16

The Family Under Christ



Two guests were overheard conversing at a wedding reception. "Pastor Jones is such a fine speaker," mused the one. "Yes, he is," replied the other. "But with that lengthy sermon about sin, pride, selfishness, stubbornness, the ugliness of the human nature—the various and heavy crosses fallen upon the institution of marriage—I momentarily feared that bride and groom were reconsidering."

Trouble-less Marriages?

Perhaps the bride and groom were reconsidering. Christ's own disciples expressed similar reservations about matrimony. Upon hearing the Savior's explanation of marriage, its requirements and responsibilities, the disciples responded: "If THIS is the situation between a husband and

wife, it is better not to marry" (Mt. 19:10).

Marital difficulties are often denied out of shame or sorrow. Conversations concerning the same are usually spoken of in hushed whispers. Yet, there are no problems more possible or prevalent than marital problems, from the daily and minor disagreements to the painful threat of divorce. This is also true of Christian congregations. Christians are people too: people subject to the same temptations and frustrations; people beset and besieged by the same sinful nature.

Thus there is an immediate need to learn and relearn what Scripture teaches about marriage and divorce.

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Trouble-less marriages are not the rule but the exception—if indeed there exists such an entity as a trouble-less marriage. And even should there be such an entity, is there any marriage, no matter how exciting or rewarding, without need for improvement?

To believe that the matter of marriage is meaningless or irrelevant to the unmarried is absolute nonsense. Children are strongly affected by the marriage of their parents. Parents are strongly affected by the marriage of their children. According to Genesis 2, marriage and family were the fabric of which human society was woven.

The Support Of God's Word

One reason for public worship and congregational ministry is to support and encourage—Christian marriage included. And how do Christians support and encourage each other? Not with idle speculations or empty notions or trite, polite generalities. Christians use none of the gimmicks, limericks, or expediencies regularly employed by the world. Our support and encouragement consists in this, that God has given us His Word. And this Word from God is “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). **THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED.**

Though you have no title, no degree—no, not one moment's experience as a marriage counsellor—you do have the clear, inerrant Word of God. The degrees and

decrees of mere men are immaterial. God's Spirit is the Counsellor, the highest and finest of marriage counsellors. And the Spirit's counsel is ever the Lord Christ's Gospel.

The **FAMILY UNDER CHRIST** is that family deriving everything from Christ: its strength, its unity, its fulfillment. For the Bible teaches that “no matter how many promises God has made, they are **YES** in Christ” (2 Cor. 1:20). In Christ the family finds its God-intended potential.

God's Institution

Marriage is God's institution, not ours. Too often and easily this institution of God is treated as if a human contrivance, as if a contract to be altered or trifled with at will.

Jesus dared to insist that marriage is God's institution, and therefore an institution subject to God's will and Word. Jesus dared to declare that divorce exists only because of human stubbornness. “It was because your hearts were **HARD** that Moses wrote you this law” (Mk. 10:5). Stubbornness, selfishness, such is the legacy of divorce. Doesn't experience prove the legacy true? What must be done to repair and improve a failing marriage is usually obvious. What's missing most often is the **WILLINGNESS** to do what must be done.

Divorce is not an equal option to marriage. Divorce is the opposite of marriage. Divorce is literally an abandoning of the vows and the spouse. But marriage is also an abandonment, an abandoning of all else **FOR** the sake of the spouse: “For this reason a man will **LEAVE**

his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one" (Mk. 10:7-8). Listen anew to the characteristics of God's institution as expressed in Ephesians: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and GAVE HIMSELF UP for her" (Eph. 5:25). A TOTAL ABANDONING of the self for the spouse. And, oh, the pain inflicted upon husband, upon wife, upon children, when the "two made one" are wrenched asunder.

Thus are we returned to where we began: to the two wedding guests; to that lengthy sermon seeming to cause momentary reconsideration; to the Lord's twelve—and the response of every disciple since to a study of marriage's absolute claims: "If this is the situation between husband and wife, it is better not to marry" (Mt. 19:10).

Yet, how esteemed is this sacred institution within Scripture. Significantly, Christ's first miracle was performed at a wedding.

Incompatibility?

We may wince with those two wedding guests at any prediction of troubles for a marriage. Nevertheless, the potential for trouble exists. Why? God's institution is in itself holy and wholesome. The problem lies not with God's institution, but with the sinful and selfish nature of those who enter it. Incompatibility? Irreconcilable differences? This is the "stuff" of which human nature is made. But weigh the selflessness of the wedding vows against Scripture's definition of human nature in Galatians 5:19ff. Suddenly the "I

DO" of the marriage vow can be overshadowed and overwhelmed by the countless number of human "I can't's" and "I won't's." How important, therefore, that the FAMILY UNDER CHRIST hear the third "I DO" spoken at every Christian marriage: God's "I DO"—God's vow to sustain and nurture and prosper the Christian husband and wife.

May God's Spirit move all wives and husbands to see the Jesus who "shared in their humanity" (Heb. 2:14). For here there is a Marriage Counsellor who does understand, who will act speedily and powerfully in their behalf. For the Christ over the Christian family is also of the human family. "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

Is there a marriage problem that can remain to injure and destroy, when and where husband and wife take refuge in the cross of Jesus? Hear His words of grace and power: "Love one another. As I HAVE LOVED YOU, so you must love one another" (Jn. 13:24). Divine love. Christlike love. Undeserved love. Love beyond rights, reasons, or limitations.

Jesus Christ is the end and the answer to all "irreconcilable differences." Jesus is the Way. Let not the stubbornness of the human heart deprive us of the Means.

Oh, blest the house, whate'er befall,
Where JESUS CHRIST is all in all!
Yea, if He were not dwelling there,
How dark and poor and void it werel

—P. M. Weiss

FAITH

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:28).

“It seems a very easy matter indeed to receive forgiveness of sins by doing nothing more than simply believing. People think: doing good works is a heavy task, but believing is something that is soon done. To be sure, faith does seem to be an easy matter; but it is really a difficult art. Temptation and experience teach that clinging to God’s Word so that the heart is not afraid of sins and death, but trusts and believes God, is a far more difficult task than observing all the rules of the monastic orders.” (Martin Luther)

Why is this faith that justifies and saves so difficult for us human beings?

First of all, we are not talking about merely believing in God’s existence. As James writes: “Even the demons believe that—and shudder” (Jms. 2:19, NIV).

Secondly, we are not simply talking about knowing what the Bible says about who Jesus is and what He did, agreeing that it is true.

Saving faith is personal trust in Jesus as one’s own Savior and Lord. It is the reliance of the heart upon the promises of God in Christ Jesus. It is individually filling your name into the “whosoever blank” of John 3:16. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that _____ believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Created By The Spirit

Simple trust in God’s promises is not only difficult for humans, it is impossible unless God makes a major change in us. This is true because at the heart of sin’s

destruction is the destruction of the heart. Since sin entered, we have been utterly incapable of trusting God. This was evident already when the newly sinful Adam and Eve ran and hid at God’s approach. This is clearly seen today in emotions so common to us all—like fear and worry.

When it comes to God’s promises people by nature have hearts of stone—hearts hard, cold, and indifferent. This is just the opposite of faith, which is alive and responsive. True faith warmly desires what God graciously promises in His Word.

God who sent His Son to rescue us from sin’s power and penalty also comes to our rescue where our inability to trust in Him is concerned. “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). For “the Gospel . . . is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16).

Through the Good News of God’s forgiveness in Christ, the Holy Spirit creates faith in those previously incapable of believing God’s prom-

“THE DROWNING MAN MUST HOLD FAST NOT JUST TO ANYTHING, BUT TO SOMETHING THAT WILL SUPPORT HIS WEIGHT. FAITH THAT SAVES IS FIRST OF ALL AND ABOVE ALL HOLDING FAST TO JESUS CHRIST.”

ises. Here is the heart transplant we needed so desperately of which the Lord spoke through Jeremiah (24:7): “I will give them a heart to know me.” “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:23).

Living And Active

Through faith in Jesus Christ God gives us life for death. It should then come as no surprise that faith itself is a living and active thing—a new heart beating and pulsing, a tree bearing fruit. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works” (Eph. 2:10).

Listen to Luther, the Apostle of faith, on the subject of faith in action: “It is a living, energetic, active, mighty thing, this faith! It cannot but do good unceasingly. Where there is faith, one does not ask whether good works are to be done; but before the question is asked, the works have been done, and there is a continuous doing of them. Faith is a living, daring confidence in the grace of God. . . Accordingly, it is impossible to separate works from faith, just as impossible as it is to separate the power to burn from fire.”

God’s gift of faith is like the gift of a new heart. But just as our physical hearts are not life itself, even so faith is not the believer’s life-source. Christ is our life. It is not the activity

of believing that saves, but the One in Whom we believe. The drowning man must hold fast not just to anything, but to something that will support his weight. Faith that saves is first of all and above all holding fast to Jesus Christ.

The Centurion

Faith in God’s promise of forgiveness in Christ does not stop with this primary purpose, but goes on to take God at His Word in any and every case. The centurion of Capernaum (Luke 7:1-10) manifested such a faith when he said that it was not necessary for the Lord Jesus to see or touch his ailing servant, but that if He would only say the word, that would result in his servant’s full recovery.

The centurion also demonstrated a basic characteristic of faith when he denied all merit on his part. In the same way every believing child of God renounces all thought of deserving in any way any blessing of God—especially the blessing of forgiveness and salvation. Religious activities of faith, such as the use of the Word and Sacraments are not done to pay God off, but to receive from His gracious hand. Thus: “We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:28).

—W. V. Schaller

Helping The Poor And The Needy—II

Old Testament Regulations

The law that God gave to Israel included many provisions for helping the poor and the needy. For example, we find the following in the book of Leviticus: "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger" (Lev. 19: 9-10). In the days of the judges this law was obeyed by Boaz of Bethlehem, with the result that Ruth and Naomi had enough to eat in their poverty.

In another provision God said: "The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning" (Lev. 19:13). In other words, God wanted every employer to pay his employees on the very same day that they earned their wages. Some in their poverty could use that pay at once.

God's regulations also called for property to remain in the same family for all time. There was no such thing as the rich getting permanently richer and the poor getting permanently poorer. The Year of Jubilee was to be observed every fifty years. In that year all the land that had been sold or otherwise lost was to be returned to the original owning family. Thus all land sales among the Jews were only leases in

effect until the Year of Jubilee.

In this connection God said: "If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. . . And if one of your brethren who dwells by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. But as a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with you, and shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee. And then he shall depart from you; . . . he shall return unto the possession of his fathers" (Lev. 25:35-41).

Moses' Last Warnings

When Moses had led the children of Israel to the border of the Promised Land and was about to die, he repeated the laws of God to the new generation in the book of Deuteronomy. Again, assistance to the poor and the needy was

"Assistance to the poor and needy was encouraged with the promise that if the stranger and the fatherless and the widow were taken care of adequately, then the Lord God would bless them . . ."

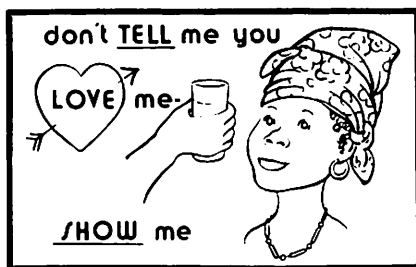
encouraged with the promise that if the stranger and the fatherless and the widow were taken care of adequately, then the Lord God would bless them in all the works of their hands.

At the end of every seven years all debts were to be canceled. Moses warned them specifically: "You shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs" (Deut. 15:7-8). This generosity was to be practiced even if the seventh year, the year of release, was at hand. "Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing. . . You shall surely give to him. . . For this thing the Lord your God will bless you. . . For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land'" (Deut. 15:9-11).

And when slaves were released in the seventh year, they were not to be let go empty-handed. Moses said: "From what the Lord has blessed you with, you shall give to him. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you" (Deut. 15:14-15).

In The Days Of Joshua And The Judges

The days of Joshua were, for the most part, days of obedience and trust in the Lord, victory over the enemies, and abundant prosperity. Before Joshua died, he said to the people: "Not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord



your God spoke concerning you" (Josh. 23:14).

In the time of the judges, however, the people were often hard-pressed because of their own failures to drive out and destroy the pockets of Canaanite resistance in the land. Instead of driving out these enemies, they began to worship the false gods of their enemies. The result: "God delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them" (Judges 2:14).

This is a theme that is often repeated in the Old Testament: Poverty in some cases is a consequence of sin and a judgment from God. For example, because the children of Israel did evil, God delivered them into the hand of marauding bands of Midianites, who destroyed their crops and left them no sustenance. This situation changed only when Israel repented of its idolatry and turned to the Lord under Gideon.

That poverty and prosperity were prevalent in those days as today is clear from Hannah's song in First Samuel. At the birth of her son Samuel she said: "The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap" (1 Sam. 2:7-8). Surely one

reason the Lord makes some people poor is to provide an opportunity for the more prosperous to share what they have been given.

Poverty Portrayed In The Psalms

In the days of David and Solomon and the subsequent kings the duty of God's people toward the poor was discussed particularly in the psalms. In Psalm 37 David describes the wicked as having drawn their sword and having bent their bow "to cast down the poor and needy." When famine comes, the wicked will perish, but God will always take care of His people. For "the righteous shows mercy and gives. . . He is ever merciful, and lends; and his descendants are blessed." Yet the same psalm points out that according to outward appearance the evildoers sometimes seem to be prospering much more than the righteous.

"Surely one reason the Lord makes some people poor is to provide an opportunity for the more prosperous to share what they have been given."

In Psalm 41 David repeats this assurance to the kind and generous: "Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." David himself in his early days gave refuge to the poor who for one reason or another were out of favor with King Saul. "Everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them" (1 Sam. 22:2).

The psalmist Asaph in Psalm 82 insists that earthly judges should not take advantage of the poor. "Defend the poor and fatherless," he says. "Do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked."

In Psalm 109 David speaks out against the traitor in words that are applied to Judas in the New Testament. One of the traits of the traitor is that "he did not remember to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and the needy man." On the other hand, the Lord "shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those who condemn him." Judas, we remember, pretended to be very much concerned with the poor and needy, but in fact he kept for himself what was given for the poor. In our time also we hear of food, clothing, and supplies being sent to the poor in foreign lands and ending up in the hands of wealthy bureaucrats or mobsters.

The twin psalms, Ps. 111 and Ps. 112, portray the Lord God as being "gracious and full of compassion," giving food to those who fear Him. Therefore also the child of God is "gracious and full of compassion. . . He has dispersed abroad, he has given to the poor," just like his heavenly Father.

The details of Old Testament regulations may no longer apply to us today. But as surely as we are children of a compassionate Father by faith in Jesus Christ, we are to be like our heavenly Father, and this means showing compassion to the poor and needy.

—D. Lau
9

National Geographic— November 1985

An article entitled "The Search For Our Ancestors" appeared in the November 1985 issue of *National Geographic* magazine. The article caused considerable stir among the magazine's readers, as is indicated by a notation in the March 1986 issue that "objections to our Early Man article had brought more than 100 letters of resignation by year's end."

Mr. Albert Sippert, formerly a CLC pastor and now a member of Immanuel Church, Mankato, Minnesota has written a critique of the article from the perspective of a Bible-believing Christian. We would like to share some of Mr. Sippert's comments in which he uncovers the evolutionary bias of the *National Geographic* article. As Mr. Sippert points out, many of the observations and conclusions made in "The Search For Our Ancestors" are readily explainable through the biblical account of the Flood at the time of Noah.

What follows are excerpts only from Mr. Sippert's article. Please be advised that quotations from *National Geographic* appear in italics, with Mr. Sippert's comments in normal print. In some instances page references are given so that our readers might cross-reference the article if they so choose.

Millions Of Years?

On page 563 the actual writers of

"The Search For Our Ancestors" write: *24 to 5 millions of years ago an array of early ape species spread throughout the Old World. Sometime during the last half of the epoch the ancestral line of ape and man and his ancestors split.* But all this is merely assuming, guessing, presuming, theorizing, and postulating, based on only a few fossil bones that can be either of apes or of men who died in the Flood of Noah's time instead of 24 to 5 millions of years ago.

Page 564 states: *Suddenly a primate that stands, walks, and runs on two legs is discovered in a three-million-year-old stratum with a skeleton so strikingly like our own. . .* They are referring to pieces of a skeleton, named Lucy, that Dr. D. Johanson found at Hadar, Ethiopia in 1974. They say this creature appeared suddenly in the history of mankind. And yet with the few bones they found that creature could be either an ape or a man. They then show five reconstructed skeletons, nine reconstructed skulls, and nine fully-fleshed beings reconstructed by artist Jay Matternes. All these reconstructions are from a few bones that could be either apes or human beings.

On page 574 they mention that the *artists focused on the main area of change, the skull* (that is, in the different creatures reconstructed). Then in the next sentences they

“ALL THESE RECONSTRUCTIONS OF SKELETONS AND SKULLS MEAN NOTHING . . . ACTUALLY THERE ARE HUMANS TODAY WHO LOOK LIKE WHAT THEY CALL NEANDERTHALS OF 30,000 YEARS AGO.”

mention that vast differences like this exist even in different human beings today, stating, *All populations today . . . exhibit an immense range of physical variability, both within groups and from group to group; compare the Eskimo with the Brazilian Indian, the Pygmy with the Masai. Earlier Hominid species undoubtedly also existed in variable forms as a result of their adaptations to local environments.* So all these reconstructions of skeletons and skulls mean nothing. . . Actually there are humans today who look like what they call Neanderthals of 30,000 years ago.

Africa's Taung Child

On the front cover of the *National Geographic* they show a three dimensional picture of a skull, called Africa's Taung child, whose skull is presumed to be one to two million years old. This skull, found in 1924, is the treasured prize of the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. They claim (on p. 578): *The child died at the age of 5 or 6 and the bones ended up in a cave. Accumulating debris gave the skull protection against the usual destruction by animals, insects, and soil acids. . .* But accumulating debris does not preserve bones. Millions of buffalo died or were killed ruthlessly in our western plains 100 years ago, but no bones were preserved within a few years by accumulating debris of

violent western winds. Evidently the skull of this child was preserved not by *gradually water borne carbonates percolating into the cave* but by the massive, devastating Flood of Noah's day, which quickly buried millions of skulls and skeletons of men and animals under layers and layers of sand, rock, mud, and lime which preserved those bones until dug up by miners, excavators, road builders, or exposed to view by windstorms, heavy rains, and local floods.

Although the evolutionists do not believe in the Bible account of creation and the whole earth being created good, that is, beautiful and pleasant or almost heaven-like and although they refuse to accept a world-wide flood, they make statements (from p. 582 on) that fit in beautifully with the Bible. They quote C. K. (Bob) Brain of the Transvaal Museum in Pretoria, South Africa, stating: *He (Mr. Brain) finds a remarkable record of catastrophic environmental change, a profound cooling between 5 to 6 million years ago, following millions of years of mostly warm climate. . .* Now if Mr. Brain would change his millions of years into a few thousand years, his other statements would be in conformity with the Bible account given in Genesis.

On page 585, referring to the partial skeleton and skull called Lucy, they state that that fossil was *long hidden by layers of sediment*

“GRADUAL COVERING WITH SEDIMENTS COULD NOT HAVE PRESERVED THAT FOSSIL, BUT THE QUICK, MASSIVE FLOOD AND VOLCANIC ACTION OF NOAH’S FLOOD WOULD HAVE PRESERVED IT.”

and volcanic ash. Gradual covering with sediments could not have preserved that fossil, but the quick, massive flood and volcanic action of Noah’s Flood would have preserved it.

On page 589 they state: *Faulting, uplift, and erosion have exposed hundreds of meters of lake and river sediments and a wealth of fossils at various depths, laid down over millions of years, and interlayered with these sediments are numerous beds of volcanic ash from many eruptions over those same millions of years.* Change the millions of years to a few years and you have a beautiful description of the activities of the Flood of Noah’s day.

“Wise Man?”

National Geographic works man up in 4 million years from Australopithecus afarensis and africanus (southern ape of Africa) to homo sapiens (wise man) or modern man. And, oh how proud modern man is today with his “advancement” from ape-like to man-like. But on the day of judgment I am sure the Lord will have a different translation for homo sapiens, namely, “wise guy.” He no doubt will say to many: “O.K. Wise Guy, where were you when I created the universe, this earth, all animals and mankind?” (See Job 38:4). On the basis of Romans 1:18-22 what a judgment awaits all those who reject what God revealed not only in the

Bible, but also in the created earth and universe, and what the destructive Flood of Noah’s day screams to us!

I must quote what the apostle Paul proclaimed to the worldly people of his day: “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness . . . for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen . . . professing themselves to be wise they became fools.”

The True Answer

The next story given in *National Geographic*, November 1985, p. 625, is entitled “Homo Erectus Unearthed.” It is by Richard Leakey . . . and Alan Walker who tell of a 12 year old boy who lived 1.6 million years ago as they presume. They say his body *disappeared beneath layers of lake sediment and river borne ash from distant volcanoes.* But that would hardly preserve his body any more than the same thing would today. He evidently was quickly covered by the muddy water sediments and ash, as very likely happened in the turmoil of the Flood and earth upheaval of Noah’s day. Gradual covering of bodies does not preserve them.

If Richard and Mary Leakey and other evolutionists—instead of looking for fossils of men and women who migrated to rural areas of Africa

before the Flood and were buried in the muddy water of the Flood— would turn their study of early mankind (i.e. anthropology) to above all, the study of archeology (the study of the life and culture of ancient peoples, by excavations of ancient cities, relics, artifacts, etc.) they would find that our forefathers came not from ape-like creatures, but highly intelligent and advanced people who built pyramids, towers reaching to heaven, and other structures and buildings that we still

marvel at today.

If the evolutionists would not harden their hearts and minds against God . . . , They would find the true answer to the origin of this earth and the universe. Like in the days before the Flood, God's righteous wrath is revealed when He sees that the wickedness of men (and also rebellion against God) is great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his hearts is only evil (and rebellious) continually (see Genesis 6:5).

Groundbreaking In Dallas

It was a beautiful autumn day in Dallas, Texas when on Sunday, October 13, 1985 members and friends of St. Matthew's Ev. Lutheran Church gathered to break ground for their new church/parsonage facility. On the basis of the Word of God, the group was reminded that

the church does not consist of a man-made building with four walls, but of Christians who gather around the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. The prayer was also raised to the Shepherd of our souls, Jesus Christ, that this new building would assist in proclaiming the light of our Redeem-



L to R: John Abbott, Vice Pres.; Gordon Stangeland, Treas.; Pastor Stephen Kurtzahn; Darrell Abbott, Pres.; Pat Sandilands, Sec'y.

er's forgiveness in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

St. Matthew's was formed in the late 1970's by two CLC families who were being served with the Bread of Life by the pastor of Bethel Ev. Lutheran Church, Spring (Houston), TX. Then in 1981 a small group of displaced Lutherans who yearned for a Gospel-centered ministry came into contact with St. Matthew's. The suddenly expanded congregation was served jointly by Pastor Gene Rutz of Spring, and Pastor Paul F. Nolting, our missionary-at-large who was working in the Austin area. The missionary-at-large soon thereafter moved to Dallas, while at the same time serving Reformation congregation of Austin on a part-time basis. In the spring of 1984 Pastor Stephen Kurtzahn of Hendersonville, NC was moved by the Holy Spirit to accept the call as St. Matthew's and Reformation's first permanent pastor.

After considering several building sites, St. Matthew's decided to purchase a one acre tract of land in far north Dallas, at 6510 Frankford Road. It is centrally located for our members, and was much less in price than other parcels in the immediate Dallas area. Total cost for the one

acre was \$101,000. This may seem rather high for many of our readers, but is reasonable for this growing city. It was also discovered that the road fronting the property would be widened into a major thoroughfare, and a major freeway would be built just two miles away. Funds to purchase the land and materials were obtained from the CLC Mission Extension Fund.

Everyone was ready and willing to begin construction of the new building after the groundbreaking, but because of a few more bids that needed to be obtained and city regulations which had to be followed, actual construction did not commence until April of this year.

St. Matthew's new facility will be built with volunteer labor from the congregation. It will consist of a 125 seat sanctuary, with an attached, two story, three bedroom parsonage. The parsonage was designed so it could easily be converted into a Christian Day School. God willing, the parsonage will be occupied by December 1st. We hope that the members of the CLC will keep this—and all our young mission congregations—in their prayers, which ascend as incense to the throne of grace.

—Stephen Kurtzahn

Daily Devotions For August 1986

Chapter by chapter John's Gospel takes up themes basic to our Christian faith. This month we consider . . .

DATE SCRIPTURE

- 1 John 4:1-26
- 2 John 4:27-42

JOHN CHAPTER FOUR

Jesus reveals Himself to be the promised Savior.
The witness of the woman at the well—and its fruit.

MEDITATIONS ON WITNESSING

Based on Jesus' approach with the woman of Samaria.

Witnessing begins with an unselfish, Christ-like interest in others. (v. 7-9)

- 3 Matthew 8:1-4 He touched him! A leper! Here is unselfish caring in action.
4 Luke 7:11-17 "His heart went out to her."
5 John 6:1-13 Jesus tests His disciples concern for others.

The witness seeks to arouse in others a serious curiosity about important questions—especially about Jesus. (v. 10-12)

- 6 John 1:35-51 "Come and see."
7 Luke 18:18-27 "Who, then, can be saved?"
8 Acts 16:22-34 "What must I do to be saved?"

The witness makes known how Jesus meets our deepest needs. (v. 13-15)

- 9 Acts 2:36-41 In Christ we have the forgiveness of our sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
10 I Corinthians 15:12-26 Jesus gives us victory over death.
11 I John 4:9-16 The Son makes us sure of the Father's love.

The witness reveals God's desire to have a real and living relationship with us. (v. 16-20)

- 12 Romans 14:13-18 Real religion is not mere forms, ceremonies, rules.
13 I John 2:28 - 3:10 Through faith in Christ God makes us dear members of His own family.
14 John 14:23-27 The Christian's daily life is lived in the presence of his heavenly Father.

The witness leads others to see their need for a Mediator—Someone to give us a true knowledge of God and to bridge the gap between us sinners and our holy heavenly Father. (v. 21-25)

- 15 Romans 3:19-26 The Law leaves no doubt as to our need for a Mediator.
16 Ephesians 2:11-18 Jesus has reconciled sinners—to God and to one another.
17 John 14:1-7 There is only one Mediator. (I Timothy 2:5)

The witness presents Jesus' claims in a faith-inviting manner. (v. 26, 28-30)

- 18 Matthew 11:1-6 Jesus is all the Messiah was promised to be.
19 Acts 3:11-26 God sent Him to bless you.
20 Acts 10:22-48 All who believe in Him receive forgiveness of sins through His name.

JESUS ENCOURAGES US IN WITNESSING TO HIM

There is deep satisfaction in revealing to weary sin-scarred souls the open arms of the waiting Savior. (v. 27, 31-34)

- 21 I Thessalonians 1:2-10 What a privilege to see the results of God's work in human hearts!
22 II Corinthians 4:5-18 What purpose, meaning, and strength belongs to those who bring Christ to others!

God provides us with ample opportunities for fruitful testimony. (v. 35-38)

- 23 Matthew 9:35-38 Look for God to answer your prayer in your own life.
24 Acts 18:1-11 "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking . . . I am with you."

Many of those to whom we witness will then carry the Word to others. (v. 39-42)

Installations

As authorized by President Fleischer, the undersigned installed Rick R. Grams as pastor of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Eagle Lake, MN on May 11, 1986.

—L. D. Redlin

As authorized by President Daniel Fleischer, I installed Paul F. Larsen as pastor of Holy Truth Lutheran Church, Ketchikan, Alaska, on Pentecost Sunday, May 18, 1986.

—Arvid G. W. Gullerud

Pastor Carl Heinrich A. Schmutzler was installed by the undersigned as assistant at Grace Lutheran Church, Fridley, MN on February 9, 1986.

—D. Fleischer

Request

Grace Lutheran of Valentine, NE is looking for a new or used small church organ in good condition. Anyone knowing of, or having, one for sale please contact Pastor W. Mielke.

Notice

Pastor Greg Kesterson has asked to be relieved as chaplain of the Convention. Pastor Paul Gurgel has been appointed in his place.

—Daniel Fleischer, President

Time of Worship

Grace Lutheran Church, Fridley, MN will be holding Sunday worship service at 9:00 a.m. until the Sunday after Labor Day.

Change of Address

Pastor Rick R. Grams
P.O. Box 62, 208 Le Sueur Ave.
Eagle Lake, MN 56024
Phone: (507)257-3203

25 Acts 18:18-28
26 Mark 5:1-20

God's righteousness in Christ is revealed from faith to faith.
To witness is to tell how much Jesus has done for you.

THE GROWTH OF FAITH

27 John 4:43-54

Jesus leads a man from fledgling faith to absolute trust.

Saving faith sees Jesus as more than a miracle-worker. (v. 46-48)

28 Luke 23:32-43

The mockers missed the greatest miracle of all: a sinner saved forever.

Faith rests confidently on the Word of Christ. (v. 45-50)

29 Luke 7:1-10

"Just give the order, Lord."

30 Matthew 15:21-28

This woman held tight to every Word of Christ—even those that might have sounded discouraging at first.

Faith openly confesses Christ and shares Him with those nearest first of all. (v. 51-53)

31 Romans 10:8-15

Let us confess Jesus in our households.

NOTE: Hymns suggested for use with this month's readings.

1-26: 360, 277, 506, 507

27-31: 381