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1987

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

"For in the Gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: the righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:17).

FANNING THE REFORMATION FLAMES



While a doctor of theology sat meditating on the book of Romans in his study one night almost 500 years ago, God lit a spark which would eventually turn into a raging fire across the European continent. The lone doctor was Martin Luther, and the specific passage he pondered was Romans 1:17.

A Gospel Gem

The Holy Spirit opened Luther's eyes to see that the righteousness revealed in the Gospel is His love

and compassion in Jesus Christ. Through his new-found understanding of this Gospel gem in Romans, Luther realized that God's

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divine favor is not found through fasting, praying, or disciplining the body, but through childlike reliance on what Christ Jesus has already done. When Luther found the true Gospel and the true God he exclaimed: "Now I felt exactly as though I had been born again and I believed that I had entered Paradise through widely opened doors."

When Luther, born again through the Spirit's power, viewed the rotting carcass of apostate Christianity, sparks began to fly! Spirit-inspired faith and dead religion are incompatible. Luther was compelled to write 95 Theses. In these he denounced the godless abuses prevalent in all areas of church life and challenged anyone to debate. This was the kindling God used to transform the spark within Luther into Reformation flames.

The Fire Spreads

The hearts of kings, noblemen, priests, theologians, and common folk began to burn. Some hearts burned with anger and hatred toward Luther because they were being indicted by the truth. Other hearts burned with love because they were beginning to understand the Gospel of free salvation through Luther's writings.

The Reformation fires spread quickly from northern Germany into just about all parts of Europe. They spread to France, to the Scandinavian countries, and even into Italy, the home of the pope. All sorts of people were beginning to experience the liberating power of the Gospel for the first time. It was a tremendous

time of rebirth for the Church of Jesus Christ.

Satan did not stand idly by as he beheld the fires purging the church. He used the Anabaptists, Zwinglians, Enthusiasts, and the counter-Reformation efforts of the Roman Church to slow down and in some place totally drown the flames. But all was not lost. God raised up faithful souls who continued to carry the torch, even after Luther's death.

470 Years Later

Today, some 470 years since the nailing of the 95 Theses on the Wittenberg church door, the situation in Christendom seems bleak. It sometimes seems all that is left of the

". . . Hearts burned with love because they were beginning to understand the Gospel of free salvation through Luther's writings."

Reformation fires is cold embers. There are now hundreds of denominations, sects, and cults which have long abandoned the truths rediscovered by Luther or which never possessed these truths to begin with. They are leading souls away from the Savior and the comfort of the Gospel.

The modern Lutheran Church is not exempt from problems. Although a new 5 million member Lutheran body will be functioning as of January 1, 1988 in North America, it will hardly have the same spark which was within Luther and which ignited the Reformation. The position of this new church on the inerrancy of Scripture, justification, and other vital

doctrines puts it in a different camp than Luther's. The new church will, in many respects, be extinguishing the Reformation flames rather than fanning them.

In the midst of all this religious confusion stands the Church of the Lutheran Confession, a denomination which is endeavoring to adhere to the principles of the Reformation and which dares to proclaim the pure Gospel which Luther rediscovered. With strength from the Spirit our little church body is trying to fan the flames.

Our Rich Heritage

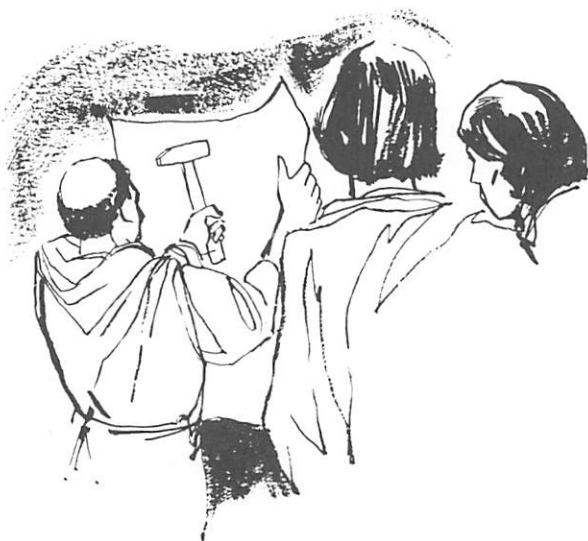
You may well ask: "How can we continue our work with so much opposition today?" The answer is found in the source which created the spark in Luther—the Word! The Word of God creates and renews faith in us. It protects us from error. And when the fire seems to be all but extinguished, the Word causes it to blaze again.

As Lutheran Christians with such a rich heritage behind us, let us always treasure the Word of God. Let us never allow it to be mishandled or neglected among us. Then the Reformation fires will continue to spread throughout this cold, sinful world.

Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy
Word;
Curb those who fain by craft
and sword
Would wrest the Kingdom from
Thy Son
And set at naught all He hath
done.

Lord Jesus Christ, Thy pow'r
make known,
For Thou art Lord of lords
alone;
Defend Thy Christendom that
we
May evermore sing praise to
Thee. (TLH 261:1-2)

—Kurt Luebke



IF LUTHER WERE LIVING TODAY

"If Luther were living today, he would be as harsh in his criticism of Roman Catholicism as he was in his own time." This quote comes from a January 1987 news release from the Lutheran Council in the USA. The speaker was Prof. Heiko Oberman, a Dutch-born Reformed clergyman who teaches history at the University of Arizona in Tucson. A Luther scholar, Oberman was speaking at a mid-winter convocation of clergymen in St. Paul, MN.

Other Oberman quotes: "Luther would be even more critical of modern Protestantism because it has betrayed the cause of Luther on all fronts." Protestantism "stands with Erasmus of Rotterdam as far as free will is concerned; with Zwingli in its conviction that it can't be possible in the Eucharist that the Lord is really present; and with the Schwärmer (Luther's term for the Anabaptists) in their denial that infant baptism is appropriate because they want to see that people make a conscious decision for Christ."

On our part, we are happy for what we see as an honest appraisal by the professor. He acknowledges, however, that his comments are "not so nice for those of you who feel it is time to forget our Lutheran heritage" and who believe that "we have to go and look for an ecumenical consensus."

Our Lutheran Heritage

For those of us who have no desire to forget our Lutheran heritage and no interest either in compromising the truths of God's Word, let us hear what Luther had to say on the subjects Oberman mentions. On the Real Presence of Christ in the sacrament, for example, Luther says:

"If these words are not clear, I do not know how to speak German. Would I not understand, if someone were to place a roll before me and say: 'Take, eat, this is white bread?' Or again, 'Take and drink, this is a glass of wine'? Therefore, when Christ says, 'Take, eat, this is my body,' even a child will understand perfectly well that he is speaking of that which he is offering . . . He commands you to take his body and blood. Why? For what reason? Because the body is given for you and the blood is poured out for you . . . They (the fanatics) say that it is only a sign by which one may recognize Christians and judge them, so that we have nothing more of it than the mere shell . . ." (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 36, pp. 337 & 348, "The Sacrament Against the Fanatics")

On the subject of infant baptism Luther speaks just as plainly and forcefully:

"I still maintain, as I have maintained in the *Postil*, that the surest Baptism is infant Baptism . . . You do not baptize children because, as you say, they do not believe. Why, then, do you preach the Word to old folks who do not believe but who may, in the course of time, probably come to believe? You certainly do this only because God has commanded it. For if you baptize me because I am able to say the words, 'I believe,' then you baptize me on the basis of me myself and in my own name and on no other basis. Since, then, it is unknown to you whether the person being baptized is believing or unbelieving, the baptizing is done solely because of God's command and behest." (*What Luther Says*, Vol. I, pp. 50 & 52)

And we have the following words from one of the classic theological writings from Luther's pen. In answer to a writing of Erasmus of Rotterdam, Luther wrote:

"A man cannot be thoroughly humbled till he realizes that his salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, counsel, efforts, will, and works, and depends absolutely on the will, counsel, pleasure, and work of Another—God alone. As long as he is persuaded that he can make even the smallest contribution to his salvation, he remains self-confident and does not utterly despair of himself . . . men resist this humiliation; indeed, they condemn the teaching of self-despair; they want a little something left that they can do for themselves. Secretly they continue proud and enemies of the grace of God . . ." (*The Bondage of the Will*, F. H. Revell Co., 1957, p. 100f)

More Erasmian Than Lutheran

Erasmus (d. 1536) was a Roman Catholic priest and contemporary of Luther (d. 1546). He sided with Luther on some aspects of the Reformation, but preferred the role of neutrality and compromise on most issues. He earned the title of forerunner of much of Protestantism today from his *Diatribes*. In this writing Erasmus contended that sinners have a free will to cooperate with God in conversion. Luther taught, instead, how the will of sinners was hopelessly bound

"LUTHER TAUGHT . . . HOW THE WILL OF SINNERS WAS HOPELESSLY BOUND IN SIN AND THAT THEREFORE CONVERSION WAS WHOLLY THE WORK OF GOD."

in sin and that therefore conversion was wholly the work of God.

Erasmus' teaching on the freedom of the will allows for "conscious decisions for Christ." This teaching of Erasmus is evident today in most of Protestant Reformed and "evangelical" theology, including that of the popular media preachers. At the same time, much of Protestantism today can claim an Erasmian heritage in its tendency to compromise Bible doctrine. Consider:

We are forced to ask whether Protestant Christendom has not tragically sold its birthright between Luther's day and our own. Has not Protestantism today become more Erasmian than Lutheran? Do we not too often try to minimize and gloss over doctrinal differences for the sake of inter-party peace? Are we innocent of the doctrinal indifferentism with which Luther charged Erasmus? Do we still believe that doctrine matters? Or do we now, with Erasmus, rate a deceptive appearance of unity as of more importance than truth? . . . Is it not true that it is rare today to hear proclaimed . . . that man is hopeless and helpless in sin, fast bound in Satan's slavery, at enmity with God, blind and dead to the things of the Spirit? . . . Do we not stand in urgent need of such teaching as Luther here gives us—teaching which humbles man, strengthens faith, and glorifies God—and is not the contemporary church weak for the lack of it? (J. I. Packer, ed., *The Bondage of the Will*, Preface, p. 59f)

"LUTHER . . . WOULD BE CALLING THE CHURCH TODAY, AS HE DID THE CHURCH OF HIS DAY, BACK TO CLEAR BIBLE TEACHING ON ALL FRONTS."

Luther Betrayed!

Luther believed that doctrine matters: "It does no good to say: I will gladly confess Christ and His Word in all articles except one or two which my tyrannical masters will not tolerate . . . he who denies Christ in one article or word has in this one article denied the same Christ who would be denied in all articles; for there is but one Christ in all His words, collectively and individually." "Doctrine must be absolutely straight, certain, and without sin. Therefore nothing except the certain, pure, and only Word of God must be preached in the church." "Doctrine must be a sort of continuous and round ring in which there is no break. If even only the smallest break occurs, the ring is no longer perfect." "In matters concerning faith we must be invincible, unbending, and very stubborn; indeed, if possible, harder than adamant. But in matters concerning love we should be softer and more pliant than any reed and leaf and should gladly accommodate ourselves to everything." (*What Luther Says*, Vol. I, p. 408f)

We have little doubt what Luther would be saying were he alive today. He would be as critical of Roman Catholicism and Erasmianism today as he was then.

Nor do we have any doubt that Luther's greatest sense of betrayal would be felt over against that branch of Protestantism today which carries his name. Luther is being betrayed by those in the Lutheran camp who deny the doctrine of the Real Presence of the Lord's body and blood in the sacrament; who recommend a restoration of fellowship with Rome which still rejects the scriptural doctrine of justification by faith alone; who deny such fundamental Christian beliefs as the Trinity, the virgin birth, the deity and resurrection of Christ; who permit abortion indiscriminately and condone homosexuality and "liberated" sexual mores.

If Luther were living today we know, too, that he would hardly dwell for any length of time upon a sense of self-betrayal. For one thing, he never wanted a church named after him, ala the cultists and sectists arising in our days. Luther "was not a naive child of his times but someone with tremendous authority who could speak to generations because of the power of his message." (Oberman) Luther spoke to his generation, and he would be speaking to ours, on the basis of *scriptural authority*. He would be calling the church today, as he did the church of his day, back to clear Bible teaching on all fronts.

And he would begin with a resounding defense of the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

—Paul Fleischer



(The following is an address given at the Minnesota Area Reformation Service, Mankato, MN on October 26, 1986.)

THE REFORMATION—AND MOTHERS

"Motherhood is not to be despised and disdained. For a young woman to become a mother is a grand and glorious thing."

In the Bible we find numerous examples of persons who recognized their need for a Savior from sin and who then turned in steadfast faith to the Lord their God as the One who could fulfill that great need.

Heroes Of Faith

We think of Abraham, for example, who is called "the father of all believers." Abraham lived in a world which for the most part had forsaken the worship of the true God and which was steeped in idol worship. Yet Abraham remained steadfast to the Lord his God. He clung firmly to the Gospel promise of the Lord, believing that the Lord would one day send a Messiah into the world to crush the power of Satan and help sinful man regain the holiness and righteousness which he had lost when he had fallen into sin.

And there are other heroes of the faith which we might make mention of: Noah, who together with his family was preserved by the Lord from the waters of the Great Flood; the prophet Elijah, who continued to faithfully proclaim the Word of the Lord to the people of Israel in the days of

wicked King Ahab; John the Baptist, whom the Lord used as His instrument to prepare the way for the coming Savior; Stephen, the deacon, who for the sake of the Lord was willing to give up his life.

God-fearing Women

Each of the persons which we have mentioned thus far were men. We might also mention some examples of God-fearing women.

In the Old Testament the story of Ruth is one that is familiar to most of us. We remember how Ruth refused to leave the side of her mother-in-law, Naomi, and go back to her native land of Moab which was an unbelieving nation. She desired instead to live among the believing people of God in the land of Canaan. And who can forget the New Testament story of Mary of Bethany? When Jesus one day came to visit her and her sister Martha, Mary sat at her Savior's feet and listened attentively to His life-giving words.

Why does the Lord provide us with so many stories of people who came to trust in Him as their Savior? He desires that we, too, place our hope for

salvation alone in Him and remain steadfast in His Word.

And perhaps a reason why the Lord saw fit to include stories of such God-fearing women as Ruth and Mary is that He might provide Christian wives and mothers with an example of faith that they might follow.

For our benefit and learning the Lord caused the following to be recorded: "Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies . . . She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her; many daughters have done well, but you excel them all; charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised" (Prov. 31:10, 28-30).

Luther Exalted Marriage

What is it that makes a wife and mother virtuous? What is it that makes her truly happy and blessed?

Back in Luther's day the wrong answer was often given to this question. The church had many rules and regulations concerning marriage. It forbade priests to marry. It also encouraged young men to enter monastic life, and young women to become nuns and enter the convent. The church was teaching its people that that which makes a person virtuous or blessed in the sight of God is if he or she remains unmarried.

What was the result? People came to look upon marriage as something which wasn't good, wasn't pleasing to the Lord. Consequently, many people did not consider motherhood a very important or honorable station in life.

Luther sought to restore marriage to the high place that the Lord God intended it to be. He tried to help the people of his day to understand that marriage is not something to be despised and shunned in order to obtain the favor of God. Rather, marriage is something which the Lord established for the benefit and happiness of mankind—something which can and should be held in high honor by all people. And so also motherhood is not to be despised and disdained. For a young woman to become a mother is a grand and glorious thing. Such receive the favor and the blessing of the Lord.

"My Katy"

Luther himself entered into wedded life. He married Catherine von Bora in the year 1525 when he was 42 years of age. The Lord blessed the marriage of Martin and Catherine with six children.

Luther cherished his wife and considered her a precious gift of God. This was evident to all those who



knew the Luther family. It is particularly evident from a comment about his wife which Luther once made to one of his friends: "I would not exchange my Katy for all of France and Venice."

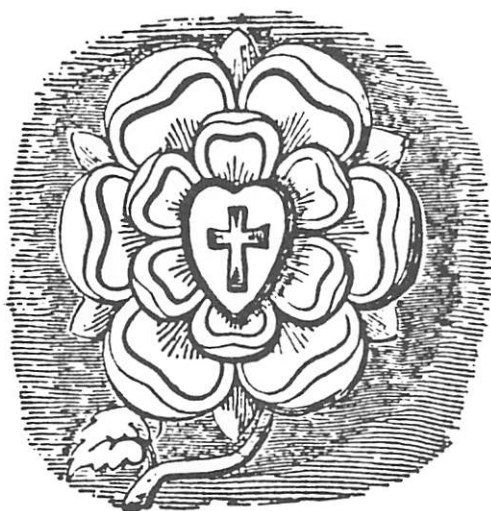
Why did Luther praise his wife and hold her in such high regard? Not because of any outward beauty which she may have possessed. But rather, because he knew that his wife loved her Savior. He noticed how this love demonstrated itself in so many ways every single day. He saw how Catherine remained a devoted wife to him through all the trying and difficult times that they passed. He saw how she was a faithful mother to their children, always taking the time to teach her children about their Savior, no matter how busy her schedule. Many were the times when Luther returned home after a long journey and

found the children, catechisms in hand, gathered around their mother and learning from her the teachings of Jesus from the Bible.

A mother is truly virtuous, happy, and blessed who believes in Jesus, who trusts in His Word, and who seeks to bring up her children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, that they too might know Him as their Savior.

Our prayer on this Reformation Day is that our Christian mothers—and all of us—may follow the example set by Martin Luther and his wife Catherine. May we ever regard the message of Christ crucified as our dearest treasure, and strive diligently to pass on to our children those soul-saving Scripture truths which our fathers and mothers passed on to us. The Lord help us so to do!

—Thomas Schuetze



LUTHER'S COAT OF ARMS

A cross on a heart, resting on the center of the Messianic Rose (often surrounded by a circle to symbolize eternity) was adopted by Luther on his own Coat of Arms and as an expression of trust in God. "The Christian's heart is resting on roses E'en while beneath the cross it reposes." The colors are usually gold for the circle; the outlines of the petals, red; the background for the rose, a heavenly blue; the heart, red, and the cross, black.

THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

(Part I)

A hush falls over the expectant audience. From behind the wing curtains an attractive young woman dressed in a flowing white gown proceeds to stage center and begins flattering the standing room only crowd. She knows she must perform well, since each person in the hall has paid 400 dollars to witness the coming two-hour spectacle (\$1500 for a weekend seminar).

A Hollywood premier? A Broadway opening night? No, nothing so tame.

She sits down, her eyes roll back. Within thirty seconds comes some ever heavier breathing and a few grunts. Finally the eyes open and she lunges forward in the stance of a Samurai warrior. She no longer speaks in soft, feminine tones but with the raspy voice of Ramtha—claimed to be a 40,000-year-old former warrior killer turned humanitarian good guy.

The woman through whom Ramtha has chosen to lecture the faithful as well as the skeptical is one J. Z. Knight, who otherwise resides in a new multimillion dollar estate in the little town of Yelm, WA. She owns a passel of Arabian steeds which she sells to the faithful as "good investments" for up to a cool million each. The horses are pampered in "stables" which appear to be mansions which only the very rich could afford.

Tip Of The Iceberg

She—that is, Ramtha—lectures

fluently in British accents with words which carefully avoid offending anyone. Her message? "What the world needs now is love, sweet love." How to make it happen? It's the same old red herring which Satan first so successfully dragged out in front of Eve at the dawn of the world. "You can become as wise as God. That is because, entity, you are also God." (These witches—oops, channelers—love to address any warm body as an entity.) You set your own standards and, if you violate them, you may be reincarnated in a lower form (cockroach?) next time around in life until you reach harmony with the universe.

So also says Penny Torres, the hottest newcomer to channeling in southern California, through whom speaks Mafu, a former leper from first century Pompeii. Then there is Thomas Jacobson through whom speaks a 19th century physician named Mr. Peebles. One Chris Griscom living in Galisteo, NM is a channeler with a difference: she uses acupuncture to help her clients penetrate the spirit world. Ruth Norman from El Cajon, CA is the grande dame of New Age spiritualists at 86. She claims to have come through fifty-five reincarnations, one of which was Mary Magdalene, and yes, her late husband was once Jesus Christ. She has earned the sobriquet, "Space-Age Ruthie." This list goes on.

In a sense, all of the above are really pikers in comparison to the witch—oops, I mean channeler—of Endor of I Samuel 28. She brought up not just the voice but the person of Samuel. But lest the impression be given that the New Agers are all simply kooks out to make a fast buck, in reality these are just the tip of the iceberg that is New Age philosophy.

"Age Of Harmony?"

To astrologers and therefore to some modern music composers, this is the age of Aquarius, the age of growing peace, understanding, and harmony, all brought about by mysterious forces in the universe which can be harnessed for good. In fact, Sunday, August 16th was, in case you missed it, "Harmonic Convergence" Sunday.

One Dr. Jose Arguelles, in his book *The Mayan Factor*, concluded that the August date was the exact time when the 468 years of the Nine Hells of the ancient Mayan calendar end, and on August 17th a cycle of Thirteen Heavens begins.

Movie and TV star Shirley MacLaine became fascinated with J. Z. Knight, and bought a home and a horse or two from her in Yelm. Lately Shirley has been lecturing on New Age philosophies. The *Los Angeles Times* carried an article recently with some quotes from Shirley's lecture circuit. Some examples: "The cosmic law spirals the light;" "Love travels faster than light. It's a matter of frequencies;" "All time is happening at the same time;" and "The vibrational oscillation of nature is quickening." At this point the writer of the article responded, "Huh?" One more quote:

"Hurry up and clean up the karmic debris." Responded the editor, with a great deal of sympathy also from Christians everywhere, "Amen, sister!"

If you suspect this writer's full tongue-in-cheek treatment of the New Age movement, you're right. If you pass off the whole movement as just a brief fad, however, you will be making a huge mistake.

You might be amazed to have your children coming home from public school rejecting your values as only binding for you, and their teachers referring to "centering," or "visualization," or "the inner self" and "transpersonal learning." You might find a fellow-Christian or yourself scheduled by many of this country's largest employers for "productivity training." Some New Age schools will promise an auto dealer that for a price they will train the salespeople and offer a certain guaranteed rise in business and profitability or there will be no charge. These have a New Age religious basis, that the self is the source of goodness. But, of course, this foundation is almost always denied, disguised, or ignored to make the teaching palatable.

—to be continued—

—B. J. Naumann

**CHRIST
IS
THE
ONLY ANSWER**

ADOPTION—A FAMILY BLESSING



Are you thinking of adopting a child, but afraid or uncertain about taking that first step? Christian couples who are considering adoption may want many questions answered before they seriously begin the often long and emotional process. Although I am no expert on the success of adoption, I hope that by sharing our experience it will help others who are pondering the adoption of an infant or toddler.

A Big Question

The obvious question we needed to answer was, "Do we want and need a child in our home at this time?" This may seem like a strange question but since adoption is a choice, the answer to it must be mutually agreed upon by both husband and wife. Whether you are unable to have children of your own or you are an older couple seeking to add to your family, this choice will be made with the help of the Savior. Through prayer the Lord will lead to the right decision. Our answer was —yes, we wanted a baby, and a baby that was not our own was acceptable to both of us.

We knew that just wanting to have a child did not mean we would be granted one. However, we knew the saying "you don't know until you try" applied to us. Our decision was easier than for some couples because we didn't limit our preferences to a Caucasian child. (We wanted a Korean child.) That certainly is a question you must ask before you begin.

Of course, we were somewhat concerned about racial prejudice and how it would affect our families. Now that Matthew is in our home those concerns have greatly diminished. The response has been wonderful. Although we realize there still may be difficulties, racial prejudice is not one of our major concerns. Our adopted boy is a child of God and our Savior suffered, died, and rose for him as well as for each of us. We hope to give Matthew a healthy respect for his Korean heritage.

Many Guidelines

Probably our major concern was whether or not our application for

adoption would be accepted. There are many guidelines which must be met. Although each adoption agency varies, most of the basic rules remain the same. You must be married a certain number of years and be in relatively good mental and physical health. A detailed statement from a physician may be necessary, and oftentimes further investigation must be done concerning a health problem. All questions should be answered with complete honesty or the consequences could be heartbreaking.

There is also a minimum salary requirement. However, they do take into consideration the personal situation (pastors and teachers are able to count their housing, utilities, car allowances, etc.). A working wife may also help although it is required to take time off from work after the baby arrives. Medical as well as life insurance is a requirement. Our adoption agency was more concerned over what kind of parents we would be than over how many material blessings we could shower on the child.

A home-study by a social worker is also a requirement. The social worker spends time in your home visiting and asking questions. Our home-study was a very pleasant experience. (Don't worry about cleaning out your closets; the social worker is only concerned that you have a suitable place to raise your child.) In addition, a written biography is a requirement which takes much time. Sometimes the paper work seems endless!

The period of waiting to determine whether we would be accepted or not was very difficult. Doubts arise.

How would it affect us if we were turned down? Were we doing the right thing? Knowing that only God could give us the miracle of a child was a great comfort. An understanding husband was also a great help to me.

Tears Of Joy

A month after our home-study we were informed that we were assigned a child—a 15-month-old baby boy! Even though we were assigned a child, before we made the decision to accept him as our own we were able to see his picture, read his history, and ask questions. As soon as we read about him, we knew that this was the little boy we wanted and needed. So many have said that we did a wonderful thing by adopting a foreign orphan. But we want them to know that we are the ones who have been blessed! Our daughter has a little brother and we have a son to bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Two months after we first saw his picture, Matthew was in our home. A special delivery was made by Grandma and Grandpa who went to Korea to make sure he had a safe and comfortable trip.

On March 5, 1987, over six months after he arrived, Matthew was legally adopted. During those six months before the adoption, the adoption agency was Matthew's legal guardian. What a joy to know that after the judge signed the final papers, Matthew became our legal son. There were tears of joy and prayers of thanksgiving.

It is very evident to us that adoption is a wonderful blessing from our heavenly Father!

—Mrs. Sharon Kurtzahn

NEW MEXICO

Our Lord has promised to be present wherever any are gathered in His name, though they be only two or three in number (Mt. 18:20).

This promise takes on special meaning for those who worship, not in a church, but in a home or rented room; for those who worship in groups numbering only a handful. They are encouraged in their worship by the assurance of the presence of Christ, whatever or whoever else may not be present.

It was with this encouragement that a group of Christians from CLC congregations began in June of 1985 to gather for worship in the Albuquerque, New Mexico area. At the first ser-

vice, with twelve in attendance, a Sunday School was organized. In July of 1985 the new congregation called Pastor Norbert Reim of Phoenix to serve as pastor and to conduct services once a month. After six months the congregation formally organized. They chose the name of Holy Spirit Lutheran Church because they recognized that it was the Holy Spirit that had brought them together. The congregation was accepted into membership in the CLC at its 1986 convention.

The ministry of Holy Spirit congregation has been blessed by the Holy Spirit. A family of six has been added to the original group. Last





Pastor Reim (suit) and the nucleus at Holy Spirit.

Christmas Eve at the congregation's second annual children's service two children received the sacrament of Holy Baptism—a direct result of their Sunday School's mission efforts.

Holy Spirit congregation also is not lacking in gifts of the Spirit. Two laymen are able to conduct the services on those Sundays that Pastor Reim is unable to be present. Three members are able to teach classes.

One member uses musical ability to serve the congregation.

Recognizing the blessings of the Holy Spirit, this young congregation is looking to the future. They have found a place of worship in the conference room of a counseling center located on the West Mesa of Albuquerque where most of the city's growth is taking place. Worship in this location began in April of this year.

The experience of these brethren ought to be encouraging to all of us, especially those in situations similar to theirs. One of the members writes: "All of us who are involved in the effort here in New Mexico have been richly blessed by it, and heartily encourage the numerous isolated CLC members throughout the United States that they should seriously consider taking the foolish (to human minds) step of beginning a congregation where they are, even if it only includes their own family. Go forward in faith."

—John Klatt

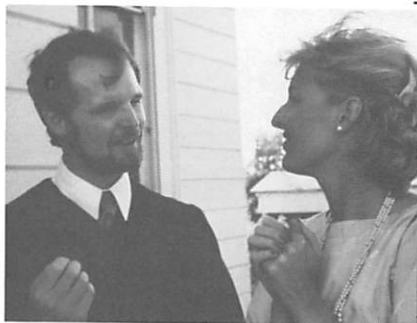


CALIFORNIA

St. Stephan congregation in Hayward extended its cordial welcome to a new parsonage family this summer. Special services and fellowship meetings on July 12 celebrated the grace of the Lord Who had sent yet another pastor—a "minister to ministers," as the guest speaker described such gifts to the church.

Pastor Jerome Barthels is a son of the Rev. and Mrs. George Barthels of Okabena, MN. A graduate of Immanuel High School at Eau Claire,

he studied mechanical engineering for a year and a half at the University



An Appreciative Welcome



Pastor & Mrs. Jerry Barthels family

of Minnesota. When his interest and concern for the gospel ministry asserted itself, Barthels returned to the Eau Claire campus for the pre-theological courses of the college department. A one-year interlude of work in retail store management in Galveston, TX qualified him for the kind of position that enabled him to support his family while he studied theology at the ILC Seminary. His internship work was done at Holy Truth congregation in West Columbia, SC and at Messiah of Eau Claire. In May of 1987 he was graduated as a candidate for the ministry.

Mrs. Ruth Barthels, the former Ruth Zechel, is also a graduate of Immanuel High School in Eau Claire. She then majored in systems analysis and earned an MIS degree at the University of Wisconsin in Eau Claire.

With daughter, Nicole, and newborn son, Ryan, the Barthels are happily established in the Hayward parsonage, recently acquired with Mis-

sion Extension Funds for the congregation and by the CLC Mission Board, which partners with the congregation in the CLC outreach to the East San Francisco Bay area. Services and meetings are held in a rented church, the historic Pioneer Chapel (in service since the days of the Civil War).

Pastor Barthels arrived with a high level of enthusiasm for the work in East Bay. The church is centered in a north-south corridor of some two million people. The prospects are endless. The new pastor was especially pleased to find a mission committee of church members already in place, at work, and ably directed by the congregation's mission board chairman. Barthels quickly discovered that his role as pastor would be that of one who "equips the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph 4:12 NKJV). Truly, a minister of ministers.



The prophet Jeremiah had foretold that the Jews would remain captives in Babylon for seventy years. In 535 B.C. the seventy years had come to an end. The prophet Isaiah even earlier had foretold that a ruler named Cyrus would set the Jewish captives free. Cyrus was now on the throne of the Persian Empire. Therefore the time was right for God to keep His word. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel (also known as Sheshbazzar) of the house of David a small band of Jews returned to Jerusalem, revived the daily burnt offerings to the Lord, and laid the foundation of a new temple.

But it was not until Darius was on the throne that the Jews completed the Jerusalem temple. The Lord sent two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, to encourage the people to finish the temple project as part of God's glorious plan for His people. For even though the Jews were weak and poor, the best part of their history was yet to come. The Messiah was on His way, as God had said, to provide His people with the blessings of everlasting peace.

But meanwhile the Jews had an enemy who threatened the total destruction of God's people in the days of Xerxes I. This enemy was Haman, and his plot to exterminate the Jews failed only because God had seen fit at this very time to exalt the Jewish girl, Esther, to be Xerxes' queen. Esther bravely used her influence to save her people and her cousin, Mordecai, from the bitter hatred of Haman.

So also today God works in marvelous ways to protect both church and state. Let us thank our Lord for His providential care.

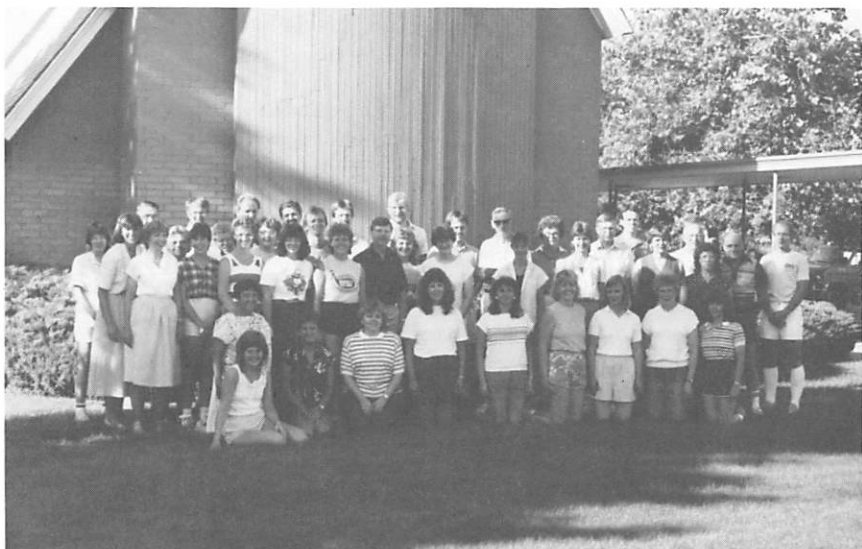
| Date | Reading | Theme | Hymn |
|--|------------------------------|---|------|
| Cyrus the Great (559-530 B.C.) | | | |
| 1 | Ezra 1:1-11 | God keeps His promise: the Jews can return to Jerusalem. | 18 |
| 2 | Psalm 85 | God gives the people a new beginning. | 325 |
| 3 | Psalm 126 | "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy." | 409 |
| 4 | Ezra 3:1-7 | Burnt offerings are again offered to the Lord in Jerusalem. | 567 |
| 5 | Ezra 3:8-13 | The foundation of the Lord's Temple is laid. | 633 |
| 6 | Psalm 107:1-22 | God's merciful deeds lead His people to give thanks. | 570 |
| 7 | Psalm 107:23-43 | Only the truly wise understand the Lord's loving kindness. | 572 |
| 8 | Ezra 4:1-5, 24 | The Samaritans hinder the work of building God's Temple. | 514 |
| Darius the Great (522-486 B.C.) | | | |
| 9 | Ezra 5:1-2; Haggai 1:1-11 | God's prophets Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to build the Temple. | 479 |
| 10 | Haggai 1:12-2:9 | The glory of this temple will be greater than the glory of Solomon's temple. | 72 |
| 11 | Haggai 2:10-23 | God will bless His people and their leader Zerubbabel (an ancestor of Jesus). | 460 |
| 12 | Zechariah 1:7-17 | The Lord will again choose Jerusalem for His Temple. | 469 |
| 13 | Zechariah 2:1-13 | The Lord will again dwell with His people in Jerusalem. | 461 |

| | | | |
|----|----------------------------|--|-----|
| 14 | Zechariah 3:1-10 | The Lord will send the Messiah to remove the people's iniquity. | 360 |
| 15 | Zechariah 4:1-14 | The Lord has chosen Jeshua as priest and Zerubbabel as ruler. | 490 |
| 16 | Zechariah 7:1-14 | The Lord wants obedience from His people rather than fasting. | 398 |
| 17 | Zechariah 8:1-17 | The Lord promises great blessings to His people in Jerusalem. | 618 |
| 18 | Zechariah 9:9-17 | The Lord will send His Messiah-King to establish His peace. | 57 |
| 19 | Ezra 5:3-17 | Governor Tattenai writes to Darius about the Temple project. | 263 |
| 20 | Ezra 6:1-12 | Darius orders Tattenai not to hinder the building of the Temple. | 474 |
| 21 | Ezra 6:13-22 | The Temple is finished and there is joy in Jerusalem. | 36 |
| | | Xerxes I or Ahasuerus (486-465 B.C.) | |
| 22 | Ezra 4:6; Esther 1:1-12 | Queen Vashti disobeys the orders of Xerxes. | 621 |
| 23 | Esther 1:13-2:4 | Plans are made to select a new queen to replace Vashti. | 4 |
| 24 | Esther 2:5-23 | The Jewess Esther is chosen as the new queen. | 532 |
| 25 | Esther 3:1-15 | Haman makes plans to exterminate all the Jews in Persia. | 582 |
| 26 | Esther 4:1-17 | Esther agrees to do what she can to save her people. | 566 |
| 27 | Esther 5:1-14 | Esther arranges a banquet for Xerxes and Haman. | 435 |
| 28 | Esther 6:1-14 | Xerxes rewards Esther's cousin Mordecai for faithful service. | 581 |
| 29 | Esther 7:1-8:14 | Esther reveals Haman's plot, and he is hanged. | 569 |
| 30 | Esther 8:15-10:3 | The Jews defend themselves against their enemies. | 568 |

—D. Lau



Participants at CLC Teachers' Conference August 8-11, 1987 Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Spokane, WA



MINNESOTA PASTORAL CONFERENCE

Date: Nov. 4-5, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Place: St. John's Lutheran Church

Okabena, MN

Agenda:

Exegesis of Revelation 2:12-17

—J. Pfeiffer

Isagogical Study of Micah—R. Grams

Methods of Teaching Confirmation

Class (Roundtable Discussion)

—K. Olmanson

A Study of Acts 9:1-2 with Special
Reference to Paul's Acknowledgement
As "Disciples Even Though They Did Not
Yet Know the Holy Spirit"—D. Schierenbeck

A Study of the Scriptural Terms for
Heaven and Hell—V. Greve

What Kind of Judging is Forbidden
According to Matthew 7:1-6

—G. Barthels

A Word Study of the Hebrew Term,
GOEL—N. Greve

—R. Grams, Secretary

Installations

As authorized by President Fleischer, I installed Desirae Ohlmann as teacher of St. Paul's Lutheran School, Austin, MN on August 23, 1987.

—John Pfeiffer

With the authorization of Pres. D. Fleischer, the undersigned installed Mr. Theodore Quade as principal and instructor of Immanuel Lutheran School, Winter Haven, FL on August 23, 1987.

—John Reim

As authorized by President Daniel Fleischer, I installed Miss Collette Sieg as a teacher of Faith Lutheran Church and School of Coloma, MI on the 9th Sunday in Trinity, August 16, 1987.

—James E. Sandeen

Authorized by President Daniel Fleischer I installed Arvid Gullerud as Pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church of Richardson (Dallas), Texas on September 13, 1987.

—Paul F. Nolting

Conference Visitor

Pastor Norbert Reim has been appointed to complete the unexpired term of Pastor Arvid Gullerud as Conference Visitor of the Pacific Coast Conference. Pastor Gullerud resigned upon accepting a call into another conference.

—Daniel Fleischer
President

Notice

The Call Committee for educational institutions will meet October 21, 1987 at 7:30 p.m. at ILC. A professor will be called to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Professor Robert Dommer.

—M. Sydow, Chairman
Board of Regents