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REJOICE!

YOUR SALVATION HAS COME

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God . . ." (Psalm 42:5)

THE MOST DIFFICULT QUESTION

Perhaps the most difficult question in the world is the question "why?"

Children are full of "why" questions. They ask "why" about anything and everything. Sometimes parents feel bombarded and frustrated with these questions, because some of them are not too easy to answer. Sometimes the only answer we can give is: "Well, that's the way God made it."

Scientists are also confronted with "why" questions. In fact, that is what science is all about—finding out why something is the way it is, or why it does what it does. The study of science is hard work. Why? Because it asks "why?"

In the forty-second psalm the writer asks another difficult "why" question. His question is one that many Christians have had to ask themselves down through the ages: "Why are you cast

down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?"

The writer was down. He was depressed. Though he may have felt happy and lighthearted at some time in the past, that feeling had forsaken him now. He does not tell us the particular cause of his depression. He just says that it is there.

"Why are you cast down, O my soul?" That is a question we might be asking ourselves often.

Why Cast Down?

How many sources of sadness there are in this world! How much there is to drag us down, weigh us down, make our lives miserable! Perhaps we have fallen deeply into sin. How miserable we become as our consciences accuse and upbraid us! Like King David our bones grow old through our groaning

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all the day long. Day and night the Lord's hand is heavy upon us. Perhaps we are being called upon to endure sickness and physical pain. The day and nights become long. A cloud of gloom and sadness begins to overshadow our whole existence. Perhaps we have beloved family members who are causing disquiet in our souls as we see them wandering away from the Lord, or as we try to help them bear their burdens and afflictions.

"Why are you cast down, O my soul?" We know the answer. It really isn't difficult. It's because of sin. It's because of what sin has made of us and this world in which we live.

But as the psalmist asks, "Why are you cast down, O my soul?" he is not wallowing in self-pity, nor is he encouraging us to do so. Instead, he is encouraging us to . . .

Hope in the Lord!

How often we find ourselves walking sadly through life with our souls cast down, our spirits disquieted.

But then there comes again this time of year when our eyes, our hearts, and our spirits once again turn to Bethlehem. And our souls cry out: "O Bethlehem Ephratha! Though you are just a little town in a far-away land, how I am thrilled at what happened in you on that precious night so long ago! A baby was born. And not just any baby, but the One who means more to me than anything else in life—my Lord Jesus!"

When our souls hear the angels proclaiming the glad tidings of great joy, a thrill penetrates our darkness, and we feel what millions have felt down through the ages. A sense of awe lifts us up as we realize that the One born on

"When our souls hear the angels proclaiming the glad tidings of great joy, a thrill penetrates our darkness, and we feel what millions have felt down through the ages . . ."

that day in Bethlehem is the Lord God clothed with a true human nature. Then comes the pure joy of remembering that He came to be our Savior, to take away sin's curse, to end all our sadness.

Christmas is for sinners, but especially for those who are cast down in spirit. Though all else in life may seem dark and gloomy, the Christmas Gospel brings light and hope. "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

That is a powerful statement of hope. That is a statement that sin and Satan can do nothing to weaken. No matter how successful Satan may otherwise be in shrouding our lives in a pall of gloom and depression, the Christmas promise shines through, giving us hope and gladness. There is no denying that promise. The Christ Child was born for you. He cares. He will help and deliver.

"Why are you cast down, O my soul?" There is no need to be cast down! Set your hope in the Lord. Set your hope in the Child of hope, our Savior, Christ the Lord!

We Christians may Rejoice today
When Christ was born to comfort and to save us.
Who thus believes No longer grieves,
For none are lost who grasp the hope He gave
us. (TLH, 107:1)

—Michael Thom



"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

Let Ev'ry Heart Prepare Him Room

How do you prepare for a king, especially a king who has absolute control over life and death?

In Old Testament times everything had to be made ready for the coming of the king. It was probably with a sense of relief that the people marked the passing of the king and his procession.

God was preparing His people for the coming of their King for many years. He wanted them ready for the coming of their Messiah King. The prophet Zechariah pictures the coming of this king in terms of Palm Sunday when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey. This preparation was not to be forced, nor was it to be a matter of fear. The coming of this king was a great event to be welcomed with great joy.

Isaac Watts, in his paraphrase of Psalm 98 in the hymn "Joy to the World," reminds us that every heart is to prepare this king room. We welcome this king with great joy. This is a special king. He comes meekly and humbly. He comes riding on a bor-

rowed donkey. He comes in lowly pomp to die on the cross. This is the king who came in the likeness of human flesh in order to taste death for all men. It is because of Jesus' coming that we can rejoice greatly.

The coming of Jesus is always to be viewed from the perspective of the cross. The one thing that often seems left out of our Advent preparations and Christmas celebrations is genuine joy. We welcome Jesus with true joy as we experience the forgiveness of sins.

Let your preparation for Christmas be a joyful experiencing of God's love and acceptance as Jesus comes into your hearts. Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her King!

Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room

And heav'n and nature sing,

And heav'n and nature sing,

And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

—John Schierenbeck

"Thee We Own A Perfect Savior"

The syndicated columnist Joseph Sobran once wrote a column for Christmas in which he explained to his readers why he believes that Jesus is the Son of God. He said that Jesus must have been just as He is described in the four gospels because the mind of man does not have the ability to invent someone like Jesus.

Surely Sobran is correct. How could the mind of sinful man come up with the pure, holy, sinless Jesus whom we come to know in the Bible? His spotless character is otherwise unknown in human experience. Neither does Jesus have any counterpart among the fictional characters which have sprung from the mind of man.

The Man Jesus—A Miracle!

At Christmas we are again reminded that the sinlessness of the man Jesus is truly a miracle. The child Jesus is conceived and born without sin; the angel Gabriel who announces His coming birth describes Him as "that Holy One" (Lk. 1:35). He is the "lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19). He is "separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). Yet this pure and holy child is

"At Christmas when we come to worship the babe lying in the manger, we see there our perfect Savior."

born of a mother who, though a godly woman blameless before men, has a sinful human nature. This pure and holy child is descended from a long line of sinners, including Adam "whose common sin infects us all"; including

even those openly guilty of most shameful vices: Judah who committed fornication and incest (Gen. 38); Rahab who had been a harlot (Mt. 1:5). This pure and holy child is truly, as Isaiah wrote of Him, a "root out of dry ground" (Is. 53:2), a living thing sprung up in ground incapable of producing or supporting life.

Just What We Needed!

How could this happen? The angel Gabriel answered this question when he said to Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you" (Lk. 1:35). The child Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost so that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in the body of Jesus. The man Jesus was also the holy Son of God.

Why did this happen? The Son of God became the sinless man Jesus so that He could live, for us, the kind of perfect, holy life that God's holiness required; so that He could satisfy, for us, the demands of God's holy law. The Son of God became the sinless man Jesus so that He could offer His holy life to God as an acceptable sacrifice for our sins.

At Christmas when we come to worship the babe lying in the manger, we see there our perfect Savior. The little child is the holy Son of God perfectly and uniquely fitted for the work He came to do for us. We are poor, lost and condemned sinners. We are unable to please God, unable to make ourselves acceptable to God. But He has all that we lack and is able to supply all that we lack.

—John Klatt

Bethlehem Lullaby

Mr 1, A. 112

F. Schaller, 1987

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In a man - ger, In a sta - - ble, Sleep now, lit - tle Child.

1. You were named by God's an - gel Gab - ri - el:
 2. 'Tis the day Your Fa - - ther has made for You:
 3. God will keep You, Bless You and pros - per You:
 4. Blest are You, now, Com - - ing in God's own name:
 5. Thanks to our Lörd, His love en - dures al - way:

Sleep now, we will re - joice for You. [humming]

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(Once again we have asked our staff member, Pastor Paul Schaller, to share with the family of Spokesman readers his annual Christmas hymn. We thank him, and the Lord, for making this unique gift available to us all.)

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

TIME magazine had it all wrong when its cover story asked: "Who was Jesus Christ?" The magazine asked readers this question in connection with its comments on Hollywood's latest attempt to discredit Christianity in the movie "The Last Temptation of Christ." It was heartening to notice that some letters to the editor called attention to the fact that, as far as Christians are concerned, the question should have been put: "Who *is* Jesus Christ?"

Misleading Ideas

TIME's cover question was, at least, misleading. When mortal creatures discuss the identity of Him who is immortal—yes, eternal—you have to watch your tenses!

When Jesus was on earth in human form He put a similar question to His disciples in the present tense: "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" Getting all sorts of wrong answers, Jesus put the identical question to His own: "But who do you say that I am?" That's when Peter gave the good confession: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:13ff).

After Jesus had completed His earthly mission and returned to heaven, the same Peter said, years later: "Christ . . . is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God . . ." (1 Pet. 3:22) Notice the present tense even then. The divine message was, *and is*: Christ *now* rules and reigns!

We were not surprised that the TIME cover story had it all wrong. Jesus had warned of the coming of Christ-deniers and Christ-impersonators. His good confessor, Peter, also warned against "false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them . . ." (2 Pet. 2:1)

We say we are not surprised that worldlings fail to know and acknowledge Jesus for who He is. What is sadder, however, is when those who claim to be His disciples give misleading ideas about Jesus.

Here is how Dr. Henry Morris calls attention to this: "The popular Jesus may be the baby Jesus in the manger at Christmastime, or the buddy Jesus of Nashville 'gospel' music, or the success-counseling Jesus of the positive thinkers. (The popular Jesus) may be the romantic Jesus of the Christian crooners, the rhythmic Jesus of Christian rock, or the reforming Jesus of the liberals, but none of these are the Jesus preached by the apostle Paul."

Furthermore, says Morris: "The Lord Jesus, as He really is, is not the popular Jesus of T-shirts and bumper stickers, politicians and entertainers. He was 'despised and rejected of men' (Is. 53:3), so they 'crucified the Lord of glory' (1 Cor. 2:8). It has never been otherwise, and even in the last days, 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution' (2 Tim. 3:1, 12)."

The Jesus We Preach

Dr. Morris speaks words we need to hear these days. As we study the Bible to get to know Jesus better, He hardly comes through as the "popular" Jesus. The



for unto us is born a savior...

*God's Greatest Miracle
was one
Our hands could touch —
Our eyes could see —
Our hearts could love!
Share the "Good News"!!*



**A BLESSED CHRISTMAS
TO ALL
from the
*Lutheran Spokesman***



**May we suggest Gift
Subscriptions to the
Spokesman—a gift
which truly keeps
on giving through
the year!**

Jesus preached in our churches, taught in our Christian Day Schools and Sunday Schools, worshipped in the hearts and homes of believers among us, is more aptly described in Morris' second paragraph.

For us Jesus is "the only begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father . . ." (*Nicene Creed*). To us Jesus is (present tense) ever "the Christchild"—the eternal Son of God who came (past tense) to save sinners in the only way that mission could have been accomplished. Jesus "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the

likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself (past tense) and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is (present tense) Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:7ff).

This is the Jesus proclaimed on the pages of the *Lutheran Spokesman*. In this issue Pastor Thom's article proclaims Jesus as the One who came to "take away sin's curse" and "to end all our sadness." Pastor Klatt writes of Jesus as "the holy Son of God perfectly and uniquely fitted for the work He came to do for us." Pastor Schierenbeck teaches that Jesus is "a special king . . . who came in the likeness of human flesh in order to taste death for all men." Pastor Schaller's article on the liturgy presents Jesus as the One who came to "save His people from their sins."

A Gift of God!

When Peter gave his good confession, the Savior said: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 16:7) For us to know and confess Jesus *for whom He truly was and is* is a gift of God the Father.

From this backdrop we say: this Christmas again let us celebrate God's gift to us. That Gift was (past tense) the sending of His eternal Son into human flesh by way of a supernatural, virgin birth so that the incarnate Son might accomplish redemption for sinners. The gift of God also is (present tense) that you and I are given the faith to believe.

In fact, celebrate Christmas for whom Jesus Christ was, and is, and *ever shall be!* God's gift in the manger is: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Cor. 9:15)

—Paul Fleischer



The Confession and Absolution

Advent/Lent

A *dv*ent and *Lent* have more in common than rhyming with each other. At a time of year when we are decking the halls with boughs of holly, when red and green are everywhere, the altars in many of our churches are draped in purple, the color we use in Lent. It is the color of repentance.

This reminds us that we do not only repent in Lent, but also in the season of Advent, as we look forward to and prepare for the celebration of our Savior's wondrous birth.

At Christmas time we celebrate all the promises of old that were fulfilled, but at the same time that lowly birth holds another promise of its own: "for he shall save his people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21). It is this promise that makes Advent a season of repentance for Christians, as we acknowledge our great need of being saved from our sins. This is also at the heart of the differences between the Christian's celebration of Christmas and the world's celebration.

Every Sunday

Every Sunday we also acknowledge our great need as we draw near and confess our sins, drawn by the promise of forgiveness. For neither recognizing our great need nor seeking God's

greater mercy dare be limited to only two seasons of the year.

But sin is so personal. How can we all confess together? And how can we do it week after week? We can all confess together, of course, because we know that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). We know that we can sin even when we are not aware of it (secret faults, Ps. 19:12), so even if we can't think of something specific, we can still join in confessing.

Besides this, we know that we have not only sinned against God actively by our thoughts, words, and deeds, but that we are also by nature sinful. We are sinful from our very first breath—"sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Ps. 51:5). All of this we can confess together.

At the same time then what joy that we can also flee together, not as Adam and Eve away from God, but "to take hold of the hope offered" (Heb. 6:18). Our help, the redemption in Christ Jesus, is for ALL. God has declared the whole world "just" through His blood.

Thus we can all come before God with confidence, for "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us" (1 Jn. 1:9). Through His Spirit He gives us all a true knowledge of Himself, as Jesus promised: "When the Counselor comes . . . he will testify about me." When we know Jesus, we know "true obedience," the obedience that comes from loving God who first loved us.

So what is next? The priesthood.

the Christian in whatever calling the Lord may have placed him. It would be good for every Christian to memorize words such as the pastor says on Sunday morning, so that he can bring this comfort privately and personally wherever the Lord gives opportunity—perhaps even to his own pastor!

Beginning our Sunday service with the confession of sins can do much to prepare us for entering God's presence with our prayers and praises. It can also do much to prepare us for our daily service of glorifying our Father in heaven.

—Paul Schaller



Tracing The Acts Of The Apostles . . .

" . . . seven men of good reputation . . ." (Acts 6:3)

DEACONS IN THE CHURCH

The growing Christian congregation in Jerusalem had twelve pastors and teachers, and they were all good ones, chosen by the Lord God Himself. Still all the necessary work was not being done. The congregation was supporting many poor widows, and the twelve pastors were told that some of the Greek-speaking widows were being "neglected in the daily distribution" (Acts 6:1).

One solution to this problem would have been for the pastors to rearrange their priorities and give more time and attention to the distribution of goods and supplies to the poor. This no doubt would have resolved the immediate problem.

But the twelve pastors, that is the twelve apostles, did not choose this course. No, they told the congregation: "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables" (Acts 6:2). The apostles regarded their main responsibility to be "prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). If they spent more of their time in the distribu-

tion of food, they would begin to neglect their main spiritual duties: teaching, preaching, praying, baptizing, evangelizing, encouraging, admonishing.

A Good Idea

Therefore the apostles suggested a better idea, one that had been suggested to Moses by his father-in-law Jethro many years before when Moses was in danger of wearing himself out by too much work. Jethro had told Moses: "This thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself . . . You shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers . . . So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you" (Ex. 18:17-22).

So now also the twelve apostles told the people: "Brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3). In other words: "The work is too much for us pastors.

"There is much work to be done, and it is not good for the pastor to do all the work himself, especially if this other work takes him away from his chief task: prayer and the ministry of the Word."

We need help. Why don't you pick out seven good men as helpers, and we will put them in charge of the food-for-the-poor program. We pastors will keep on concentrating on our special ministry or service, which has to do with prayer and preaching the Word."

The suggestion of the apostles made good sense to the Jerusalem Christians. In some manner not fully known to us "they chose Stephen . . . and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas." These seven helpers or deacons, as they are often called, were brought before the twelve apostles. The apostles "laid hands on them" (Acts 6:6) to signify that the Lord God had indeed imparted the gifts of the Spirit to these seven men and had called them through the congregation to their special office of administering gifts for the poor and needy.

Two of these seven men became much more than helpers and deacons. Stephen was given the special gift of doing miracles in Jesus' name as well as the gift of preaching God's Word forcefully. Philip had the gift to be an evangelist or traveling Gospel preacher, and he was also given the power to do miracles in Jesus' name.

Not Only in Jerusalem

The New Testament indicates that other congregations also began to make

use of helpers or deacons.

The word "deacon" simply means minister or servant. For example, the congregation in Philippi had both "bishops and deacons" (Philippians 1:1). The bishops were the spiritual overseers or pastors, sometimes also called elders in the New Testament. The deacons were helpers or assistants, carrying out whatever functions their calling congregation asked them to do. These helpers were God's gifts to His Church, as indicated in First Corinthians 12:28 where both "helps" and "administrations" are listed in a list that begins with apostles and prophets.

Paul's first letter to Timothy outlined the qualities that were needed in those called to be deacons. "Deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless . . . Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well" (1 Timothy 3:8-12).

To me it seems most probable that women also were sometimes chosen as deacons or deaconesses in the early church. In First Timothy 3:11 the qualities considered necessary in women deacons are spelled out. They must be "reverent, not slanderers, temperate,

Editor's Note: In last month's issue we introduced the latest Seminary graduates. In that connection comment was made encouraging prayer for more pastors and teachers. Thereupon we received the minutes of the October 1988 Coordinating Council. In the introductory portion of his "ILC President's Report" Prof. G. Radtke had some things to say which in our opinion deserve wider reading. What follows is that introduction:

Jesus said: "... the workers are few ... beseech the Lord of the harvest ... " (Mt. 9:37-38)

The world can scarcely compute the divisions and subdivisions of careers available to worker trainees. Universities, colleges, and technical schools are satiated with the enrollment of students striving to achieve proper preparation for their chosen career.

We, however, are becoming more and more alert to the shortage of workers, both in the harvest fields and in our harvester training center. Our college and seminary, dedicated to the training of faithful workers for the Lord, give indication that the harvest trainees for the field work of the Lord are in very short supply. Today's harvest is being worked with a goodly number of experienced, aged workers who may soon feel the need to retire. The supply of replacement workers at present is very low, and the potential supply for some years to come is also very low.

Jesus made a similar observation in His day. Making sad comment on the few laborers for His harvest, He advised His disciples: "... beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

We therefore beseech our Lord:

Bless us, O Lord of the harvest, with young men and women who will be led by You to find their career objective to be a preparation for the public ministry of preaching and teaching. To that end bless the teaching skills in our Christian schools, particularly in our specialized training center at ILC. Grant us good students, dedicated and faithful, who will zealously respond to the Lord's call for workers in His harvest. We ask this for the sake of Your love, that would not see the sinner die, but live forever in Your Father's home! Amen.

faithful in all things." I realize that some translations, including the New King James Version, use the word "wives" in First Timothy 3:11. But it

must be remembered that in Greek the word for *wife* and *woman* is the same. Since the qualities of bishops' wives are not listed in First Timothy 3, it is

hardly likely that the deacons' wives would be mentioned. It seems much more natural to believe that "wives" in First Timothy 3:11 should be translated "women."

Thus, interspersed with the qualities of men deacons, there is—in this verse—a list of the qualities needed in the women who were chosen for this office, such as Phoebe, who was known as "a servant (deaconess) of the church in Cenchrea" (Rom. 16:1).

Deacons Today

In our congregations today we have a variety of helpers, both men and women, that do work similar to the work carried out by the New Testament deacons. Most congregations in our church body, I suppose, elect elders or trustees or deacons or church council members to do, in part at least, the work done by the seven men in Jerusalem.

But we have other needs today as well, and many times the pastor simply cannot do everything that ought to be done. Christians certainly have the right to call qualified helpers and give them the authority to labor in behalf of the congregation in whatever field of labor help is needed: whether as helpers in the church school or as ush-

ers for the service or as drivers in evangelistic work or as secretaries working in the church office. Of course, in keeping with what Paul had written earlier to Timothy (confer 1 Tim. 2:11ff) congregations will bear in mind the "order of creation" and not elect women to serve in positions where they will be exercising authority over the man.

There is much work to be done, and it is not good for the pastor to do all the work himself, especially if this other work takes him away from his chief task: prayer and the ministry of the Word.

"We hold that in Christian liberty the Church may and does exercise the functions of the Public Ministry when it calls qualified persons into the pastorate, into the work of Christian Day-school teaching, into a professorship at its High Schools and Colleges, or as elders and deacons who are to assist pastors and teachers in their ministry. We believe that each and all of these offices are administrations of the Public Ministry, and their duties are such as are prescribed by the Lord for the Gospel ministry, and that their respective form is governed, not by divine decree but by the terms of the Call as issued by the Church" (Concerning Church and Ministry, pp. 35-36).

—D. Lau



Sexual Immoralities And . . .

The Influence Of Television—III

While the world sees violence as the greatest danger on TV, Satan has many more evil influences in store for children. Many of these may be even worse than violence. Sexual immorality is one

of the first things we think of.

Sexual Immorality

We don't generally think of sexual immorality as being a problem in chil-

dren's shows. Certainly it is not as prevalent as in other shows, but it is there. Our society has become accustomed to exploiting the female body and overemphasizing the importance of physical beauty and sexuality. Children are bombarded with the importance of sexuality and beauty on TV all the time. Many commercials use these means to promote their products. Even many cartoons depict women and men in skimpy clothes and with perfect figures.

It used to be that little children didn't even think about sexuality until in their early teens or maybe preteens. Now Satan has succeeded in getting them to think about it often. For example: In kindergarten the teacher would often have the children cut out pictures in magazines and catalogs for paste up. One little boy almost always cut out pictures of women in their underwear or in the bath tub or something like that. It's a shock to see such a young boy so obsessed with women's bodies. How can there be anything wrong with it when it's in all the magazines and even on the cartoons he sees?

Some children's shows go even farther than emphasizing beauty and sexuality. The worst example was on a children's after-school special a few years ago. The whole show was about a boy who found that he had homosexual desires. The point being taught was that we shouldn't condemn this or think badly of him because he just has a different sexual orientation. The conclusion to be drawn is that supposedly homosexuality is not wrong; it is just a different life style.

I think that almost every family sitcom that portrays children growing up,

particularly in the teen years, has dealt with the situation of a child facing his first time at sexual intercourse. All of them that I have seen wind up saying basically that it is all right to have sex, there is nothing wrong with it, and each child has to decide for himself when the right time is. They do try to discourage children from experimenting with sex too early, and say it should be a "meaningful relationship" and so on. But in the final analysis they teach that premarital sex is all right. Some even give the impression that every guy that is anybody has already had sex with at least one girl by the time of graduation from high school.

Many of the surveys we received show that children are also watching afternoon soap operas and their evening equivalents like *Dallas* and *Dynasty*. These shows openly and frequently show a total disregard for God's establishment of marriage and sex.

Guard The Heart!

I feel that TV has played a major role in the moral decay of our country. The problems with teen pregnancy, divorce, and homosexuality have been spread and broadened by TV. Some say the decline of the country's morals is the cause of what is shown on TV rather than vice versa. I think it goes both ways, and has become an escalating spiral chasing each other down the drain. We as parents have to be very careful with what our children watch on TV.

We also need to remember that it is not only the act that is a sin, but the thoughts and intents of the heart. There is perhaps the greatest danger. Watching sexually suggestive scenes or scantily clad women easily increases

sinful thoughts and desires. We can get so used to seeing unmarried couples crawl into bed together that we can become calloused to it. It hardly shocks us anymore. Then children can begin to feel that lesser forms of sexual activity are all right: "As long as I don't actually have sex I'm doing what is right." Not so, God says. "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt. 5:28).

Satan loves to take things that God says no to and make us think these things are really not so bad or even all right. That has been his main trick ever since the beginning with Adam and Eve. So he still comes to us and our children on TV and other places and says: "Has God really said?" Has God really said you can't have any type of

sexual relation unless you are married? Has God really said you should deny a relationship just because it is not in the bounds of marriage with a man and a woman?

Satan has already succeeded in convincing church leaders and pastors all over the country. Leading bishops in the Episcopalian church struggled for the church to condone homosexuality and premarital sex. And we have all heard of pastors and priests living this life style for themselves.

If Satan can influence church leaders certainly he can influence our children too. He knows the earlier he can influence them with his ideas, the more success he will have.

(To be continued)

—David Reim

Our "At Home" Missions—

Immanuel Lutheran Church Addison, Illinois

The CLC mission in this Chicago suburb is a congregation of 62 souls. This congregation began as a group of CLC members who had been relocated around Chicago gathered for worship. After some years of varying conditions, the congregation called a resident pastor. They did this with the prayer that thus their light might shine brighter in this large community.

Shortly after the then-seminary-graduate David Schierenbeck accepted this call a property was purchased and remodeled to provide a church home in the suburb of Addison. This building still serves as both parsonage and chapel for the congregation.



As the years went by and the original group moved on to other locales they left behind a congregation made up of a majority of Chicagoland natives who heard their testimony and treasured the saving Gospel.

As pastors and members come and



Immanuel at Worship



Pastor Ted and Mrs. Denise Barthels, with daughter Samantha



The Immanuel Family

then go on to other CLC congregations, the challenge remains the same: to reach out with the Gospel truth, not only to our own suburb but to all we can reach throughout the Chicago

metropolitan area.

We praise God for the success we have enjoyed over the years. We appreciate the CLC support we have received and ask for your continued prayers that the Lord may guide and bless our mission efforts.

—Ted Barthels

Note: The Addison parsonage recently welcomed the gift of a second daughter, Erica, born October 26, 1988.

Daily Devotions for January 1989

Note: We thank those staff members who have contributed to our "Daily Devotions" column in the past—most recently, Pastor David Lau. For calendar year 1989 it is our plan to offer reading suggestions and hymns for your devotional use from past issues. May the Holy Spirit bless our reading of God's precious and Saving Word!

Date	Scripture	Theme	Hymn
1	Mark 1:1-11	John the Baptist prepares the way	125:1-3
2	Mark 1:12-20	Jesus calls His first disciples	125:4-6
3	Mark 1:21-28	Jesus shows His power over evil spirits	120:1-2
4	Mark 1:29-34	Jesus is the heavenly physician	120:3-4
5	Mark 1:35-45	Jesus, the ever compassionate Savior	120:5-6
6	Mark 2:1-12	Jesus has power to forgive sins	80:1-2
7	Mark 2:13-17	Jesus calls, not the righteous, but sinners	80:3-5
8	Mark 2:18-28	Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath	137:1-2
9	Mark 3:1-6	Jesus silences His accusers	137:3-4
10	Mark 3:7-12	Jesus wants believers, not miracle seekers	104:1-3
11	Mark 3:13-27	Jesus, the Stronger One, drives out demons	104:4-5
12	Mark 3:28-35	Believing Jesus and doing God's will go together	104:6-7
13	Mark 4:1-20	Jesus wants His saving word heard and treasured	103:1-3
14	Mark 4:21-32	Jesus teaches what His kingdom is like	103:4-6
15	Mark 4:33-41	Jesus has power to still all storms	343:1-3
16	Mark 5:1-20	Do you know how much Jesus has done for you?	343:4-5
17	Mark 5:21-34	Not just any faith but faith <i>in Jesus</i> can heal	343:6-7
18	Mark 5:35-43	Even in the face of death: "Don't be afraid; just believe."	96:1-2
19	Mark 6:1-13	Jesus and His spokesman deserve our honor	96:3-4
20	Mark 6:14-29	John dies for preaching Jesus	129
21	Mark 6:30-44	Jesus shows He can be counted on for daily bread	130:1-2
22	Mark 6:45-56	Jesus calms His terrified disciples	130:3-4
23	Mark 7:1-13	Jesus warns about nullifying the Word of God by our traditions	130:5-6
24	Mark 7:14-23	When talking cleanliness, begin with the heart	416
25	Mark 7:24-37	Faith in Jesus brings many blessings	412
26	Mark 8:1-13	Sign-seekers will be disappointed in Jesus	354
27	Mark 8:14-26	Hardened hearts affect spiritual seeing and hearing	355
28	Mark 8:27-38	Jesus is the Christ who must suffer and die	358
29	Mark 9:1-8	The Son of Man is the Son of God!	353:1
30	Mark 9:9-13	The Son of God would die and rise again!	353:2
31	Mark 9:14-29	"Everything is possible for him who believes."	353:3



Call for Nominations

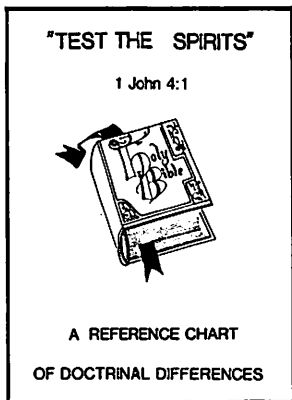
The Board of Regents of Immanuel Lutheran College invites nominations to fill the new professorship established by the 1988 CLC Convention. The nominee should be a theologically trained individual (seminary graduate or a graduate of a parochial school Teacher Training program) whose primary responsibility will be the teaching of German (including ecclesiastical German) and whose secondary responsibility will be the teaching of history.

All pastors, professors, male teachers, and voting members of CLC congregations are entitled to nominate a candidate or candidates. Letters of nomination must be postmarked no later than December 31, 1988. All nominations are to be sent to Pastor Vance Fossum, ILC Board of Regents, 1183 Big Bend Road, Ballwin, MO 63021.

Change of Address

Pastor Michael Sprengeler
620 E. 50th St.
Loveland, CO 80538

Pastor David Koenig
P.O. Box 382 Etinan L.G.A.
Akwa Ibom State
NIGERIA



Now Available

"Test the Spirits," a reference chart of doctrinal differences, is available at a cost of 30¢ per copy from the undersigned:

Pastor David Schierenbeck
9308 Rich Valley Boulevard
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55075

Basketball Tournament

Any CLC grade school interested in participating in the Fourth Annual ILC Grade School Basketball Tournament to be held March 10-12, 1989 at the ILC Fieldhouse in Eau Claire, WI please contact Don Brandt by February 8, 1989 at 140 W. Grant Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701; phone 715-834-4562. Lodging and some meals can be provided if given advance notice.

Installations

Authorized by President Daniel Fleischer I, the undersigned, installed Paul F. Nolting as pastor of Indian Landing Lutheran Church, Rochester, NY on the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity, October 23, 1988.

—*Roland A. Gurgel*

With the authorization of President Daniel Fleischer I installed Miss Ann Sprengeler as a teacher of Faith Lutheran School, Markesan, Wisconsin on August 21st, 1988.

—*M. Sydow, Pastor*

As authorized by President Fleischer, I installed Michael Sprengeler as pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Loveland, CO on October 30, 1988.

—*Michael Eichstadt*