

Lutheran Spokesman



*The glory of
children is
their father.*

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Church of the Lutheran Confession

FATHERS — The Glory of Christian Children

June 16th is Father's Day, a day on which we are to honor fathers. Why? Because the calendar suggests that we should? Because commercial advertising urges us to do so? Are we being coerced by custom to give honor to fathers? Or is there a deeper reason?

A Fruit Of The Gospel

We may think first of the Fourth Commandment which directs us to "Honor your father and your mother." We understand that fathers deserve honor from their children because of the relationship. In addition to the commandment, there are numerous passages warning against refusing to give this honor.

But this type of honor seems to be similar to the obedience which a slave must give to his master. Joy may be totally lacking. The honor could be superficial and characterized by insincere words and meaningless actions.

We would expect much better from Christian homes. The Christian father should well deserve the honor given.

His children should gladly give it. Such a situation does not just happen. It is a blessing from God.

Yet it does not occur by random chance. Like so many blessings, it comes as a fruit of the gospel. With the knowledge of sins forgiven for Christ's sake, and the assurance of eternal life because of forgiveness, there will be a strong desire to express one's gratitude by following the direction of God's Word.

That will be true for Christian fathers. That will be true for Christian children. God's Word gives directions for achieving the mutual love and respect that God wants between parents and children.

Through the apostle the Lord urges: "You fathers, do not provoke your chil-

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dren to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Perhaps nothing interferes with children loving and respecting their parents more than does treating them in a harsh and unreasonable manner. Such treatment angers them and produces friction and an uncooperative spirit. The home becomes a battlefield and a place to be avoided. Far better than harsh and unreasonable is gentle and firm.

As the children develop toward the time when they must make their own way in the world, they need more and more involvement in decisions affecting them. True, it may seem convenient for the father to make all the decisions and demand that they be carried out by the family. But even if he were able to make good decisions consistently without input from the others, he would not be preparing them for life on their own.

Teaching By Example

He is to bring them up using the training and admonition which is pleasing to God. From the parents' example and instruction the children are to learn a healthy respect for God's Word. Regular church and Sunday School attendance, family devotions, and references to and applications of the Word in daily life, will lead them into the Word.

The lives of the parents should encourage the development of Christian virtues by example. The apostle gives us this list: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). Verbal guidance will also be necessary as the children interact with family members



"Honored fathers and loving families do not just happen. They come as a blessing of God through faith."

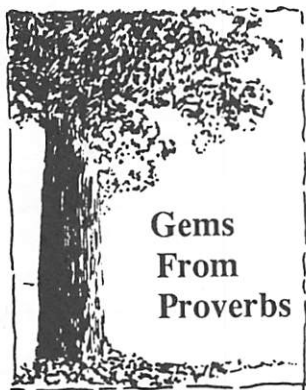
and others. They will have to be guided in their dealings with others. What is acceptable and unacceptable will have to be made clear in situation after situation until children learn what is expected of them.

But Scripture also speaks directly to children. Consider these words in Colossians 3:20: "Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing to the Lord." This may seem to be just too much to some young people. But God is asking full obedience so that they may receive the full blessing He wishes to give through parents.

Parents' decisions, requests, and refusals are based upon years of their own observations and experiences. They are based upon providing what is best for the child and avoiding that which could result in loss or harm. Those directives may not always be correct. Parents are human. They do make mistakes. But a mistake made out of love and concern should be accepted by the Christian child.

When loving concern by parents and respectful obedience by children

"A wise son makes a glad father" (10:1)



The man had two sons, not one. They were talented young men, carrying on in their father's highly respected profession, serving as priests before the LORD God of Israel. But they were "corrupt; they did not know the LORD" (I Sam. 2:12ff). They lived to satisfy their fleshly desires rather than to serve their Redeemer. A thousand *Father's Days* would have brought Eli no happiness!

Absalom was a handsome fellow with a quick mind and charming ways. He might have been a leader of Israel and brought much joy to his father. Instead, after murdering his brother and seeking his father's life and throne, Absalom died a violent death. It could have been a day in June when David wept: "O my son, Absalom – my son, my son Absalom...!" (2 Sam. 18:33).

Another of King David's sons may have remembered his father's sorrow with God-given understanding. Solomon wrote by divine inspiration: "A wise son makes a glad father." In Proverbs 23:15-24 Solomon pleads with his son to make his father-heart rejoice in the wise and righteous ways of his child (cf. also Prov. 15:20, 27:11, 29:3).

Let every son or daughter understand! Special attention, kind words and gifts on *Father's Day* are fine tokens of love. But the day passes away, along with its things. You remain. *You* – what you are and what you shall be – continue before your father. He cannot think of you without also being reminded of his successes and failures as a Father.

Has he brought you "the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"? (2 Tim. 3:15) Then he will rejoice as you exercise that faith-wisdom in your daily life, walking in the commandments of your Savior God by love. Are you now a child of the heavenly Father by a living faith in His Son? What "you shall be" when Christ appears – when you "see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2) – this is the hope for you that gladdens your father's heart!

Knowing that his children are walking in wisdom unto eternal life in Christ Jesus, nothing you could give your father could make him happier. For when your father's days are translated from this world to heaven, he wants to find his children there also!

—Vance Fossum

exists, there we find the situation described by the Proverb: "Children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children is their father" (17:6).

Honored fathers and loving families do not just happen. They come as a blessing of God through faith.

—Keith Olmanson

This is the first of three articles in which we will consider the three-fold office of our Savior: Jesus as our Prophet, King, and High Priest.

Jesus, Our Prophet

“THE VERY RIGHT REVEREND”

The above title comes out of the Episcopal Church, and we have always wondered if anyone ever indeed lived up to it. Just to be referred to as "Reverend" is already a very high compliment. Then what must it be like to be *very* reverend? But then to be referred to as all at once reverend in both the "very" and "right" senses seems to be to achieve an atmosphere of pious rectitude so high and rare that only a select few can ever hope to attain it.

In any case, the title does suggest how man loves to bestow and especially receive names of honor. Where doctorates are the most highly sought after titles in all fields of human pursuit, it can be almost ludicrous to observe the pecking order of importance among graduation time scholars. Even their distinctive robes, caps, chevrons, stoles, and colors can indicate to those in the know just who is slightly above the next in honor and importance. Woe to the man or woman out of order in the line of greatest to least among such august, marching "titleists."

Anyone familiar with life in the military also knows how the pecking order of rank dictates importance both among the service people and their spouses. Let the Major's wife beware the wrath of the crossed wife of the Commanding Colonel.

Jesus gave a rather painful lesson of prideful importance to the lawyers and Pharisees of His day, as recorded in Luke 14.

Christ — "The Anointed"

There is really only one all-important title holder in our lives, and that is Jesus Christ. Many people since His day have been given one or the other of His names, but seldom both. That is because *Jesus* is a name meaning *Savior*, but *Christ* is really a title such as *doctor* or *reverend*.

Our Sydow Catechism states on p. 91 & 92: "The name Christ means 'The Anointed.' He was anointed with the Holy Spirit as the Prophet, High Priest, and King." As Jesus our Shepherd is one of a kind because He is identified as the only truly "Good" One (John 10:11), so Jesus is set above and before all others by that name as "The Anointed One."

We quote the relevant Catechism section:

THE OFFICE OF CHRIST

141. What is the meaning of the name CHRIST?

Bible passages:

597) John 4:25 - The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ) . . .

598) Acts 10:38 - God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.

The name Christ means "The Anointed." He was anointed with the Holy Spirit as the Prophet, High Priest, and King.

Anoint: to pour on oil; to use oil in a ceremony to show a special selection or appointment.

142. How did Christ carry out His office as the PROPHET?

Prophet: one who "speaks for" another; a mouthpiece.

Bible narratives:

599) Luke 4:16-30 - Jesus preached the Gospel in the synagogue of Nazareth.

600) John 3:1-18 - Jesus taught Nicodemus.

A prophet preaches. Jesus our Prophet preached the free Gospel of forgiveness and then gave us that blessed lifetime job (Mt. 28:18-20). No matter whether you have a title in this world or not, there is no other really important work that deserves and requires the all of our time and talents.

Come to think of it, there is really also only one Very Right Reverend.

—Bertram J. Naumann

The 30th Anniversary of the CLC (1960–1990)

Looking Back in the *Spokesman*

— from June 1961 —

...What word can best summarize our position? Is it not "weakness"? So few in number we are – mocked as a splinter among the lofty trees in the forest of church bodies today. So feeble in financial strength we are – unable to raise for all our purposes the amount that many a church body needs to hold its convention. What weakness, O Lord!

Shall we despair and cast the burden down? No, never! For our very weakness is the key to our strength. It is and shall ever remain one of

the unchanging laws of the Kingdom that God's strength is made perfect, achieves its goal, carries out its purpose in connection with human weakness. How weak the Church appeared on Pentecost morn! What strength the Lord has brought forth out of that weakness! How weak was not Luther as he faced such overwhelming odds! What strength, and we are heirs of it, our God wrought through him in his weakness. He learned the secret of strength in weakness, as did St. Paul (2 Cor. 12:9-10). May we learn that

lesson. Then we shall be able to face our weakness and still say with Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong." (Paul F. Nolting)

... If God permits conditions to develop in our country which make it more and more difficult to conduct our own Lutheran schools, we will have only ourselves to blame. For a hundred years God has provided ample opportunity, free exercise, financial resources to bring up our children in His Way. He gave leaders who taught us the urgency of establishing Christian day schools. But most congregations have been willing to let Caesar take their children and educate the whole person. We waited for a more favorable time. Now it is going to take more and more sacrifice. Waiting will never make it easier. He has set before us an open door, and no man can shut it. But God is not made a fool of; if we are unwilling to enter the door, He will shut it, and then no man can open it. (Winfred Schaller)

Every child of God is endowed with a new nature, incapable of sinning, the issue of a new birth through the Holy Spirit. Yet in each of us there remains an old nature, incapable of holiness, and that has been condemned to death... We are inclined to profess lightheartedly that our sinfulness is a beaten foe. We suggest that we can contemptuously leave him to lurk in his cave. For are we not redeemed? Are we not reborn unto a new life?... As there is rejoicing in the tabernacles of the righteous, as they celebrate their victory in Christ, as they go on their life mission in behalf of the Gospel, there must be quiet hours of stern judgment and ruthless condemnation upon our surviving sinfulness. This belongs to "sincere contrition and repentance." And the sun will not stand still for us. The time is now. (Egbert Schaller)

... "The LORD is gracious and full of compassion." ... With this name of the LORD in your heart you, an afflicted sinner, will experience how graciously the LORD invites you to Him, waits for you to take and receive His compassion, wants you not to flee from Him but to come boldly and confidently to Him. Should you give

Him any other name or make Him to be someone else in your mind, you dishonor Him and will be in dread and terror before Him, a terror of your own making. For the LORD is gracious. His works reveal it. His salvation for us in Christ fully proclaims it. He is full of compassion. Without ceasing He forgives our sins, bears our weaknesses and failings which we yet have in this life because of our flesh. These He covers over with the merits of His Son and will not see them. He strengthens and urges us on in our new life against the flesh so that we grow more and more in His image, in that image which we shall take with us into heaven where it shall be altogether free of sinful flesh forever... (Leonard Bernthal)

One minister is quoted as saying, "If I said publicly what you have, I could be voted out on my ear overnight. Finding a new church at my age would be hard, if not impossible." His honesty is commendable. And let us not say that in our stress we were not plagued with the same misgivings. We had to talk rather sternly to ourselves, "All right, mister, how about it! For years you have been teaching your children that whenever the truth is at stake, other considerations, food, clothing, comfort, pain, do not apply. You fortified yourself with the passage, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'" To live with themselves, many risked being "voted out on our ear," and saw it come to pass. But the barrel of meal did not fail! (Gilbert Sydow)

CHURCH NEWS: Mankato, Minnesota - The end of the current year at Immanuel Lutheran College was marked by a closing service held in Immanuel Lutheran Church... The sermon was preached by Dr. Norman A. Madson, on Hebrews 13:7-9 - "The Remembrance That Bringeth Blessings." The service was concluded by the ILC Choir singing a group of sacred numbers under the direction of Prof. R. Dommer. The attendance at the service was very good, particularly because of the large number of visitors from other congregations, some of whom had come from far away.

From the Editor: We began this series "Looking Back in the Spokesman" to coincide with the observance of the synod's 30th Anniversary year (July 1990-June 1991). That year is now behind us. However, as space permits we may continue this feature off and on in coming months.



The Gospel, the Power of God— Studies in Romans

THE FAITH THAT SAVES

Would you expect a stoop laborer weeding a lettuce field for minimum wage to be effusive in thanking the paymaster for his check? Hardly. At very least, it is his due. In the case of some pro ballplayers (\$35,000 per hit) you might wonder if the wage could possibly be their *due*. Yet even their salary is not considered a *gift*.

The apostle uses this principle to rescue us from a common misconception about "the faith that saves." *What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.* (Romans 4:3-5 NIV)

Faith Not "Credit-worthy"

Among the Jewish scholars of Paul's day who wanted acceptance with God to be based on their merit, it was commonly held that Abraham's faith was a meritorious *work* that deserved a pay-off from God. As on a balance sheet.

Not too different from the modern trend to advance *faith in faith* rather than *faith in the object of faith*, namely Christ. "I am confident because my faith is so strong." Eric Hoffer, the longshoreman philosopher, would mock the "true believer" (as opposed to

someone who "believes what is true").

Not too different from the notion that mere *believing* is a great thing, regardless of *what* is believed. "All religion is a good thing, regardless of what it teaches as truth."

The Biblical View

To get the point Paul makes as a corrective for such damaging misconceptions, we need the help of language scholars. They point out that the word we translate as "credited" in the quote from Genesis 15 is *not* the term for balance sheet accounting which lists what might be due for something rendered. Rather it is a word filled with the gracious will of the "creditor." Abraham was a passive *receiver* of God's gift of righteousness, not a collector of something due him.

Too bad that our English does not have an equivalent. You might think of the modern practice of giving a *bonus* to a faithful employee. A gesture of corporate goodwill beyond the obligation of a labor contract. In a sense, God *bonussed* Abraham and all of us who are Abraham's children by faith with the very righteousness of Jesus. This, without any merit or worthiness in us!

Christian faith has sometimes been called "the receiving organ." Even though it produces works (I Thess. 1:3), it is first and foremost the trusting embrace of Christ Himself. That, of course, is why we stand so well with

God, who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

The Unemployed

Carnal human nature loves the notion that we would be accepted by God (justified) because of what we are or do, trusting in ourselves that we are righteous. Pure grace is revolting to the humanistic spirit, which will never accept the truth that "the man who does not work (try to be saved by his own works), but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness."

Notice, dear reader, how the *content* of saving faith is here stressed. Not just "God." But the God "who justifies the wicked." What a perfect description of the faith that saves! Embracing Christ our Righteousness in faith, we are "bo-nussed" with the very righteousness of God. No person, not even venerable Abraham, has ever attained this by his own effort. The humblest believer in Jesus has it by faith, the faith that truly saves.



The Foundation Of Peace

How blessed we are that the Spirit makes this truth so clear! Where it is received and understood, one can expect a full measure of that "peace of God which transcends human understanding."

Given the confidence that we truly possess the very righteousness of God by faith in Jesus, we can be tranquil in our troubles. Certain that our prayers are acceptable and heard. Sure of our place in glory at the Savior's side and ready to sing His praises to all eternity.

"Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (Rom. 5:1)

—Rollin A. Reim



Some members of Bethel Ev. Lutheran Church, Spring, Texas. See story on page 14.

Recruiting Recruiters

Item: *Dear Pastor: Congratulations! You are herewith notified of your (re)appointment as ILC's chief recruiting officer for your territory (in some cases that involves the entire state and more). Your "recruitment kit" is enclosed. It consists of our new 1990-91 catalog...Registration form...Recommendation form...(Flyer in the latest ILC Catalog)*

Item: *We will be graduating a rather large class of high school seniors next May. We hope that many (if not most) of these will continue their studies in our college department. May it be the goal of every ILC "recruiter" to reach out to CLC members of high-school and college age and urge them to consider attending ILC next year. How wonderful it would be if the 33 high-school graduates would be replaced with 33 new students. (The ILC President's report to the Coordinating Council, October 1990)*

Item: *The Lord invites us to ask Him, the Lord of the Harvest, that He send workers to harvest-ready fields. The solution to our current shortage of workers for the public ministry (especially teachers for our Christian day schools) lies with our Savior. We need to ask that we might receive. We ask that He teach all of us to cherish Christian day schools. And we beg that He lead students to careers in public ministry and parents to encourage their children...so that no pulpit or classroom is empty. (The ILC Regents report to the Coordinating Council, October 1990)*

The Urgency

While some of our "chief recruiting officers" no doubt get the message out, others – I'm one of the guilty – find the urgent messages buried in the shuffle on the desk. Maybe this will help.

The recruiting spoken of is hardly the pastors' alone. In his CC report, ILC President John Lau explained: "Who are the ILC recruiters? We rely on each pastor, teacher, professor, congregational officer, parent, grandparents, and *all* (his emphasis) members of the CLC for their active participation in inviting and urging, praying and encouraging students to come to ILC as to a fount from which flows eternal life, for the Gospel which is proclaimed there!" And he adds: "The world is full of the false and misleading, yes, deadly words and deeds of

Satan. May God in His mercy empower us to send our youth to ILC."

These last words suggest reasons why the President borrows a word out of military parlance. "To recruit" means to "enlist personnel for a military force; to get new supplies of something, replacements." In these last days there is a mighty battle for souls (Armageddon!) going on. Every Christ-believer is a warrior in that war. Not every Christian, however, can be expected to be a leader on the front lines. The "Items" above plead for well-trained Christian recruits for both the behind-the-scenes supply units (congregations) as well as for front-line duty as pastors and teachers.

It is not only in our synod that the need exists for recruits for ministry. Other church magazines we read call

attention to the same needs. For example, in an editorial called "The Coming Clergy Dearth" (*Christianity Today*, Feb. 11, 1991), this was said: "Several denominational executives report that 35 to 40 percent of their active ministers will reach retirement age by the year 2000. And clergy attrition rates have increased because of the rising expectations of congregations, obsolescence, fatigue, and frustration..."

We may not agree with everything the article says, but the writer makes other points all of us "recruiters" should consider. He adds: "Churches and agencies seem to think that well-qualified candidates spring forth *ex nihilo* each June..." Of course they don't. Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary can and will send forth into our schools and churches only such candidates who attend, and are drawn, there from our circles or our contacts. Yes, "the Lord provides," but the pool from which prospective pastors and teachers come are usually our homes. It is in the home that the Spirit of God must be allowed to fan the flame of faith so that young people might be led to choose the pastoral or teaching ministry as their life's calling. *Positive encouragement and prayer* is a large part of the home training and godly influence of which we speak.

The Role Of Parents

Here is how the *Christianity Today* editorial makes our point: "...Parents have a special role in providing God's servants. In years past, parents often dedicated their children to Christian service and encouraged them toward ministry or missions. But now, with

surprising frequency, seminary applicants speak of parental opposition."

We have no way of knowing whether this judgment is true among us. Do parents among us "desire to spare their children the real pain of ministry" as the editorial suggests? Or is "the clergy's loss of status in society" a factor among us, as it is suggested it is in some synods? Given that we are products of the same societal pressures, perhaps the judgement has its application to us? And surely there is wisdom in this advice: "More than ever prospective seminarians (and teachers, we might add - ed.) need the prayerful support of their families as they answer God's call."

True to their respective callings, our ILC President and Regents members are alerting us to the need to recruit students for front-line duty in pulpit and classroom. In addition, we were happy to note another **Item: EDUCATION "PEP" RALLY** -- *On Monday evening a gathering of education and seminary students took place in Ingram Hall rotunda. Purpose? To discuss the ministry of education in our CLC schools, with emphasis upon the teacher. Ross and Lynette Roehl were the presenters and provided a very inspirational message. We expect that this will be only the first of yearly events of this nature.* (ILC Newsletter, Nov. 1990)

In other words, efforts are being made to address the needs of the Lord's church among us. There can not be too many of such efforts. Fellow CLC Christians – ILC recruiters all! – seek ways to do so in your home churches, *and in your own homes!*

—Paul Fleischer

Postscript

After we had written the "Recruiting Recruiters" article we received the April 1991 Coordinating Council Report. It contained the following piece of good news under the report of the ILC Regents: "There will be eleven students in the Seminary for the 1991-92 school year..."

To our knowledge this is a record prospective enrollment in the Seminary department, and it is reason to offer thanksgiving to the Lord.

Nevertheless, what we have written can stand. We would, after all, like to have up to three of four young men enter the Seminary each successive year.

We are happy to note that, of the eleven Seminary prospects, three are coming to our CLC as concerned young Lutherans out of other synods. This reminds that the Lord has ways to supply the needs of His church other than from our own homes. As we say in the accompanying article, ministerial candidates come "from our circles or our contacts." Praise be to the Lord!

The greatest immediate need appears now to lie in the area of candidates for the teaching ministry. A phone call to Prof. Clifford Kuehne, Academic Dean at ILC, revealed that the ILC program graduates two teachers this Spring and, it appears, will do the same a year from now.

The need for teacher candidates, in other words, remains acute. Without trying to assess the reasons for this, we think the following words of the Professor should be passed along. We need, he said, to "encourage parents to make use of the High School" for their youth. And why? Up to 90% of our teachers have been those who come out of the Immanuel High School department. Put another way, very few enroll in ILC's teacher training program without having attended High School there.

In our phone conversation with the Professor, he added one other word by way of encouragement to us all: "Pray..."

Spiritual Encounter (#1 In Series)

-Luke 19:1-10

Hungering And Thirsting After Righteousness

Certainly we all yearn to meet those people who hunger and thirst after righteousness. These are people who have sought the answers to life's questions in all the wrong places, and have found the answers either nonexistent or wanting where they have looked. They have been brought to the point of not looking within themselves for the solution. They have a conscience that yet speaks to them so that they feel a guilt and even an emptiness.

Zacchaeus had certainly heard to his face and in whispers behind his back

what a wicked man he was. This must have had a crushing effect over a period of time. Though he had power and wealth, being a higher echelon tax gatherer, he was not looked up to. His own people generally despised him, showing this in linking his office with the status of open sinners. How might the supreme Roman authorities view him? Doubtless in no better light. They knew the Jews and how they were. And the tax gatherer was looked on as a lackey. And Zacchaeus knew very well how many times he had abused his office and cheated in the gathering — as

In examples from Scripture we will try to learn ways and attitudes which will better enable us to witness of our Lord to others. These examples are drawn from a casual perusal of the Gospels and Acts. It is by no means exhaustive. As with the basketball strategy of "one on one" we will be looking at examples of one witnessing to another individual. We are not considering what was said to groups, though that is applicable. We are not considering what was said to individuals already in the faith, though that is applicable. We are considering these various situations where it is one on one and the one witnessed to is in unbelief.

Not all those individuals witnessed to then believed. But the point we shall consider is that they were witnessed to. We should not be disturbed if some and even many do not believe when witnessed to. We know God's power and mercy. We know His Word will accomplish what He wills. (Isaiah 55) And we know man's stubborn and rebellious heart.

We should be disturbed, however, with ourselves if we do not make every effort to reach out with the Law and especially with the Gospel that the Spirit may work. Our laziness, fears, indifference, and doubt may and do interfere so often. We are unprofitable servants and people of such little faith. Through these examples we seek to build ourselves up in our witnessing desire and ability.

The ultimate goal in all witnessing is to be like John and point to Christ, saying that He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. While we try to earnestly develop our skills in this area, we don't want to forget John's motto: "He must increase, but I must decrease." No matter what gifts we have and how we develop them, we are looking not for glory for ourselves. We are looking to have a prospect join with us in glorifying our God.

—Pastor Koenig

he later admits.

To this man in this situation the Lord comes. We should not think that this was just an idle stroll of our Lord. Far from it, for our Lord wanted Zacchaeus to know His love, this one who was anything but loved by all around him. In this we should remember for ourselves that it is our Lord who likewise sends us. He puts us into situations in which we may show His love. He purposely gives us the opportunities along life's way to reach out. Our Lord looks up purposely and speaks. He reaches out.

Every Soul Is Precious

The Lord centers His attention on Zacchaeus. Kind attention is centered on one generally despised. Every soul

is precious to our Lord. Our Lord came into the world to save sinners, and here was one of them. The love of God is beyond our human imagination. Aren't we supposed to be kind to those who are kind to us? Don't we just do for those who would do for us? The love of God means to pray for your worst enemy. The love of God means to return good for evil. The love of God means to pay attention to the unloved and despised. There are so many lost, afloat on a dark sea of life with no rudder and no oars. We come to them with the Gospel rudder and oars.

Beyond giving attention to Zacchaeus on the road, the Lord would go to his house. This was done with the obvious disapproval of others. Outreach is beyond the comprehension of

the hypocritical world. Where just might we find ourselves at times to reach out with the Word?

The immediate reaction of this prospect was: "He made haste and came down, and received him joyfully." By the demonstration of loving attention, this prospect believed. "Today salvation has come to this house..." Zacchaeus shows that he repents and believes: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." He does better even than the law of restitution. Such is the power of the Gospel of the living Christ.

Not only was the Lord standing be-

fore him, but He was living in his heart. Although in this encounter there is not much recorded of what was said, yet we see the attitude of love that is a prerequisite for witnessing. We see also that the church of our Lord is not just for the outwardly upright. How many times haven't you seen some bum or disreputable person and never dreamed of him sitting next to you in worship. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. When we reach out to the despised of this world we pray that the attention we center on such will raise hope within his heart that he will listen to our words. And in this example we see what an attitude of love we must begin with.

—David Koenig

Partners in the Gospel . . .

Bethel Ev. Lutheran Church Spring, Texas

"And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). The work of the Holy Spirit was evident among those early New Testament believers of Jerusalem. It showed itself in the fervency of their prayers, in their devotion to the Word, in their boldness in speaking the Word, in their love for one another.

Like those early New Testament Christians, the members of Bethel Ev. Lutheran Church of Spring, Texas have witnessed the Spirit's marvelous work in their midst.

The Holy Spirit's gathering and



forming of Bethel began in 1964 when He moved the Rev. Max Groeschel, a long-time Lutheran school teacher, to devote his time and energy to spreading the Gospel in the Houston area. After receiving instruction at Immanuel Lutheran Seminary, Pastor Groeschel

was commissioned as CLC missionary to the Houston area. For three years Pastor and Mrs. Groeschel hosted Sunday worship services in their home near downtown Houston. Pastor Groeschel served the small congregation from 1965-1968.

In 1968 the congregation began to focus its attention and outreach efforts in the Spring area, twenty miles north of downtown Houston. After worshiping in an elementary school for a short time, the congregation bought a large home located along the interstate highway, and remodeled it into a chapel/parsonage. This purchase involved much financial help from CLC partners in the Gospel. This served as Bethel's house of worship from 1969-1977. During this time the Spirit gave boldness to speak the Word, and blessed Bethel's gospel witness with a growth in numbers.

In 1973 the Lord made Bethel one of the beneficiaries of the Houston oil boom. Having received a generous offer to buy their property, the congregation was able to burn its mortgages, build a new church and parsonage, and eliminate its subsidy from the CLC. The new church and parsonage were dedicated on April 10, 1977.

Beginning already at the highway chapel and continuing to the present, the Spirit has continued to open doors for Bethel to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. There has rarely been a time when Bethel's pastors have not had at least one instruction class in progress.

Perhaps the most visible evidence of the Spirit's work at Bethel is the congregation's dedication to providing a Christian education for its young people. From 1969-1971 the congrega-

tion operated a nursery/kindergarten. In 1981 the Lord granted the gift of a Christian Day School. Those who have taught are Dan Gurgel (1981-83), Wendy Greve (1982-88), Collette Sieg (1986-87), Marie Olmanson (1988-89), and Mary Thom (1988-89). Though the school was closed in 1989 due to the severe lack of teachers in the CLC, Bethel continues to pray that the Lord will grant this blessing once again.

From time to time throughout its history, the Lord has used Bethel as a base from which to reach outside Houston with the Gospel. In 1969 the pastor of Bethel began serving a group in Corpus Christi, which was to become Zion Lutheran. Later, work was also begun in Dallas and College Station. The pastor of Bethel still provides services to students at Texas A & M University and other members in the College Station area.

In recent years the Lord has led several people from the Conroe area, twenty miles north of Spring, to Bethel. This welcome influx has caused the congregation to ask whether the Lord might perhaps be pointing their attention in that direction. Wednesday night Bible Study and prayer meetings are held there. Other outreach efforts are also being planned for that area.

Those who have ministered at Bethel are Pastors Groeschel, Arvid Gullerud (1968-1972), L. Dale Redlin (1972-1979), Eugene Rutz (1979-1983), and Michael Thom (1984-1991).

(Editor's note: Pastor Thom, who authored this article, recently accepted a Call to Watertown, SD; the new pastor at Bethel is John Klatt.)

Minnesota Delegate Conference

Date: June 16 beginning at 3:00 p.m.

Place: Grace Lutheran Church, Sleepy Eye, MN

Agenda:

1. Old Testament Prophecies and Contemporary Issues in the Middle East
—Vance Fossum
2. Theses/Antitheses Concerning the Doctrine of the Call - Elton Hallauer
3. Business meeting

Please announce attendance to the host congregation.

— Rick Grams, Secretary

Resignation

After many years of faithful service, Rev. M. J. Witt has resigned from the Board of Doctrine as well as from the Standing Constitution Committee.

— Daniel Fleischer, President

Appointments

Pastor Mark Bernthal has been appointed to the Board of Doctrine filling the vacancy caused by the resignation of Rev. M. J. Witt.

Pastor Peter Reim and Teacher Karl Olmanson have been appointed to the Standing Constitution Committee. They fill the vacancies caused by the death of Rev. Robert Reim, and the resignation of Rev. M. J. Witt.

— Daniel Fleischer, President

Resignation

Rev. Kurt Luebke has resigned from the ministry of the Church of the Lutheran Confession and has joined a church not in fellowship with the CLC. He is no longer eligible for consideration for, or call into, the ministry of the CLC.

— Daniel Fleischer, President

Installation

I did, on the 24th of February 1991, install Michael Thom as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Watertown, SD. Authorization by Pres. Dan Fleischer.

— Leland Grams

Correction: In the obituary for Pastor Robert A. Reim in the May issue I noticed that I omitted, as one of the six children, the name of Rebecca Gamble, Inver Grove Heights, MN.

— The editor

Hymnals Wanted

Grace Lutheran Church of Live Oak, Florida needs 30-50 copies of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Pastor Michael Roehl suggests that any such hymnals available might be brought along to the General Pastoral Conference at ILC in June. Thank You.

New Spokesman Index



An Index covering Volumes 21-32 of the *Spokesman* has been printed. Copies may be obtained at \$2.00 each, postpaid, from the Business Manager.