

Lutheran Spokesman



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In the beginning God
created the heavens
and the earth.



Are We Healthy?

In response to an interviewer's question, General Douglas MacArthur said: "Believe me, sir, never a night goes by, be I ever so tired, but I read the Word of God before I go to bed." It is evident that MacArthur placed a very high priority on God's Word. It is also evident that MacArthur had a strong desire to read and learn God's Word.

An Intense Yearning

What is our attitude towards Scripture? In his epistle, Peter tells us what our attitude should be. In I Peter 2:2 he writes: "Like newborn babies, thirst for the pure milk of the Word in order that it may cause you to grow so that you are saved."¹ The Greek word that is

translated "thirst" is an old word that literally means "intense yearning." Do we intensely yearn for God's Word?

One of the signs of physical illness in an infant is the loss of appetite. Healthy infants get very upset if they are not fed adequately. They have an intense yearning for their mother's milk. How is our spiritual appetite?

The result of a healthy physical appetite and diet is that babies grow up to be strong and healthy adults. The result of a healthy spiritual appetite and diet is that spiritual babies grow up to be strong and healthy spiritually. Babies that are deprived of adequate nutrition soon become weak and listless. They become very susceptible to disease and

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premature death. The same thing is true spiritually. If we don't have an adequate appetite and diet spiritually we are very susceptible to Satan's attacks which can result in serious spiritual illness or even spiritual death.

Martin Luther writes: "Not only do we need God's Word daily as we need our daily bread; we also must use it daily against the daily, incessant attacks and ambushes of the devil with his thousand arts."² Referring to God's command to read His Word daily, Luther writes: "Certainly God did not require and command this so solemnly without good reason. He knows our danger and need. He knows the constant and furious attacks and assaults of the devil. So He wishes to warn, equip, and protect us against them with good 'armor' against their 'flaming darts,' and with a good antidote against their evil infection and poison."³

Satan continually assaults us with the "flaming darts" of temptation to sin and disobedience. He is constantly busy trying to "poison" our lives with sin and the difficulties and tragedy that can result. He is busy trying to lead us into a life of practicing sin which results in spiritual death and eternal judgment. Unless we put on the "armor" of God which he provides through His Word, we will not be able to stand against the attacks of Satan. We will soon lose our spiritual health and even our spiritual life.

A Healthy Diet

Motivated by a strong love, parents seek to provide a healthy diet for their

children. They want their children to grow strong and healthy. They want their children to avoid the difficulties and dangers of serious illness. They want their children to know the joy and blessings of good health. Because of our Lord's great love for us, He has provided His Word so that we might grow strong and healthy spiritually—as Peter writes: ". . . so that it may cause you to grow so that you are saved."

Our Lord wants us to avoid the great dangers of spiritual weakness or sickness. Our Lord wants us to know the joy and blessings of spiritual growth and health. These are only possible through a daily intake and learning of God's Word. Through His Word and promise the Lord gives us every good thing needed in this life. As Luther wrote: "Time and paper would fail me if I were to recount all the blessings that flow from God's Word."⁴ Abraham Lincoln understood the great blessings of God's Word. He wrote: "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book."

How is our spiritual health? Are we so sickly that we don't even desire to learn God's Word, let alone on a daily basis? Do we hear and sing about the peace and joy of the Christian life without experiencing their reality in our lives? Do we have little desire or excitement to witness to others? These are all indicators of spiritual sickness or even death.

God's Word To The Nations. Cleveland: Biblicon, 1990.

² *The Book Of Concord, "Martin Luther's Preface to the Large Catechism,"* p. 360. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.

³ *Ibid.* p. 360.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 360.

Our Lord who suffered and died for us has provided the antidote—His Word. Spiritual health and the joy, peace, and excitement that result are only produced by the Lord through His Word. Like a parent who loves His child, it is His will that we grow strong and healthy through His Word. Like a

Father who dearly loves His children, it is His will that we know the joy and peace that only good health can bring.

Are we spiritually healthy? “Like newborn babies, thirst for the pure milk of the Word in order that it may cause you to grow so that you are saved.”

—M. Bohde



The Gospel, the Power of God — Studies in Romans

The Mystery of the Gospel

“Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:33-36).

The New Testament speaks of the mystery of God’s salvation by grace alone through the power of the Gospel. This is a difficult concept for man who wants to be in control of his life and his destiny. In our technological age, man thinks that nothing should be a mystery to man. This emphasis on reason and logic seeks to take the mystery out of God and God’s dealings with mankind.

By Grace Alone

In these three chapters of Romans (9-11) Paul outlines the mystery of the Gospel. The mystery is that God chose the Jewish nation, descendants of Abraham, to be His chosen people. But when this people rejected God’s grace in Jesus Christ, God turned to the Gentiles with this wondrous message of salvation. The unbelief of Israel became the occasion for the Gentiles to be brought into the kingdom of God. “By their transgression salvation has

come to the Gentiles” (11:11).

The inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom of God is a result of the rejection of God’s Gospel of salvation by grace alone on the part of the Jews. Not even the obstinate unbelief of God’s chosen people could frustrate God’s gift of salvation. This was brought out in the book of Acts as Paul preached first to the Jews. Only when they considered themselves unworthy of everlasting life did he turn to the Gentiles.

We are stewards of the mysteries of God. In Colossians Paul speaks of this mystery: “Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the *mystery* which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known

what is the riches of the glory of this *mystery* among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:25-27).

The mystery is God's salvation in Jesus which has now been revealed to the Gentiles. "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (Rom. 11:25).

The fact that God grafted you who are Gentiles only after the unbelief and hardening of Israel is a warning against pride and overconfidence. For if God broke off the natural branches because of their unbelief, you had better believe that he will cut off the wild branches if they continue also in unbelief (Rom. 11:24).

Faith—Not Logic

The mystery of God's salvation is the mystery of grace (the Gospel) as opposed to salvation by works (the Law). The workings of God are and remain a mystery. Trying to capture the workings of God in a logical box is an impossibility.

Who can understand the tension between God's predestination to salvation and man's rejection of the Gospel by his own will?

Who can understand how the rejection of God's grace by the chosen nation of Israel became the chance for Gentiles to come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham?

Who can fully understand the workings of God in our own lives so that all things work together for our good?

"In our technological age, man thinks that nothing should be a mystery to man. This emphasis on reason and logic seeks to take the mystery out of God and God's dealings with mankind. . ."

Who can understand the mystery of God?

Faith admits that God's judgments are unsearchable and that His ways are unfathomable.

Which one of us was there to advise God when He created this world?

Which one of us does God call for advice?

Which one of us can claim to understand God or His marvelous workings?

We rejoice that God has revealed to us the mystery of salvation in connection with the Gospel. All that we have to know is that God has forgiven us freely of all our sins for Christ's sake. Instead of being obsessed with the "why" we need to spend more time with the "what." The what is the objective Gospel of the cross revealed again this Lenten season in the cross and the empty tomb. The why remains a mystery of faith.

There are so many people who crash in unbelief because they think they can figure out the "why" of God. The believer simply bows in child-like faith before God and acknowledges the wisdom of His salvation in Jesus.

Faith praises the mystery of God's salvation: "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever."

Love Is Not Jealous

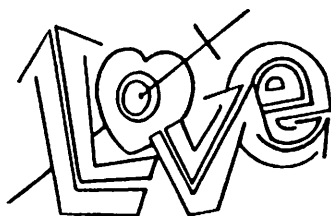
Jealousy and envy—color them green. They are like hot coals from hell sizzling to destroy. They intrude as an unwelcome guest. The pages of history—and literature—are littered with the ravages of jealousy. It is one of the eighteen plots used for dramatic presentation.

“Love does not envy” (I Corinthians 13:4). The Greek word describes something hot, seething, boiling—an internal reaction to the way things are. Envy and jealousy are the discontent and dissatisfaction with other people’s possessions, good fortune, or abilities. They include what we perceive as threats to the things we have.

It is not the casual, “I wish I could do that,” which may be a mark of admiration, or “I wish I had that,” which might be a simple desire. It is the inner turmoil, anger, stars-in-one’s-vision upset which results from covetous desire.

Jealousy was destroying the Corinthian congregation. Preacher favoritism was disrupting their *agape* (love-feast) worship. Sin was ruling. It was indicative of spiritual immaturity. Paul wrote: “I fed you with milk and not the solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” (I Cor. 3:2-3)

Jealousy and envy can destroy us. Their underlying character is lack of trust in God. The contentment God ex-



pects of us from the things He has given us and the circumstances of our lives is replaced by discontent and dissatisfaction.

The Bible talks about another seething desire—a compulsion of the divine will to pardon and save—a divine jealousy which is not tainted by the selfishness of sin. It is expressed through the apostle Paul (and he uses the same word): “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ,” (2 Cor. 11:2). Our God was so “possessive” about us that He offered up His own beloved Son to eradicate the sin which was disrupting our fellowship with Him. He sent His Spirit to create our faith and thus make us His own special people.

This love from God empowers us to love. It eliminates sinful envy and jealousy. “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts” (Rom. 13:13).

—M. Sydow

Paul's Twentieth Century Sermon

The apostle Paul, in writing to the assumedly wise people of Rome and others of that time, says: "Professing to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man . . . and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator...." (Rom. 1:22f) And that is what humanism (the worship of man and his abilities without God) is all about today. Humanism today is not one bit more advanced than ancient people who worshiped their ancestors and leaders.

And what evil effect has all this foolish thinking brought to the world today? Listen to the apostle Paul as he preaches his twentieth century sermon for today, about sexual promiscuity, herpes, and AIDS. Listen closely as Paul continues with his sermon: For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women (lesbians) exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another (gays), men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due (herpes, AIDS, even death, etc.). (See Rom. 1:26-27)

Let Paul finish his twentieth century sermon, vs. 28-32: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their

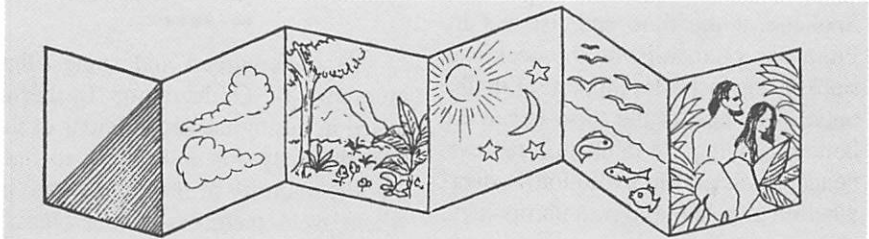
knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness and immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them." That is a scorching sermon for all times.

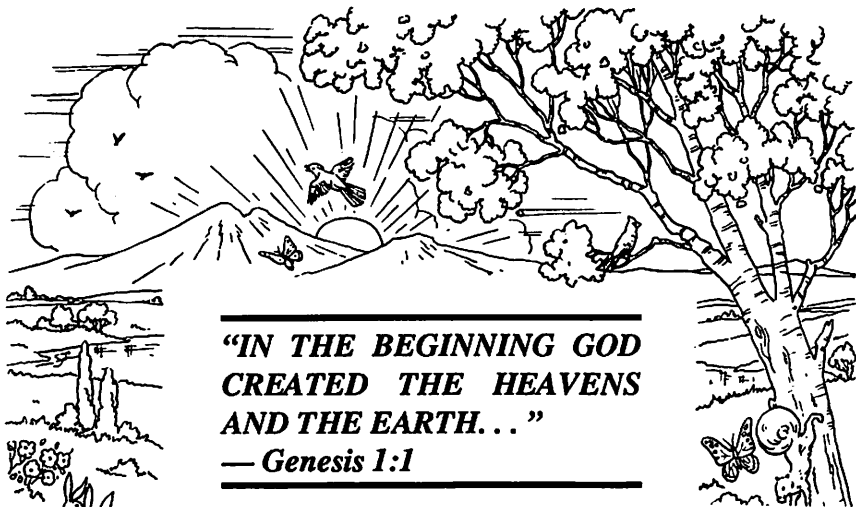
From all this it is evident that the primary evil in the world is the idea that there is no creation and therefore no God; that all took place by mere chance, by evolution.

And out of this primary evil flows all the other evils of society today, that Paul mentions in the rest of chapter one of Romans. One also wonders if things like this were not also very prevalent in the days before the Flood, so that God in righteous anger tore up the entire crust of the earth.

In summary, in light of all that Paul wrote and what is happening in the world all around us, only a fool will say there is no God, no Creator.

— Albert Sippert





***“IN THE BEGINNING GOD
CREATED THE HEAVENS
AND THE EARTH...”***

— Genesis 1:1

Creation/Evolution Debate

A member of one of our CLC churches in Spokane had read Albert Sippert's book *From Eternity To Eternity*. Impressed with Sippert's book and his grasp of the issues involved in the Creation/Evolution Debate, Mrs. Arlene Caton sought other forums in which Sippert might be given opportunity to testify to the truth. After a local university professor refused to give forum for a debate, a Spokane radio station was contacted. The station's talk show host agreed to devote one of his hour-long shows to a debate between Sippert and Dr. James Birx, an evolutionist who had also written a book. The debate took place September 4, 1991.

This writer happened to be pastor in Spokane at the time and listened in. From our vantage point, the deck was stacked against Mr. Sippert from the outset. The host of the show began the hour by saying: "I think that the evidence for scientific evolution is overwhelming: paleontology, anthropology,

genetics, molecular biology, even astrophysics all go back to an evolutionary basis." All through the debate it was evident that it was two against one. A number of those who phoned in (the hour after the debate) told the host of their unhappiness with his allowing his own evolutionary bias to be so much on display. "Not fair!"

But Mr. Sippert held his own in this, his first public debate at the young age of 83 years. In his remarks he made various points—enlarged upon in his book—to the effect that evolution is not scientific and is, in fact, contrary to the proven laws of science.

We are printing just a few of Sippert's responses to the contentions of the evolutionists he debated. (See box)

The undersigned and some other members of Gethsemane Lutheran called in during the second hour of the talk show. It was interesting to note that the majority of the callers (two of whom were members of our church,

but most we did not know) spoke out in favor of the biblical account of creation. If nothing else, this indicates a widening concern exists on the part of Bible believers to speak out in defense of a God-centered origin of the world, man, and life in general.

One caller asked the moderator: "Based on the evolutionary theory, what is the purpose of man?" He answered: "You are not going to like this. Based on pure scientific pragmatism, leaving religion out of it, there does not have to be a purpose . . . Our purpose is to continue the species, to reproduce. . . (As to) our overall purpose: do we have a destiny? Do we have a reason to be here? (There is) no reason to believe so."

Read it, and weep. That answer is the saddest possible. It verbalizes the end result of the evolutionary doctrine (faith): there is no reason or purpose for mankind's existence. From that it follows: without a Creator-God there are no standards or absolutes on moral and ethical issues, or any other issues for that matter. If such is the case, little wonder our world is in the shape it is.

In "Paul's Twentieth Century Sermon" appearing elsewhere in this issue, Sippert gives a biblical commentary on just where the tenets of evolution will lead their believers.

As we did on these pages a few months back, we would once again recommend to our readers the book *From Eternity To Eternity*, a 419-page paperback now available from the author at the reduced price of \$6.95 which includes shipping. Order from Sippert Publishing Co., 330 Wheeler Ave., No. Mankato, MN 56003. Mr. Sippert would also like it known that he is available for lectures on evolution



Albert
Sippert

and science. (He prefers not to say creation and evolution, because "creation stands on its own.")

Who won the Spokane debate? It is difficult and even impossible to say who "wins" in such a discussion. The consolation for Bible believers is that the Spirit of God accomplishes what He will through the Word spoken. We have the promise that God's Word does not return unto Him void. We are simply to proclaim the Word, and this was done.

Early on in the debate both the evolutionist debater as well as the radio-show host labeled the Bible as a book of myths. Without belief in an inerrant Bible as the common ground or starting point, room was (is) left for all sorts of evolutionistic "explanations."

We would underscore that creation—as "observable" as it is (see Psalm 19) — is finally a matter of faith. "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Heb. 11:3). Therefore, to reason (argue?) with evolutionists on the basis of supposed "findings" of science will often prove to be a hopeless undertaking. Human "wisdom" always has and always will find fault with God's reve-

We print here a few excerpts of Mr. Sippert's responses to those he debated in the Spokane, Washington radio talk show last September. It was all done by telephone, with Sippert speaking from his home in North Mankato, Minnesota. Some of Sippert's responses are enlarged upon by him after he received a taped transcript of the radio show. They are, however, a fair reflection of his original responses. (Wood = Alex Wood, talk show host; Birx = Dr. James Birx, evolutionist debater.)

Wood: I do not believe that a belief in evolution negated a belief in a god.

Sippert: Evolution does negate a belief in God. If things evolved, starting with a big bang, why would a God be needed?

Birx: As far as Genesis goes and as far as the Noachian Flood goes, and Adam and Eve, I think the modern theologians as well as most scientists and rational philosophers would say that these are stories and myths . . . evolution is not based on a myth.

Sippert: Where is the scientific evidence that Genesis, the Flood, and so forth are myths? The evidence is that evolution is a fable and Genesis is a fact.

Birx: Groups of plants and animals have been placed in an evolutionary sequence.

Sippert: There is totally no scientific evidence for such evolutionary sequence, but it is merely another assumption or fabrication of the evolutionists.

Birx: Evolution does have something disturbing to say about man, that man is just an animal who does not have any relation or responsibility to a non-material God.

Sippert: This false teaching has separated man from God to whom he is accountable.

Birx: Many of the ecological and environmental problems can be traced back to man being separate from animals.

Sippert: This statement is highly questionable. Much rather the problem is the moral decay and downfall of man, which is due to people being taught that man is just another animal accountable only to himself, to do his own thing without regard to others. If you are just an animal, why not live like an animal? It has also caused many denominations to teach and believe that many things in the Bible are mere myths and that evolution could be true and acceptable. I have met a number of these leaders who are wavering in doubt. It has harmed mankind also eternally, by teaching man is not accountable to a higher non-material Creator being. In summary: evolution is one of the primary evils of this world out of which have flowed endless other evils, as is evident from Romans chapter 1:20-32.

Wood: We must distinguish between myths on the one hand and scientific evidence on the other hand.

Sippert: Genesis is not a myth. It corresponds with actual history, geology, paleontology, biology, astronomy, and DNA molecules . . . Genesis is clearly established as shown not only in the Bible and other accounts but also from the crust of the earth and the fossils in them. It is evolution that is a recently developed fable to counteract and defy the facts given in the Bible, and a correct analysis of the crust of the earth.

Birx (after making many other points): In conclusion, evolution is supported by science and reason.

Sippert: Evolution is not supported by scientific evidence and it is totally unreasonable. There is no evidence anywhere that evolution ever took place. Reason must say that there is a non-material force, power, intelligence, or Being behind all the material things and the life that exists, just as there is a non-material mind and intelligence behind all the things that men have designed and made. Romans 1:20 states the case clearly: "Since the creation of the world his invisible attributes (eternal, all-powerful, all-wise, etc.) are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead (non-material attributes), so that they are without excuse." A man must be totally foolish to disbelieve all the creation evidences around us. That is why the Bible also clearly declares: "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God" (Ps. 14:1).

See Mr. Sippert's article "Paul's Twentieth Century Sermon" elsewhere in this issue.

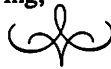
lation, be it His revealed Word or His created world.

But God's world and His Christians shall go on testifying. The world does so of itself, preaching its sermon relentlessly and universally: "Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard" (Ps. 19:2f). As for God's Christians, it is up to them to get His Word out in the fashion of St. Paul on Mars' hill in ancient Athens: ". . . the One whom you worship without knowing,

Him I proclaim to you. God, who made the world and everything in it . . ." (Acts 17:22ff).

The world today, as humanistic and secularistic as was St. Paul's day and age, needs what is called "creation evangelism." Where God is not acknowledged as Creator, His Savior-Son will not be seen as necessary for what we know as the redemption of sinners. That's a big subject, perhaps for another time.

—Paul Fleischer



Spiritual Encounters (#5 in Series)

John 4:7-39

Witnessing to...

The Disinterested

his has to be one of the most studied examples of witnessing, because our Lord's conversation with this woman of Samaria is recorded in such detail. It is an appealing study also because of the immediate positive results. Here Law and Gospel are articulated. Our Lord is casting the net of the Gospel and drawing in this prospect for His heavenly kingdom.

And the thing to take note of at the outset is that she is not interested. She did not come to the well to see Jesus and to inquire of Him. But the Lord came for her.

Changing The Conversation

It starts with a request for a drink of water. The Lord moves the conversation from the physical and material to the spiritual. Here we have much to learn from Him. How many times haven't we wondered how to change a conversation from the mundane to the

spiritual? First of all, His request takes her off guard. She was not only a lowly woman but a Samaritan, and Jesus talked with her. He treated her not as an inferior. All are valuable to God. There is joy in heaven over just one sinner who repents. God would have all men to be saved and not any lost. Jesus shows this concern in His treatment of her. How are we when we witness? Do we convey the idea of "now you just sit down and let me tell you"? Are we pedantic or caring?

Jesus transforms the conversation from earthly water to the water of life. In our everyday surroundings there are many examples from which we might spiritualize. Our Lord's invariable use of examples from nature are well-recorded and well-known. Lilies of the field and birds of the air can be used to show God's preservation of men. The loving care of the earthly shepherd is

used by our Lord to illustrate the heavenly shepherd. Jesus also used illustrations from fishing, about bread, and a door, and so on.

One reason why we may have trouble moving from an earthly example to the spiritual is that we often don't have our minds so firmly set on the spiritual. If we did we could more easily see the corollaries and illustrations.

The Master Fisher

An integral part of our Lord's encounter with the woman is the preaching of the Law to convict of sin. "You are right in saying 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband..."

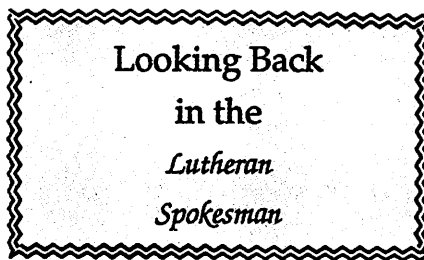
The sinful flesh detests hearing how wrong it is. It easily bristles. Haven't we all had those times when we had to tell someone that he was doing wrong, only to have him turn on us? This likely causes us to back off, rather than being (as they say) "judgmental." But it is in love that we rebuke, reprimand, and expose sin. As long as we approach another with humility, knowing how sinful we are, we should not hesi-

tate to speak the Law. An important point here is that Jesus says it to her privately.

When the Samaritan woman exposes to Jesus what religious knowledge she possesses, He then seeks to correct it and expand on it. We should likewise, but in a spirit of gentleness and humility. Jesus moves on to the end things. So we also want to give people perspective on the end of all things. People get so wrapped up in their own little world that they easily lose sight of beyond. So, as our Lord did, we want to move the conversation to eternal life and eternal death. The woman is definitely interested now, and the Lord culminates with the Gospel: "Messiah...I who speak to you am he."

This example of the Lord hooking her as He cast the line and reeling her in is, of course, by the Master Fisher of men. This is a skill that we will want to work on. Know the Bible, know the Bible, know the Bible! Then it is that the Holy Spirit will give utterance with the Word.

—D. Koenig



From February 1962 . . .

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS (*The tower of Babel incident in Genesis 11:1-9 is the text treated—Ed.*) . . . This

remarkable story of olden days relates how the LORD came to men with the blessing of unity . . . So glorious was

this mercy of the LORD that, when the people of the earth held to His Word and Promise in faith, they enjoyed the fullest harmony and unity. And for a season they did believe. Spreading out over the plain of Shinar, they were replenishing the earth and subduing it with the singleness of purpose and confidence of such in whose midst the glory of the LORD dwelt.

Genuine unity is a great blessing, and wonderful in that it becomes possible among sinful human beings. Such unity is present on earth even today. True, men no longer have the same human tongue in common—and this is also the result of divine mercy, as we shall see. But confusion of language is not in itself a barrier to genuine unity. The Lord proved that at Pentecost; and ever since that Day men have heard, through the wall of diverse language, the same call to the same faith, the same Lord, the same Baptism, the same God and Father. As a result we can speak today still of a world-nation having one speech. Though its membership is widely dispersed, it is united by faith in fullest harmony. . . . And this, the unity of faith, is the one and only perfect unity which the Lord permits to succeed and prosper on earth. His glory works it; and His glory also destroys every false unity which arises.

A significant change is revealed as the story of the people in the plain of Shinar proceeds. A new kind of unity comes into the picture . . . the Lord broke the bond of language and scattered men far and wide in confusion, so that all plans for ONE WORLD were shattered. But we ought understand the reason for this stroke. The same mercy which united the people in God's Word

now disunites them.

What would have been the eventual result had the Babel plan succeeded? The utter destruction of all the human race! For success in sin is death, temporal and eternal. God's mercy alone prevents such results. He reaches in and defuses the explosive unity of men, so that there is at least a chance for some. Because He drove the world apart at Babel, a God-fearing race could continue. Abraham could be called out of his father's house to become the father of many believers. God saves His Church, the true unity, by forbidding the success of united ungodliness.

In this fashion His glory is still being revealed. We find millions cheering greatly every new effort toward what is called ONE WORLD; but Christians understand that the unity which the world is seeking is a unity in sin and rebellion against the will and truth of God. A united world based upon the ideas of the dominant religious leadership in the world today would be a mortal danger to the Church. The same is true of the many movements toward a union of church bodies which seek a fusion that constitutes a false, hypocritical unity of many faiths and a variety of speech.

The Lord does not desire disunity; but He permits it to prevent a greater evil, and thus glorifies His grace. We ought to pray ever more earnestly that He may preserve us in true oneness which rests upon unflinching trust in His unflinching Word and promise. May His glory be manifest in our midst, and His labors at Babel not be in vain for us.

(Egbert Schaller)



Gems From Proverbs

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 16:25).

As a young man, Grandfather was caught by a blizzard on the North Dakota prairie. In the blinding whiteness he set out for home. After some time he came to a familiar rock pile, one with a large dark rock. Could there be two rock piles so much alike? No. He had walked in a circle. He was sure that he had been walking in the right direction, but he had been wrong. He found the nearby fence and followed it. That way was longer but it led him safely home.

So it is with us humans. We often go the way that we think is right and later find that it wasn't. Sometimes the error makes little difference. At other times the mistake might bring results as serious as death. In spiritual matters following the wrong way will result in eternal damnation. That is the warning of this proverb.

It is obvious that our text does not speak of matters concerning our life on earth. In such matters people are able to choose the way that seems best to them and to prosper. Their intelligence, training, and experience help to make sound decisions. But in spiritual matters no person can choose the right course by himself. He has a fatal flaw which prevents him from doing so. That flaw is original sin.

Every person is born “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). Since “the carnal mind is enmity against God”

(Rom. 8:7), every person is an enemy of God by nature. The natural man can only rebel against God and His will. Continued rebellion against God results in death, eternal damnation.

This rebellion takes the form of man insisting on doing things his own way. He doesn't want God to tell him what to believe and do. His way may be to ignore his spiritual needs. More likely he will seek eternal happiness by following some humanly devised method. It usually involves doing what is thought to please the deity of choice, and avoiding what is considered offensive. The ways of mankind may vary in details, but they are all futile. They lead only to death.

The only way this tragic course can be altered is by the intervention of God. Through use of God's Word the Holy Spirit reveals both the person's sinful condition and the help there is to be found in Jesus. The person is led to accept Jesus as “the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:6). Then he is truly on the right way, the way that leads to eternal life.

May God graciously lead us on that right way so we may finally find refuge from the storms of life in our heavenly home.

—Keith Olmanson

Pastor Vernon Greve (1921-1991)



The November air was cold and a bitter wind whipped stray snowflakes through the little prairie cemetery across the road from Zion Lutheran Church, Hidewood Township, South Dakota. But if anyone had used the word "bleak" to describe the day or the place Vernon Greve's remains were committed to the earth, then they didn't understand this man or the message he proclaimed for over 45 years. For Vernon Greve the plains of Dakota were not dreary. They were home. And through faith in the Lord Jesus, this longtime preacher of the Gospel looked forward to the day when his own funeral would be an emphatic declaration of his Savior's victory over death and the grave.

Vernon Ernest Greve was born and raised in Brookings County, South Dakota, less than 50 miles south of his final resting place. The fourth of eight children born to Paul and Hannah Greve, Vernon graduated from the high school department of Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN; Northwestern Lutheran College in Watertown, WI; and, in December 1945,

from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Thiensville, WI.

The next month Pastor Greve began serving his first call, teaching at Snoqualmie Valley Lutheran School in Snoqualmie, WA, where he met Lila Moe. They were married the following year and the Lord blessed that union with five sons and two daughters.

As a missionary at large for the Pacific Northwest District (WELS) Pastor Greve established and served a mission congregation in Spokane, WA (1946-48). After pastoring in Withrow, WA he returned to his native South Dakota to minister at St. Luke of Lemmon (1956-70) and the joint parish of Trinity, Watertown/Zion, Hidewood (1970-84). During these years Pastor Greve also conducted services for a number of small South Dakota parishes and helped with the establishment of mission congregations in Rapid City and Sioux Falls. Finally, he served Mt. Olive, Detroit Lakes and St. Paul, Ponsford, MN from 1984 until in 1988 he retired to Brookings, SD with his wife Lila.

Vernon Greve was a plainspoken and practical man. His Lord used these characteristics in leading Pastor Greve to speak out in plain words during the synodical turmoil of the late '50's and then to follow them with practical obedience as he and the people of St. Luke in Lemmon left the Wisconsin Synod and helped to form the CLC. With the same practical commitment to the Gospel of his Savior, Pastor Greve during his retirement served as an elder at Zion, Hidewood; and also as a vacancy pastor, and a Mission Festival speaker. In fact, he served in this capacity only days before he was hospitalized with the illness His Lord used to take him

home on November 4, 1991 at the age of 70.

Once when a man complained to him that “the church only wants my money,” Pastor Greve replied, “The Lord is ‘worse’ than that —He’s not satisfied with just your money...He wants you!” That Jesus Christ shed His blood to claim him “lock, stock, and barrel” was Vernon Greve’s strength and glory —and our great comfort as we praise the Lord who has now called this His servant to His side.

—W. V. Schaller

Great Lakes Pastoral Conference

Place: Peace Thru Christ, Middleton, WI

Time: February 10-11, beginning at 8:30

Agenda:

- * O. T. Exegesis, Ecclesiastes 3 —J. Sandeen
- * N. T. Exegesis, 2 Corinthians 4:1ff.— M. Sydow
- * Homiletics—a Lenten Series — P. Tiefel
- * Book Review— J. Ude
- * Causing our Souls to See Good in the Toil of our Ministry— J. Johannes
- * Evaluation of Self-esteem in Contemporary Usage, Psychology and Counseling— M. Bohde
- * The Gifts of the Spirit—Natural or Miraculous Gifts?— T. Barthels
- * How does the Doctrine of Creation Relate to Christ and the Foundation of Faith?— ILC Professor

*Can the NIV be Considered a Good Translation?— E. Albrecht
Conference Speaker— D. Reim
Conference Chaplain— J. Albrecht
Alternate— T. Barthels

— David Reim, Secretary



October 1991 Great Lakes Pastoral Conference at ILC, Eau Claire.