

# Lutheran Spokesman

**Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word;**

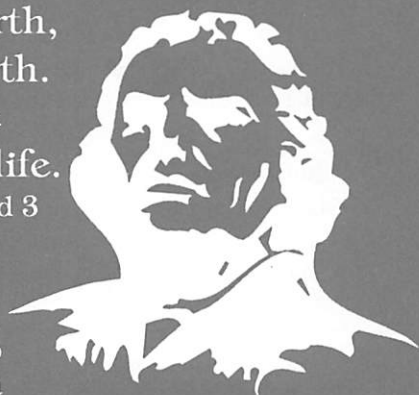
Curb those who fain by craft and sword  
Would wrest the Kingdom from Thy Son  
And set at naught all He hath done.

Lord Jesus Christ, Thy power make known,  
For Thou art Lord of lords alone;  
Defend Thy Christendom that we  
May ever more sing praise to Thee.

O Comforter of priceless worth,  
Send peace and unity on earth.

Support us in our final strife  
And lead us out of death to life.

TLH-261, V. 1,2 and 3



## **REFORMATION 1992**

**We today in the CLC need to  
have the Holy Spirit work a  
continuing reformation with us.**

### **In This Issue**

- One Word To Live
- Seeds Of Deformation - I
- Luther And Erasmus
- Careful With Adjectives
- Women's Fellowship 1992
- Spiritual Encounters #8



## One Word To Live

**S**tanding firmly on God's Word, and against the combined pressure of the Roman Papacy and the secular government, Martin Luther in 1521 at the Diet of Worms uttered the now famous Reformation battle cry: "Here I stand." The course of history was thereby changed.

An incident from the 12th chapter of Judges relates how another man also stood fast and held the line. Jephthah had been ostracized by his tribe (he was the son of a harlot), and so he had fled to the land of Tob where he had gained fame for his considerable military skills. When Israel was later invaded by the Ammonites, this outcast military genius was called on to save the day.

### The Sin Of Pride

But after the God-given victory, all of Israel did not rejoice. One tribe was

consumed with jealousy and pride. The arrogant Ephraimites falsely accused Jephthah and his men—the very countrymen who had fought for them—of excluding them from the campaign; of not sharing with them the spoils of victory; and of being nothing but a bunch of renegades. Gideon earlier had tolerated their arrogance. Jephthah did not. In the civil war that ensued, the issue was decisively settled when Jephthah held the fords of the River Jordan. The password was Shibboleth, a word the Ephraimites could not correctly pronounce. A total of 42,000 men failed the test and were slaughtered—because of their pride.

The sin of pride predates man's sin. Pride led a created angel to think he was God's equal. This arrogance resulted in Satan's rebellion and fall.

The results of human arrogance and pride were certainly in evidence in 1521, and are today. God in His Gospel has told man that deliverance

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Editor: Paul Fleischer, 238 Nicollet Ave., No. Mankato, MN 56003; Assistant Editor: Keith Olmanson; Artists: W. Bernthal, M. Schaser; Staff (Also District Reporters): D. Bernthal, M. Bohde, D. Fuerstenau (West Central), J. Klatt, D. Koenig, Joseph Lau, R. Mackensen, Bertram Naumann, P. Naumann, G. Radtke (Great Lakes), Rollin Reim (Pacific Coast), P. Schaller, D. Schierenbeck (Minnesota), John Schierenbeck (South-Eastern), M. Sydow.

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from his sin has been completely secured for him. Forgiveness and eternal salvation is to be found in God's grace alone, obtained through faith in Christ Jesus. Our Lord Himself explained that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that no man can come to the Father in heaven except by Him.

Yet by Luther's time the organized church taught that trust and confidence in God's mercy and grace alone were not sufficient for salvation. Man was required to add his works to God's grace. Popes had the audacity to claim they were Christ's equal, that nobody could come to the Father except by submitting to their authority. It was against this false, arrogant theology and perverse claim that Martin Luther made his stand at Worms.

If history is to benefit us, then its lessons must be applied. For the proud men of Ephraim one word correctly pronounced would have meant life. But one word not spoken brought destruction.

There is yet today one word that proud and sinful mankind must learn to spiritually pronounce. That one word is "Christ." To not do so means death.

### **Scripture Our Password**

Many churches today claim to proclaim Christ, but they do not spiritually pronounce His holy name correctly. It is still taught that to Christ's redeeming work and saving name must be affixed the good works of man. By adding letters they mispronounce our Savior's name. Modern, humanistic man does no better. He glories in himself and his

ideas. Christ is simply denied completely. Hence His saving name is again mispronounced, if at all attempted.

Against these foes we are asked to stand firm, to hold the line. Our weapon is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. It is invincible.

But perhaps the greatest threat is ourselves—our proud hearts and arrogant minds. How many times are we not tempted to describe and define God apart from His Word, and then insist that is how He has to be? Does not our human nature eagerly affirm that to God's grace we must append our own good living? Are we not inclined to treat God's Word as a buffet dinner, picking what we like, and by-passing those words and doctrines which seem "too tough," unappetizing, and indigestible?

If Luther's Reformation is to mean anything, then we must make every day a day of reformation in our hearts. Our pride must be repressed, for it is that by which death comes. Someone once commented that human pride is like a man's beard: it must be shaved off daily. We do that shaving through daily contrition and repentance.

Let us learn in true reformation spirit to make the whole of Scripture our password. Let us learn to pronounce correctly—to trust in and depend alone upon—the name of Christ Jesus, the only name whereby man is saved. Let us pray that God grant us the strength and courage to stand fast and totally on that holy name, and His words of Life.

If we do so our life will be blessed. If we so stand, death need not be feared at the Jordan crossing.

—*David Fuerstenau*

(The following is taken from a sermon delivered by Pastor L. D. Redlin at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minn. on November 10, 1991. We plan to run the excerpts in two installments in the Spokesman.)

## SEEDS OF DEFORMATION - Part I.

“Justifying faith is a living, bold trust in God’s grace, so certain that a man would die a thousand times for it rather than suffer this trust to be wrested from him.” Thus writes Dr. Martin Luther in his *Preface To Romans*.

To be sure, the Reformation was not simply an exercise in scholarly debate, nor simply the national pride of Germany rising up against the oppression of the Papacy. It was a process through which God opened the eyes of people to see the wonders of the salvation which was prepared for all mankind in the Christ. It was a coming out of the dungeon of spiritual oppression and hopelessness into the light of God’s gracious love and blessedness.

And once one had seen the light of God’s grace no one would be able to force one back into the dark dungeon of death. The Christian princes together with Luther and those who had seen the light of God’s grace would die rather than lose the precious treasure of the Gospel.

The words of Jesus applied wonderfully well to our fathers in the faith as they were strengthened to: “HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN” (Rev. 3:11).

### Luther Excommunicated

Luther had been excommunicated from the church by the Papacy. Yet his work continued until finally he was summoned to Worms and ordered

to recant and retract everything that he had written and taught.

By God’s grace he answered, in part: “UNLESS I AM CONVINCED BY THE HOLY SCRIPTURE—FOR MY CONSCIENCE IS TAKEN CAPTIVE BY THE WORD OF GOD—I CANNOT AND WILL NOT RECONT, FOR IT IS NEITHER SAFE NOR RIGHT TO ACT AGAINST CONSCIENCE. HERE I STAND. GOD HELP ME. AMEN.”

As a result, the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire declared Luther an outlaw. In other words, anyone could take his life at will without fear of punishment by the government. On the way back to Wittenberg friends took Luther captive and secretly transported him to Wartburg Castle.



Dr. Martin Luther

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*The Reformation was not simply an exercise in scholarly debate....It was a process through which God opened the eyes of people to see the wonders of the salvation which was prepared for all mankind in the Christ.*

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There he assumed the identity of Junker George. There it was that he translated the New Testament into the German language.

The light of God's love for the world in Christ was spreading throughout Europe. But unfortunately amidst the Reformation there was an ugly deformation growing. The seeds of this deformation were already sown by one of Luther's colleagues at the University of Wittenberg, Bodenstein von Carlstadt.

With Luther gone from the scene, the deformation steadily grew. Carlstadt insisted that more drastic measures had to be taken. He encouraged the mob to destroy sacred appointments. Organs were condemned for church use. The crucifixes and altars were torn down and destroyed. Gravestones were vandalized. In services conducted by Carlstadt the Lord's Supper was celebrated in a disrespectful fashion.

Luther was told of the happenings. He broke his cover and returned to Wittenberg. He too realized that change had to take place, but it should take place with understanding, with a concern for the souls involved, and out of love for the Gospel of the Lord. Carlstadt was no longer considered a fellow worker with Luther and he left Wittenberg.

### **The Lord's Supper Under Attack**

Carlstadt continued his unscriptural approach to things. Though he was

not welcome in many areas of the church, yet he was able to peddle his teachings. One of them was the teaching that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was merely symbolical.

Soon it became evident that a man by the name of Ulrich Zwingli, a Swiss theologian, had taken up this teaching. Though Zwingli was a supporter of most of the teachings of the Reformation, he began to attack the teachings of Luther concerning the Real Presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament. The purpose of the Sacrament, as far as Zwingli was concerned, was simply to reflect on the Lord's death. The more sincerely one would reflect, the greater its benefits. That it carried with it forgiveness through the body and blood of Jesus was totally out of the question for Zwingli.

Luther had rejected the teachings of Rome regarding the Holy Supper. They had made out of it a work of man rather than a free gift of God's forgiveness through the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Luther simply pointed out that the words of Scripture tell us what the Lord is here giving us—THIS IS MY BODY...THIS IS MY BLOOD—the very body and blood through which we receive the blessing of forgiveness of our sins.

To support these simple words, Luther pointed to the inspired words of the apostle Paul: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"

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***Luther held that we must poke out the eyes of our reason and listen alone to what God has to say...(Calvin) tried to develop a system of theology which would make everything fit together logically and reasonably.***

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The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (I Cor. 10:16)

Zwingli reasoned that the Lord cannot be in heaven and on earth at the same time. Therefore the word "eat" should be taken to mean "significat" or symbolic. Luther contended that the word "est" means "is" and, if the Lord wanted to use the word "significat," He would have. Furthermore, the fact that the Lord is in heaven does not prevent Him from being many places at one time.

A public meeting resulted from the disagreement—the famous Marburg Colloquy. The principle characters were Luther and Zwingli. Before the meeting Luther had written on the table before him: HOC EST CORPUS MEUM—THIS IS MY BODY.

The colloquy went nowhere. The elements of the deformation within the Reformation continued to grow.

### **Calvin's Theological System**

The influence of John Calvin began during the later part of Luther's life. Calvin was deeply influenced by Luther's writings, but finally developed a theological system which shows its marks throughout the Reformed Church even to this day.

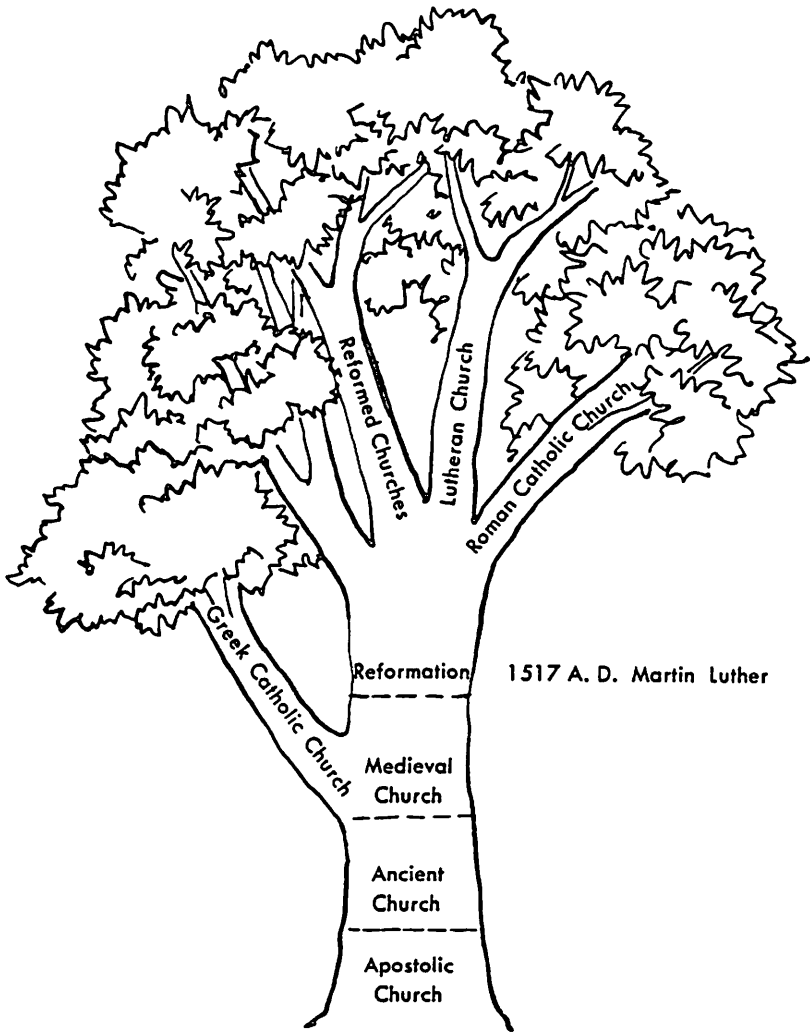
Luther held that we must poke out the eyes of our reason and listen alone to what God has to say. He held that we must let scripture explain scripture. Calvin, a lawyer, believed and taught that since God gave us

reason there can be nothing contrary to reason in the Bible. Therefore, the doctrines of the Bible, he believed, must be brought into harmony with reason. He tried to develop a system of theology which would make everything fit together logically and reasonably.

Calvin accepted the biblical truth that man is spiritually dead in his sins by nature. But from that point on his reason took over. He reasoned that if God wanted everyone to be saved all would be saved. But since some continue to reject the Gospel it must be that God did not want everyone to be saved. Therefore Calvin concluded: God elected some people to be saved and God elected some people to be damned. But the Lord makes it very clear that he desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (I Tim. 2:4)

It followed that, if God didn't intend for all to be saved, then Jesus only died for those that God had chosen to be saved. But we know that "God so loved the WORLD that He gave His only-begotten Son...." We know that "God was in Christ reconciling the WORLD to Himself...." (Jn. 3:16, 2 Cor. 5:19).

Logically, it also followed for the Calvinist that when one comes to faith one cannot ever fall away. And so the saying was developed: "Once saved, always saved." However, the Lord sees fit to warn His believers: "Hold



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fast what you have, that no one may take your crown" (Rev. 3:11).

Furthermore, to Calvin it was totally illogical that the Lord's Supper and Holy Baptism were more than mere symbols of God's love. To the Calvinist the Sacraments were not means of grace through which God blesses us with forgiveness and life.

Yet, the Lord makes it crystal clear in His Word: "...Be baptized and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16). "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28).

And so, the elements of the deformation continued to grow.

*(to be continued)*

*From October 1962—*

## **PROFILES IN CHURCH HISTORY: Luther and Erasmus.**

No study brings us closer to the heart of things in the Reformation than that of the dealings between Luther (1483-1546) and Erasmus. Erasmus (1464-1536) was the greatest of the Humanists. (*Please see Editor's Note*)

### **The Humanists**

The Humanists were learned scholars. They studied the great human achievements of ancient Greece and Rome and other civilizations. These products of the human mind were found in the classical literature, rhetoric, poetry and philosophy of the ancient world. They are often called the humanities. To study the humanities the Humanists acquainted themselves with the languages in which they were written, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.

The Humanists appeared at the end of the Dark Ages, sometimes called the Middle Ages, because they lie between ancient and modern times. In the Dark Ages there was in general little education and learning and much ignorance and superstition among the people. This was true also in the church, where not only great

corruption but also much ignorance was found. The priests knew no ancient language except the Latin of the church. The Bible was unknown to many, among them prominent men. It was used little, if at all, and then very crudely with forced arguments to uphold biased prejudices. The Humanists became a mighty force in a rebirth of learning and culture just before the Reformation. They attacked and exposed ignorance and corruption in the church and otherwise.

Erasmus (Gerhard Gerhardson) and other Humanists proclaimed their higher culture by exchanging their native names for Greek or Latin names. Luther did so too for a short time in 1518. He changed his real name Luder to the Greek Eleutherios meaning free, liberal and delivering. He returned to his real name in all but the *th*. So Luder became Luther and we are Lutherans and not Luderans. All this is because Luther was at one time greatly attracted by Humanism notably in these three points: 1) Its study of the languages especially the Hebrew and Greek from which Luther translated the Bible. 2) Its attacks on the ignorance and corruption found in the church. 3) Its exposure of the crude way religious questions were

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**Editor's Note:** What was termed Humanism in the Middle Ages (well defined by the author in his following words) is not to be confused with what we in the twentieth century have come to know as "secular humanism." For the most part the Humanists did not have as their aim, as do secular humanists in our day, the eradication of (deistic) religion—of any belief in a god. However, what Humanism and secular humanism can ultimately be shown to have in common is a dependence upon human wisdom and reason rather than upon written revelation (the divinely-inspired Word of God).

As both this article and Pastor Redlin's on "Seeds of Deformation" (elsewhere in this issue) bring out, all false teachings in the church can finally be traced back to the humanistic influence—whether of the 16th or 20th century variety. And because of all this, concerned Lutheran Christians should indeed "know where we stand and why" as Eckert, known in his day as a Luther scholar, writes.

We felt the article deserved reprinting in full for it gives a profile in church history which is as timely today as it was a generation ago.



often argued, sometimes with little purpose and sometimes merely to support the cut and dried position of the Church based on tradition, the writings of the fathers, decrees of councils, and papal edicts.

### **Praise of Folly**

In this let us hear the greatest of Humanists, Erasmus, speak in his widely read satire *Praise of Folly* which appeared in 27 editions beginning in 1509. It ridicules theologians “who spend all their time discussing such absurdities as whether God could have redeemed men in the form of a woman, a devil, an ass, a squash, or a stone.” It calls the monks and priests “these folks, whose greatest pleasure is in relating miracles and listening to marvellous lies, making use of them in an especial manner to beguile the dullness of others and fill their own purses.” It speaks of the bishops “who run more after gold than after souls and think they have done enough for Jesus Christ, when they take their seats complacently, with theatrical pomp like Holy Fathers, to whom adoration belongs, with blessings or anathemas.” But its most scathing denunciation touches popedom itself and the popes. Of them it says: “Can there be any greater enemies of the Church than these unholy pontiffs, who by their silence allow Jesus Christ to be forgotten; who bind Him by their mercenary regulations; who falsify His doctrine by forced interpretations, and crucify Him a second time by their scandalous lives.” Naturally Erasmus looked on Luther with favor. Well known is his statement: “Luther has touched the

## Looking Back in the *Lutheran Spokesman*

crown of the Pope and the bellies of the priests.”

### **Luther Admires Erasmus**

Luther in turn at first all but worshiped Erasmus. In a letter to him in 1514 he calls Erasmus his crown and his hope and humbly asks to be acknowledged by him as his little brother in Christ. At another time he says: “I greatly esteem Erasmus, accord him high praise, and know very well that he is indeed a great man, yes, realize that much better than those uncouth asses (groben Esel) the priests, monks, and papists who have it only from hearsay. I understand full well that God has endowed Erasmus above all others with an especial measure of talents in teaching, arts, languages, writing, and speaking” (translated from Walch, XVIII, 2051).

This expressed an admiration which could not long endure; for there was a great difference between what Humanism stood for and what a sound scriptural position required. Of this Luther was not fully aware at first. Humanism only skimmed the surface with its criticism and satire of deplorable conditions in the church. But much more was required than mere outward removal of ignorance, corruption, and scandalous abuses. The question was whether salvation depended in whole or in part at any point on human merit and human will

and effort. The Humanist would extol merit, will, and effort, and support his position with human reasoning. The Bible gives all glory to God and bids us accept this by faith, subjecting our human reason to it. So a mighty clash between Luther and Humanism was

immanent, in the difference that still is found between the truth and every humanistic error be it Roman, Calvinistic, Reformed or neo-Lutheran. In all this we should know where we stand and why. (Otto J. Eckert)



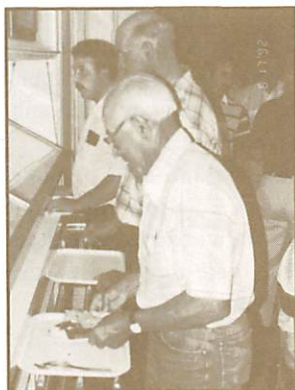
## The Convention Feeds The Soul...



One Half Of The Convention Floor



One Half Of Noon Food Line



## ...And The Body.

Left: Convention Cooks, Ethel Dorow & Walt Priebe.

## Women's Fellowship Day, June 17, 1992

With the theme "Healthy Living" and the words of Third John 2, "Dear friends, I pray that you may enjoy good health..." (NIV), about 165 women from the Carolinas to California met at Messiah Church, Eau Claire for their fourth biennial gathering.

Following the luncheon, emcee Beth Kranz introduced the speakers and their subjects: Virginia Carstensen: "Fitness for Life—the Benefits of Exercise"; Laurie Marzofka: "Mental Health for the Christian Woman"; Ruth Gullerud: "Faith-Healing Approaches to Those with Special Needs"; and Ruth Ahrens: "Your Best Protection—Early

Detection". A special guest speaker was Barbara Gurgel, wife of Pastor Paul Gurgel, the missionary to Nigeria. She talked about the native women, their dress and work, and of the pervasive problems of malaria and health-related conditions.

Displays were exhibited including craft items made by individuals or groups of women, and memorabilia of the 125th anniversary of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota. A three-part choir of about thirty voices sang the hymn, "Heavenly Father, Care for Me", the words and music written by Eileen Stangeland of St. Matthew's, Dallas.

Marilyn Greening made a videotape of the Women's Fellowship Day activities. Persons interested in buying a copy may order from her at 2008 E. 22nd St., Cheyenne, WY 82001. The cost is \$6.00 which includes postage.

Taking advantage of convention-time presence of many persons on the staff of the publication, WOMEN IN FELLOWSHIP, including its advisor, Pastor Norbert Reim, several met to

discuss editorial, production and distribution matters. Other interested women including the contact women (those who distribute the paper in their congregations) participated.

Five women volunteered to plan the 1994 Women's Fellowship Day, so we look forward to another occasion to celebrate that blessed tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.

—Lois Mackensen

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*"Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprovee to an obedient ear" (Prov. 25:12).*

## Gems From Proverbs

A celebrated singer once came to a small town to give a recital at the local college. The voice teacher at the college asked if she would give a master class for his students. The singer agreed. But when the time came for the class the singer was rather hard on the students, who had not been very well trained. The voice teacher was highly insulted and left the class in a huff. He was willing for his students to be criticized, but did not want the criticism to reflect on his teaching.

How hard it is to accept criticism! When we are criticized for almost anything our reflex is to be defensive. Even when we manage to take it gracefully, often we are still wounded inside and may brood long about it.

Yet it is foolish to react this way, especially to constructive criticism which can be very helpful. It can give us valuable information about ourselves, pointing out traits and habits which need to be changed.

Our proverb speaks highly of criticism, comparing it to an "earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold" when it comes from a "wise reprovee." This is not the unkind and unfair criticism of an enemy, but the well-intended criticism of a wise friend. Such criticism should not be taken as a slap in the face when it falls on our ears. Rather it should be taken as something of value, to be kept and treasured and used, as one would treat a gift of fine jewelry.

If we should listen to the criticism of a wise friend, how much should we not listen to "criticism" from God? God's Word is profitable for reproof and correction (2 Tim. 3:16). In the Bible God reprovee and corrects us with His holy law.

This correction, like criticism, is hard to take; it's a blow to our pride. Human criticism may strike at one or another faults or failings. But God's law tells us that according to the human nature there is nothing good in us, nothing acceptable to Him (Rom. 7:18). Human criticism usually deals with words and deeds, but God's law

uncovers the evil of the human heart. Or we may be willing to admit in principle that we are sinners, yet stubbornly persist in a favorite sin and become angry and defensive when we are rebuked for it.

But as hard and unpleasant as it is to hear God's criticism, it is necessary to our spiritual health that we both hear and humbly accept it. For God is the wisest and kindest of reprovers. He shows us what we are so that we may have no illusions about

ourselves. He reveals our sin in all its ugliness so that we may repent of it daily and look to Jesus for the pardon and cleansing that we have in His blood.

When we remember what our God intends for us with His criticism, it will be to us as an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold. Not something to be despised and thrown away, but something to be kept, treasured, and used.

—John Klatt

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*What Is This Thing Called Love?* (Pastor Sydow continues his study of I Cor. 13)

## LOVE IS NOT RUDE

"Elbows off the table." "Don't slurp the soup." "Use a napkin, not your sleeve." "Don't pick your nose." Nope. These are not Bible passages. But manners must have some relative importance judging from all the time and insistence parents use to improve their own and their children's special graces.

The Lord is non-committal about the specifics of etiquette. He doesn't comment about using the right fork at a banquet, or even using silverware at all. He didn't mention anything about the correct color dress gloves to wear to a mid-October wedding.

But the Lord is interested in His people being a well-mannered bunch. He does have something to say about the general attitude we should have in our social contacts.

The situation in Corinth had deteriorated so much that congregational behavior no longer reflected the glories of Christ's atoning death on the cross. Worship

was shambles. Arguments about a person's favorite pastor disturbed the unity. Paul's solution to these and the rest of their congregational problems was rather simple. He would show them a "more excellent way": LOVE.

This is a special kind of love that features self-sacrifice at its core and by an act of will expresses its concern for other people. It displays an interest in other people's welfare. It is love as demonstrated and lived by Jesus Christ, who offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice to take away the sins of the world. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

It is Jesus who said: "Love as I have loved you." One of the characteristics of this very special love: it is not *rude* (I Cor. 13:5). The word in the original means "without form" or "deformed," even "bent out of shape"—although that particular phrase today usually refers to the

inappropriate reaction of people who don't get their own way or who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The apostle Paul urges the Corinthians and us to tap the resources of God's love in Christ for attentive application to the problems of Christian lives. Love does not act unseemly, is not rude, crude, uncouth, barbarous, unrefined, or rough. To be such would show a lack of concern about the ease and welfare of others. A Christian does not make his fellowman uneasy by rude behavior.

People who are rude exhibit a self-centeredness coupled with sinful pride. They regard themselves more highly than they ought. They think they are better than others and don't care much whether they run slipshod over the feelings of other people.

If we do not have the love to treat one another without being rude, then no matter how right we otherwise think we are, we're wrong. That includes bosses and supervisors talking with their subordinates. It affects the communications of parents and children and of spouses with one another. Contrary to common belief, it is not okay to say absolutely anything one wants any way he wants.

From time to time we do talk about "sanctified tact." It is the ability to make others feel comfortable in our presence with what we say and do, even in trying to persuade them to a particular point of view. The ups and downs of our pilgrimage are already perilous enough without having to put up with rudeness from those who claim the rescue from sin through faith in Jesus.

—M. Sydow

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*On Recent Comments by Synod Presidents—*

## CAREFUL WITH ADJECTIVES

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod convention was held in July in Pittsburgh. Dr. Alvin Barry, who was president of the synod's Iowa District East and who was hailed as a "conservative," was elected president of the 2.6 million member church body. The election came on the fourth ballot by the narrowest of margins (580-568). Defeated was the "moderate" incumbent, Dr. Ralph Bohlmann.

The synod's conservatives feel that they have won another battle (in what we have previously labeled Missouri's Civil War). Time will tell how much

Barry's leadership will be allowed to influence the synod's course in a number of doctrinally sensitive areas. That this will not be easy seems evident from the fact that all five of the synod's vice presidents generally supportive of Bohlmann's practices were reelected to office. Will they—how will they—work together?

As one report put it: "the razor-close election revealed divisions in the church." Barry has acknowledged this but promises to "sit down and talk with" those who opposed him, and to avoid what he calls a "hatchet approach." We wish the new president

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As for Missouri, we have our own viewpoint. It was not long after the days of the *Brief Statement* that the one-time glory of that synod began to depart. Her very strength became her weakness. Apparently forgetting that in the Church weakness is strength, she began to trust in her accomplishments more than in the clear Word of her Lord.

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and his supporters well. But we do so with a warning supported by many scripture passages: false teachers are always happy to sit down and talk and thus have audience for their good words and fair speeches. Please note those adjectives (used by the Holy Spirit in Romans 16:18). How misleading “good” words and how deceptive “fair” speeches can be.

#### “Great” And “Glorious”

We came across Dr. Barry’s (printed and, we admit, abbreviated) Acceptance Address to the Pittsburgh delegates. In it he gives his reactions to two books he had recently read reviewing the synod’s history. In his remarks he speaks of Missouri as “...a great and glorious church...”, and “...this great church body...”

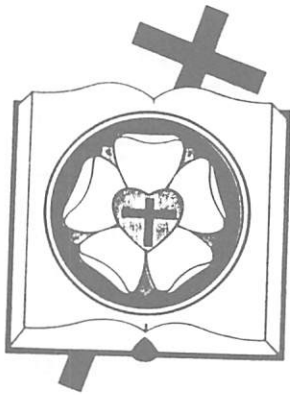
Adjectives. Verbal modifiers. We would suggest here that they be used cautiously. Dr. Barry indeed gives praise and credit to God for making his church “great and glorious.” But when the subject under discussion is “church” or “church body” it seems we would be well-advised to note how the Spirit, the Architect of God’s Church, uses them.

We looked up *glorious* in a concordance. We found that in its biblical usage it is used most often to describe the Lord God, His Name, or that Church which is Christ’s Body, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints: “there (in Zion)

the glorious Lord will be...” (Is. 33:21); “He (the Lord) has triumphed gloriously...Who is like You, glorious in holiness...?” (Ex. 15:1 &11); “You (Lord) are more glorious and excellent than the mountains...” (Ps. 76:4); “...His work is honorable and glorious...” (Ps. 111:3); “The Lord will cause His glorious voice to be heard...” (Is. 30:30); “Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God!” (Ps. 87:3).

In the New Testament the word *glorious* is used to describe the many works done by Christ during His earthly mission (Lk. 13:17); the liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:21); the gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4, 1 Tim. 1:11); the resurrection body of Christ, and that of His believers (Phil. 3:21); God’s power in the believer’s life (Col. 1:11); Christ’s Second Coming (Tit. 2:13); and, finally, most pertinent to our point, “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

We are not surprised when we hear those associated with the Roman Catholic Church proclaim it great and glorious. But heirs of Luther, we think, will want to keep in mind how



only that Church is truly glorious which is Christ's Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints. It alone, after all, is without spot and blemish. No visible church is either "glorious" or even "great" apart from what the believers within it possess by virtue of God's Word and grace and their faith-relationship to Him who is the Church's one foundation.

### Some Missouri History

The history of the Missouri Synod has much that is worthy of high commendation. In the late 19th century under the leadership of Dr. C. F. W. Walther ("the American Luther") that synod fathered orthodox and confessional Lutheranism in this country. It was the original staunch Big Brother to the Wisconsin Synod and the ELS in the halcyon days of the (now defunct) Synodical Conference. The Wisconsin Synod—and thus indirectly the CLC—traces its confessional heritage back to Missouri. In those early years, largely through the Lutheran Hour radio program, no branch of Lutheranism did more in the area of gospel outreach. It was "Walther's Missouri" to whom credit must go for producing

and promoting much biblical and soundly Lutheran theology, including the *Brief Statement* of 1932, now a public confession of our CLC.

Does this and even more good history merit the description of Missouri, or any church body for that matter, as "great" or even "glorious"? If so, in whose judgment? If so, what purpose is served? At best such judgments are highly subjective. At worst they encourage a dangerous synodical pride. The ultimate Judge of all "holds the (churches) in His right hand" (Rev. 2:2). He says to each of His churches in Revelation 2 & 3: "I know thy works...." Should that not be enough for us?

As for Missouri, we have our own viewpoint. It was not long after the days of the *Brief Statement* that the one-time glory of that synod began to depart. Her very strength became her weakness. Apparently forgetting that in the Church weakness is strength (2 Cor. 12:10), she began to trust in her accomplishments more than in the clear Word of her Lord. In the early 1950's the overtures of a Common Confession with the old American Lutheran Church were too much to withstand. Under the assault of the alluring good words and fair speeches of liberalism without, and—as the leaven was allowed to work within—of some of her own, Missouri's staunch confessional dike began to spring leak after leak after leak. There seemed to be a reprieve when, in 1974, there was an exodus of liberals (Dr. Tietjen and his "seminex" followers who formed a new church body, which eventually became part of the ELCA). But time revealed many liberals remained. Over the last



twenty years even the national religious newswires have picked up on the on-going struggles of Missouri's civil war. One of the saddest battles under Bohlmann's administration was the "disciplining" of the *conservative* Seminary president, Dr. Robert Preus (who after appeal has now been reinstated).

In other words, the divisions which Dr. Barry inherits and recognizes in 1992 have been of long standing. Will discipline of false teachers be forthcoming, albeit evangelically and not a "hatchet job"? The attitude which the new president perpetuated in his "great" and "glorious" inaugural address (he added: "we are Missouri and we are proud of it...") does not bode well. There exists the strange idea (strange surely to Walther and Missouri's other confessional forefathers) that allegiance to a visible church body often has precedence over allegiance to the clear teachings of God's Word (this is not our assessment alone but one leveled by some conservatives within the synod). It is this synodical pride—we have come to call it "synoditis"—which has over the last 50 years made the practice of disciplining false teachers within Missouri next to impossible.

#### **Our Glorious Gospel Ministry**

In our day when words are under such strain and speakers feel forced to use superlative phrases to make a

point, let's be careful with the adjectives. The Holy Christian Church is glorious. Its Lord is glorious and greatly to be praised. The Gospel is glorious. And every earthly ministry standing on that Gospel is great and glorious. That should be enough for us.

In addressing our CLC convention this summer, our synod president said: "It seems that the life of a confessionally evangelical church is about 75-100 years (as it was in Missouri—PGF). If those numbers are correct, the Church of the Lutheran Confession is about one-third of the way to becoming part of the problem rather than being part of God's solution to the problem of apostasy, and therefore a contributor to the evil that is ripening the world for judgment..."

That, to us, is a far healthier spiritual attitude. That, to us, is a far healthier description of a church body. Such a self-indictment indicates that, by itself and apart from its Lord and His pure Word, any church or church body knows it is "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." Recognizing its spots and blemishes, a church will be more inclined to heed the counsel of its Head: "...buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;

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**Surely there is nothing we would presume to call great or glorious about the CLC....Nothing but that which was the theme of our convention and must be and remain the theme of our individual and collective lives: OUR SACRED TRUST—OUR GLORIOUS GOSPEL MINISTRY.**

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## Luther on the Church\*

*Those are called the Christian Church who believe on Christ and who want to be saved through Him, not through their works or merit. And what the Holy Spirit tells them He tells all Christians, wherever they are....It is impossible to bring the Christian Church together at one place; rather it is scattered throughout the world. It believes as I believe, and I believe as it believes. No difference or inequality of faith exists between us. All of us believe one Christian Church. Outside this church everything amounts to nothing. So I believe. About this faith the controversy arises. (p. 257)*

*The only mark of the Christian Church is following and obeying the Word. When that is gone, let men boast as much as they please: Church! Church! There is nothing to their boasting anyway. Therefore you should say: Do the people have the Word of God, there is the church of God, though it be in a cow stable, the place where Christ was born. (p. 264)*

*The true treasure of the church is the holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God. (p. 276)*

*Great numbers do not make the church....We must look to the Word alone and judge on the basis of that. For only those who embrace the Word are the ones who will be as immovable forever as Mount Zion (Ps. 125:1), even though they are few in number and very contemptible in the eyes of the world....Those who keep the Word, as did Noah and his family, are the church, even though they be very few in number, only eight souls. (p. 287)*

(\*All page references are to Volume I of *What Luther Says*.)

and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see" (Rev. 3:17f).

Surely there is nothing we would presume to call great or glorious about the CLC—not its confessionalism, not its orthodoxy, not its size, outreach, or educational endeavors, nothing in its history, nothing. Nothing but God's Gospel. Nothing but that which was the theme of our convention and must be and remain the theme of our individual and collective lives: OUR SACRED TRUST—OUR GLORIOUS GOSPEL MINISTRY.

Our CLC President also said: "...If history repeats itself among us, some

of the younger pastors among us, and most certainly those coming out of the seminary the next few years will be presiding over the demise of our confessionally evangelical church body. May the Lord of the Church graciously prevent it!..." Then in many words he, and the essayists to follow, encouraged appreciation for God's great and glorious Gospel of reconciliation through Jesus' atoning blood.

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Your name give glory, because of Your mercy, and because of Your truth" (Ps. 115:1).

—Paul Fleischer

*Witnessing to those who are...*

## Looking In All The Wrong Places

There were those on the Areopagus who sought the answers to life in their philosophy, speculation, and reasoning (see Acts 17). It was clear on that mount that they contemplated the products of the human mind. But for those who seek to justify themselves in our Lord's day or in ours, they appeal to God for their work-righteousness. They would use the ten commandments, which they say God gave as the means for reward after this life.

That was the approach of this rich young ruler: "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" To us this is so pathetic. Yet it is the way of the prestigious lodges today, and not just an aberration of the Jews of Jesus' day. This "works religion" is also basic to the largest visible Christian church, the church of the Antichrist. Even among numerous Protestant denominations this religion has established a beachhead.

The Lord is gentle with this fellow. The man is looking for the answer to the question and not just trying to test Jesus or trip Him up. When Jesus refers him to the commandments, the ruler states that he has kept them. Jesus does not then point out that he has not, but moves on to a requirement that would show whether the man really wanted eternal life. "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Oh, oh! Where

your treasure is there will your heart be also. The man went away sorrowing because he had great possessions.

The immense wealth and prosperity of our society is both blessing and curse. We Christians have more to give for the Lord's work. The technology of our society can be harnessed for His purposes. But for so very many wealth is a trap. They fall in hook, line, and sinker. To this materialist we want to speak.

When we do we must make a clear dichotomy: between Christ ruling the life or mammon dictating in effect disaster; between eternal life or eternal death; between forgiveness from above or work-righteousness from man. We don't want to mince words so that one can get the wrong idea, so as to serve Christ and mammon. We shouldn't be daunted if our prospect goes away sorrowing. Conversion can yet happen by the power of God.

We may offer the opportunity for the prospect to decide before us. He doesn't have to. But why not give him the chance? We may have been overly cautious in this due to the error of the Reformed with their "decision theology." At least we want to leave the prospect with the idea that it is either/or.

There are so many passages warning us against materialism. Lay not up...the camel and the eye of a needle...into temptation, into a snare....

To the rich ruler's original work-righteous question of "What good deed must I do...?" we also have an ample supply of passages. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...there's none that does good...by works of the Law shall no one be saved.

Jesus sought to show the man that his own righteousness was not so perfect as he thought, because he would not "do good" by giving up his wealth and following the Teacher.

—D. Koenig

### Installations

With the knowledge of President Fleischer, I installed Renee Wuerch as Kindergarten teacher and Janelle Hein as 5th and 6th grade afternoon teacher at Messiah Lutheran School at Eau Claire, WI on August 23, 1992.

—Paul M. Tiefel

As authorized by Pres. Daniel Fleischer, the undersigned installed Deborah Johannes as teacher in the primary room, and Rhoda Eserhut as part-time teacher, in Luther Memorial Christian Day School of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin on August 16, 1992.

—John H. Johannes

On Sunday, August 23rd, and with the authorization of CLC President Pastor Dan Fleischer, I installed Marie Olmanson as a teacher on the faculty of Faith Lutheran School, Markesan, Wisconsin.

—Mike Sydow, Pastor

As authorized by President Daniel Fleischer, the undersigned installed Lane Fischer as teacher at Immanuel Lutheran Grade School of Mankato, Minnesota, on August 30, 1992.

—Pastor Douglas Libby

### Joint Reformation Service

Date: Sunday, Nov. 1, 1992

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Place: Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato Minnesota

—Rick R. Grams, Conf. Sec'y

Nikki Lillquist  
Star Rt, Box 60  
Mansfield, WA 98830

### toral Conference

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Church, Fridley

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- \* N.T. Exegesis of Jude—Wayne Mielke
- \* Isagogical Study of Daniel—John Pfeiffer
- \* Putting Our Liturgy Into Contemporary Language—Keith Olmanson
- \* A Study of the Davidic Messianic Prophecies—Rick Grams
- \* What is the Property of Christ?—David Naumann
- \* What is the Meaning of Self-Love in Mt. 22:39 (cf. Lev. 19:18) & Eph. 5:28 & 33—David Schierenbeck
- \* Ministering to the Family of a Suicide Victim—L.D. Redlin

—Rick R. Grams, Secretary

### Change Of Address

Pastor Bruce Naumann  
1264 Oak Creek Way  
Sunnyvale, CA 94089  
Phone (408) 733-0690

### Invitation

Who and Where: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Hwy 37 and Pine Street, Hecla, SD.  
What: 30th Anniversary, 1962-1992 (this special service will also serve as our Mission Festival and organ dedication).

When: November 8, 1992

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Pastor Walter Schaller (former pastor of Prince of Peace)

Other: A potluck meal and fellowship will follow in the church basement

—Pastor Paul Krause