

Lutheran Spokesman

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**Praise the Lord,
praise the name of the
Lord; praise Him, you
servants of the Lord**

Psalm 135:1



Church of the Lutheran Confession

CONFIRMANDS AIM HIGH

“*Aim High*” is the brief recruiting motto of the United States Air Force. It may be simple, but it’s also effective. In two short words it communicates to young people the idea that membership in the Air Force is something special — something to be aspired to, something that’s worth working hard to attain.

As spring turns to summer, we are reminded that there is an even higher goal to be aspired to. In the rite of Confirmation, which traditionally takes place around this time of year, we give our attention to a group of young people who might even more appropriately adopt the motto: “*Aim High*” — *our Lutheran confirmands*.

The rite of Confirmation is neither divinely instituted nor commanded in Scripture. Martin Luther correctly rejected the Roman Catholic notion of Confirmation as a sacrament. Still, we confessional Lutherans have historically seen the rite of Confirmation as a good and pious

tradition, worthy of continued practice in our churches.

And it may be that our world of the 90’s, especially, needs this tradition — that this generation in particular needs to hear what our Lutheran confirmands have to say. These are confirmands who are *really* aiming high!

Consider:

*In a world of relative values and situation ethics, our confirmands aim higher. They confess their adherence to the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God, and the only source and norm for Christian life. To Pilate’s age-old question, “What is truth?” they boldly answer, “God’s Word is truth!”

*In a world of easy spirituality, “feel good” religion and shallow emotionalism, our confirmands aim higher. They witness the value of prolonged and careful study in the doctrines of the Bible. Months and months of classes result in young people who are well-grounded in the

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truths of God's Word, and well-prepared to "give a defense to everyone who asks them a reason for the hope that is in them" (cf. I Pet. 3:15).

*In a world where ecumenism casually abandons one Bible teaching after another for the sake of "unity," our confirmands aim higher. They witness a faith that takes seriously Christ's command: "...teaching them to observe ALL things that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:20).

*In a world where the precious doctrine of the Lord's Supper is hopelessly (and dangerously) misunderstood, even by the vast majority of so-called "Christians," our confirmands aim higher. They have been carefully prepared to partake of the Sacrament in a worthy manner — consciously discerning the real presence of Christ's body and blood, and trusting steadfastly in His promise: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins."

*In a world where religion is becoming increasingly secularized — where the "social gospel" is preached from mainline pulpits, teaching church-goers that civil rights and political reform constitute the whole

mission of the Church — our confirmands aim higher. They carry into the world a different way of salvation: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn. 17:3).

*Finally, in our footloose world of the 90's, where responsibility and commitment of every kind is shunned, our confirmands aim higher. They publicly express their solemn commitment to continue steadfast, with the help of God, in the confession of this true Scriptural faith, and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it.

What a goal to set for one's life! What a good confession to make, especially as a Christian stands on the threshold of young adulthood.

But isn't it, after all, the same confession we all share? As we witness the rite of Confirmation again this year, let's join our young people in recommitting ourselves to the Savior whose blood has bought heaven for us, and to the faith which He has taught us in His Word.

This, certainly, is "aiming high"!

—Pastor Paul Naumann



BAPTISM AND SELF-ESTEEM

An important word in education journals and child psychology textbooks in recent years is self-esteem. Experts pinpoint a "lack of self-esteem" as the cause of a wide variety of problems in today's youth. They say children need positive reinforcement to give them a feeling of self-worth. Without this reinforcement children will feel poorly about

themselves and will not perform to the level of their abilities. Some even go so far as to say that educators and

parents who discipline or correct their students or children risk damaging a child's self-esteem. Others say that the

BAPTISM

concepts of sin and guilt should not be inculcated in children because these concepts can make children feel poorly about themselves.

I agree that children who feel good about themselves will lead happier and more productive lives than those who deem themselves worthless. I disagree, however, on how to teach children self-worth. It is only through a proper relationship with God that children can feel good about themselves.

One way to communicate to children God's love for them is to instruct them on the marvelous Sacrament of baptism. Baptism can show children that despite their unworthiness, God chose them to be His special children.

Ever since the fall of Adam children have been conceived and born in sin. Although they may look pure and innocent, their hearts are full of sin. But through the miracle of baptism, God works through His Word to create faith in the hearts of children. Through baptism God also forgives children their original sin and makes them His children. "For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27).

So what does baptism have to do with a child's self-esteem? First, for the child who feels he doesn't fit in, knowledge of his baptism can give him a sense of belonging. Oftentimes,

a child's self-image is based on his being accepted into a peer group. A child may also be from a broken home and need to feel that he is part of a family. As a parent or teacher, we can assure this child that since his baptism he has become part of God's family, and that no child can possibly have a more caring or understanding Father. Encourage this child to build a strong relationship with his heavenly Father through prayer and Bible study.

Second, for the child who feels poorly about himself because of his guilt, his baptism can give him the assurance of forgiveness. Guilt is not an unhealthy feeling that parents and teachers should try to prevent children from feeling. Rather, guilt is a good sign of an active and working conscience. We do not, however, want a child to feel guilty forever, or feel that there is no remedy for his guilt. We can assure a child that the same God who forgave his sins at his baptism, and brought him to faith in Christ, his Savior, will also forgive the sins he commits daily.

Finally, instruction in baptism can teach children that their worth is not based on anything that they have done or can do, but on what God has done and will do for them. There is no finer example of grace than God creating faith in a helpless, sinful infant. Let us diligently teach our children about their loving Father in heaven and their worth in His eyes.

—Teacher Joseph Lau

“Cease listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge” (Prov. 19:27).

Confirmation Day! It is a very important day in the life of our young people. On that day they confess their faith and promise their allegiance to God. They become communicant members of the congregation.

The excitement of the day often seems to overshadow the importance of the years of preparation which lead up to confirmation — the hours of instruction and study. Forgotten too in many cases, it seems, is the truth that confirmation is not a goal in itself. It is just one step.

Tragically some young people seem to look upon their day of confirmation as a kind of liberation day. They feel that they know enough and need no more learning from the Bible. It is to anyone who has such an idea that our proverb speaks.

Setting aside the Bible and the Catechism after confirmation is like planting a garden and then walking away from it. The garden needs much work before the harvest is brought in. Likewise there is much need for continuing instruction from God's Word before a person reaches the goal of eternal life.

Ceasing to listen to this instruction is to stray from the words of knowledge. That is serious. The words are God's words. They are truth. They tell of the way to eternal life. They tell

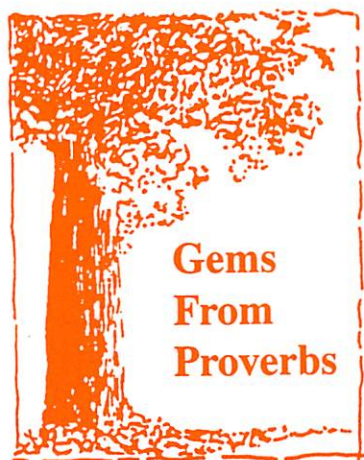
of Jesus who has opened the way and is “the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:6).

Jesus says: “The words that I speak to you...are life” (Jn. 6:63). In regard to the gospel, the apostle Paul exhorts the Philippians: “Hold fast the word of life” (Phil. 2:16).

To cease listening to that instruction is to lose the truth. It is only a matter of time until that happens. With the truth lost, a person necessarily strays into misbelief or unbelief. It is not maybe — the proverb says “will”! And those who stray from the narrow way of salvation will find themselves on the broad way to destruction.

Continue to listen! Be instructed in God's words so that you also may “hold fast the word of life.” That is the proverb's advice for every confirmand, present and past.

—*Pastor Keith Olmanson*





“To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).

Our Ascended King Lives and Reigns

Jesus paid the price for the sins of the world once for all when He died at the cross as God’s perfect sacrifice. At the cross Jesus triumphantly cried out “It is finished.” God’s work of redemption was complete. Jesus accomplished what He had come to earth to do. God then declared the acceptance of Jesus’ sacrifice by raising Him from the dead. “Jesus was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (Rom. 4:25).

Jesus Instructs His Disciples

After His resurrection Jesus remained on earth for forty days before He ascended in glory to the right hand of the Father. The book of Acts tells us that Jesus remained on earth for forty days for two purposes. The first was to prove with indisputable evidence that He really was alive. The second was to instruct His

disciples about the nature of the kingdom of God which He had established by His death and resurrection. Jesus was speaking to His disciples about “things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”

The disciples needed this patient instruction. They were filled with the false Jewish ideas of a Messiah who would establish an earthly kingdom.

The mother of James and John begged Jesus that her two sons be allowed to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus in the glory of His kingdom. The disciples saw the divine power of Jesus and were eagerly waiting for Him to drive out the Romans and establish the Jewish kingdom of God. They did not understand the true nature of Jesus' kingdom. Even after Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples still asked: "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) Jesus needed to instruct His disciples about the Kingdom of God and prepare His disciples for service in that kingdom.

Jesus had told Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world." Jesus' kingdom is the spiritual rule of the Gospel in the hearts of men through the forgiveness of sins. Jesus established His kingdom when He suffered and died for the sins of the world. At that point Satan's kingdom was destroyed and people were freed from the tyranny of sin and death. Jesus' kingdom is an established fact. The ascension is assurance that Jesus reigns as the "head" of the body—the Church. Ascension Day is Jesus' coronation as "King of kings and Lord of lords." The Lamb that was slain now sits on the throne, rules, and receives the praise of angels and the creation.

Jesus Has Triumphed!

There are no new heresies. The same mistake that the Jews made in rejecting Jesus as their King because He came to give them the forgiveness of sins has been repeated throughout history. The Lutheran Confessions

“Our task is not to establish an earthly kingdom of God with machine guns and compounds in Texas. It is to be Jesus’ witnesses to the ends of the earth...through the preaching of the Word and the power of the Spirit.”

refer to the idea of Jesus returning to establish an earthly kingdom (millennialism) as a “Jewish” error. Today there are many who actually teach that Jesus was frustrated in His attempt to establish an earthly kingdom by the unbelief of the Jews. They view Jesus' death as an incomplete part of God's plan of salvation. The cross, they say, was a failure to establish the “kingdom of God.” So they look for Jesus to return and establish an earthly kingdom. These people fail to celebrate the joy of Ascension Day.

These false concepts about the kingdom of God lead to all kinds of weird ideas. David Koresh in Waco, Texas believes that he as Messiah is going to usher in the age of the true kingdom of God. He came out of a background of Seventh Day Adventism with its emphasis on the second coming of Jesus which supposedly happened in the mid-1800's. From a McLennan County Jail one of Koresh's followers confidently asserted that “David is here for saving souls and for ushering in the kingdom of God.” David Koresh believes that he will open the seventh seal of the book of Revelation and usher in a new kingdom age.

The book of Acts teaches us about the triumph of Jesus in connection with His ascension. Jesus lives and reigns. Our task is not to establish an earthly kingdom of God with machine guns and compounds in Texas. It is to be Jesus' witnesses to the ends of the earth. As Jesus' Gospel is proclaimed people are made members of the kingdom of God by Spirit-created faith. We pray that Jesus' kingdom would come to us through the preaching of the Word and the power of the Spirit.

Let us celebrate Ascension Day with a renewed and thankful insight

into the triumph of Jesus at the cross. God's power was revealed "when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23).

Jesus lives and reigns as our ascended King.

—Pastor John Schierenbeck



Christ, the Power of God and the Wisdom of God — Studies in I Corinthians

Chapter Four—

“The Generation That Forgot God”

That's the lead cover story from TIME magazine's first edition last month. It deals with the "Baby Boomer" generation.

While so-called mainline Protestant churches are shown to have lost members, those denominations and congregations grow which offer "...everything from self-help groups like Debtors Anonymous to a 'pet ministry' for adopting stray animals." Here's another: "Biblical truth is being edged out by the small and tawdry interest of the self in itself." It will always be so where success is

equated with numbers. But statements such as "560 million Catholics can't be wrong" are well tempered by statements such as that attributed to Luther, "One man and his Bible are a majority."

Paul continues in this fourth chapter in taking to task those intellectually arrogant people in Corinth who apparently ridiculed the simple Gospel of Christ crucified as unworthy of them. They could be tolerant of the sins of the time, especially if it gained them popular support.

Appointment

Upon the resignation of Pastor Mark Bohde from the Board of Missions, due to his accepting a call to Nigeria, Pastor Walter Schaller has been appointed to the Board.

—*Daniel Fleischer, President*

Wisconsin Delegate Conference

When: Begins at 1:00 p.m. (Eastern Daylight) on Monday, June 7; closes at 12:00 on Tuesday, June 8.

Where: Calvary Lutheran Church of Marquette, Michigan

Agenda: Study of 1993 Spring Coordinating Council Report

The Difference between the CLC and WELS/ELS

The Difference between the CLC and LCMS

The Difference between the CLC and ELCA

A Round Table Discussion on Evangelism

Announce: Please announce to the host pastor. The congregation requests your cooperation in announcing early enough for their preparations. For their meal and housing preparations please indicate your tentative time of arrival.

—*Pastor John Ude, Secretary*

West-Central Delegate Conference

Dates: June 8-10, 1993 beginning at 1:00 p.m. (CDT) on Tuesday, through 12 noon on Thursday.

Place: Trinity Lutheran Church, Watertown, SD

Agenda:

- 1) Devotional Study: Luke 15 — Pastor Paul Krause
- 2) Devotional Study: Psalm 103 — Mr. Floyd Snooze
- 3) Devotional Study: Matthew 18:15-17 — Mr. Leroy Greening
- 4) Furthering Lay Member Involvement in Church Work (Locally and Synodically) — Mr. Jonathan Wiechmann
- 5) The Lord's Supper as a Strength and Power in the Christian Life — Pastor Norman Greve
- 6) When is it Proper for an "Emergency" Baptism to be Performed? — Pastor Michael Wilke
- 7) The Relationship Between the Local Church and Its Synod — Mr. Marvin Hansen

Conference Chaplain: Pastor Michael Sprengeler

Conference Speaker: Pastor Warren Fanning
—*Pastor Steven Sippert, Secretary*

Pastor Paul Schaller
N. 4724 Wall
Spokane, WA 99205

Installation

On Sunday, March 28, 1993 I installed Paul Fleischer as pastor of Grace Ev. Lutheran Church, Sleepy Eye, Minn. Assisting in the rite of installation were Pastors Elton Hallauer, John Pfeiffer, and Keith Olmanson.

—*Pastor Daniel Fleischer, President*

Minnesota Delegate Conference

DATE: Sunday, June 13, beginning at 3:00 p.m.

PLACE: Salem Lutheran Church, Eagle Lake, Minnesota

AGENDA:

1. The Fifth Commandment in the Context of a "Right to Life." — Pastor Paul Fleischer
2. How to Involve Parents in the Spiritual Education of Their Children — Prof. Robert Rehm
3. Business Meeting.

—*Pastor Rick R. Grams, Secretary*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1993 GENERAL PASTORAL CONFERENCE

June 22-24, 1993
Immanuel Lutheran College
Time: 10:00 a.m.

Chaplain — Bruce Naumann

Communion Service Speaker — Paul D. Nolting

Liturgist — Paul Tiefel

Excuse Committee — Norman Greve, Michael Eichstadt, Theodore Barthels

Program Committee — David Reim, Michael Wilke, Robert List

Agenda:

- * New Testament Exegesis, Continuation of James — David Koenig
- * Old Testament Exegesis, Choice of exegete — Paul Naumann
- * Encouraging the Positive Aspects of Church Fellowship — James Albrecht
- * When Should the Counseling Pastor "refer"? (Scriptural and legal aspects)
— James Sandeen
- * Using Lay Ministry More Effectively — Douglas Libby
- * Ethics of Reaching Out to Dissatisfied Lutherans in Heterodox Church Bodies
(When might it become proselytizing?) — Stephen Kurtzahn
- * Word Study of Pertinent Passages regarding Women's Service to the Church
(I Timothy 2:12, I Corinthians 14:34-35) — David Lau
- * Pastoral Etiquette: The Conduct of a Pastor in the Exercise of His Ministry to the
Congregation — Walter Schaller

The Immanuel Lutheran College Schedule of Tour Choir Concerts

Sunday, May 9

Sunday, May 23

Monday, May 24

Monday, May 24

Wednesday, May 26

Thursday, May 27

Friday, May 28

Saturday, May 29

Tuesday, June 1

Wednesday, June 2

Saturday, June 5

Sunday, June 6

Berea; Inver Grove Heights, MN

Trinity; Watertown, SD

Redeemer; Bowdle, SD

St. Luke's; Lemmon, SD

Gethsemane; Spokane, WA

Trinity; Spokane, WA

St. John's; Clarkston, WA

Redemption; Lynnwood, WA

St. Stephen; Hayward, CA

St. Stephen, Mountain View, CA

Redeemer; Cheyenne, WY

Grace; Valentine, NE

Please contact the congregation for concert time.

—Prof. John Reim, Director

defenders of our country, teachers in our schools, and leaders in our society. However, if one recognizes homosexuality as a deep-seated mental sickness and/or overt moral perversion one will strenuously object to such people being considered as dependable, normal and trustworthy persons in our society.

The proper course, we believe, is to recognize homosexuality as a perversion of God's creation. Such people should be offered treatment. We as the disciples of Christ would offer them the counsel of God's Truth. The Lord has spoken in His Word. So, for us this matter is not a matter of civil rights but a matter of moral depravity. The following Scripture passage shows us that: *"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God"* (I Cor. 6:9-11). You see, the Lord is here pointing to sin which separates from God and His kingdom.

The question remains — What criteria does the military use in screening its volunteers? May it use morality as a basis for determining who may or may not serve? Actually, they do. One is discharged for being a convicted thief, a drunkard or drug addict. But the homosexual will respond by saying, "But these are things that people do. It is not who they are! We homosexuals can't help being what we are!" This is where we disagree also. We hear much about this attitude of homosexuals. Yes, we are convinced that since it is a moral perversion it can be dealt with and reversed as many studies have shown.

For our society to respect homosexuality as a normal "lifestyle" flies in the face of Scripture and all of nature. For further study you are encouraged to read: Romans 1:18-32 *"God gave them up to vile passions"*; Genesis 19:1-11 *"Do not do so wickedly"*; I Timothy 1:8-11 *"The law is...for the lawless"*.



Pastors' Study Club in Faulkton, SD at Leland Grams residence. The Pastors are (l-r): L. Bade, L. Grams, P. Krause, D. Fuerstenau, W. Fanning, T. Schuetze.

done. It does not keep score. The sins, foibles, and faults of others are not to rise to the surface, be a subject of conversation, or an excuse for a good “mad.” Our God has shown us a better way!

—Pastor Michael Sydow



The article below appeared in the February 14, 1993 bulletin of Immanuel of Mankato, Minn. The good counsel given this congregation on this timely issue is, we feel, worthy of a wider audience. The congregation is served by Pastor L. Dale Redlin (who wrote these words) and Pastor Douglas Libby.

HOMOSEXUALITY — LESBIANISM A Question Of Civil Rights or Morality

This matter has been brought before us recently by the decision of President Clinton to lift the ban on homosexuals and lesbians in the military. As a result, much has been said and written about the subject. Since we as the disciples of Christ are committed to the Scriptures as the Truth of God, and since the Scriptures speak with unmistakable clarity on the subject, we therefore believe it is good for us to review this matter for ourselves.

As I have listened to some of the rhetoric and read some of the print it would seem that much of the disagreement comes from the fact that the subject is viewed from two entirely different positions. These two primary positions, it seems, are *civil rights* on the one hand and *morality* on the other.

If one were to view it simply as a matter of civil rights one would be hard pressed to disagree with President Clinton's decision. For then it would be placed in the same category as the race question, women's rights, etc. And so it can be argued: the military has quite successfully dealt with racial prejudice. It is making progress in dealing with the question of women in the military. So, it is argued, homosexuality should be viewed in the same context.

But isn't this like comparing apples with oranges? The only common denominator here is that they are all people, just like apples and oranges are both fruit. Civil rights of an individual are obstructed when discrimination and/or prejudice occurs against someone, for example, because they were born with a different color skin, have a physical or mental handicap or are of a different gender or nationality.

One of the problems is that the homosexual community is determined to have itself listed among such as are above mentioned. Thus, they wish to label those in our society who find homosexuality unacceptable as bigots and prejudiced. We are told, "We are born like this. We can't help being what we are." Therefore, we are asked to accept them as normal and moral and their "lifestyle" acceptable in our society.

Now, once again, I suppose that if one sees this matter as nothing more than a matter of civil rights one would be inclined to find such people acceptable as

LOVE DOES NOT KEEP SCORE

Even our choice of words betrays our interest in avenging ourselves. People seem to need to “get even” or “even the score.” The mathematics of social balance are an equation rooted in sin and expressed in lovelessness. Less sinister are the imperatives of social obligation, “You owe me one.”

The Lord’s advice is: forgive and forget. There usually follows the knee-jerk analysis: we really can’t and don’t forget, do we? How many times have you had to hear the litany of another’s faults, especially a spouse’s irritations and indiscretions? Can we ever remember! We can keep score of other’s “sins against us” with perfect precision and recall.

The sinful human nature loves the mathematics of social balance. In children the spirit of retaliation is very much alive. You hit me, I hit you back. You yell at me, read my decibel meter. Adults do the same equations with subtler rules, yet equally as devastating.

The effort is born of selfishness...lovelessness. We keep score to make sure we are ahead of everyone else. Or at least even.

What if God kept score? From His point of view human beings are accumulating an uninterrupted and impossibly large debt. The equation is never equaling out. There are only sins. Sins of disregard and disrespect of God Himself, His name, and His Word. Sins of ignoring the needs and welfare of our neighbor.

All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless (Is. 40:17).

When God makes His accounting, there are only debits, all negatives, no one doing good, not even one (cf. Ps. 14:3). And there is a day of reckoning: sin “earns” and deserves death. Then everything has equaled out according to the divine mathematics.

Enter the great NEVERTHELESS. God exacted the deserved and necessary punishment on His Son, Jesus Christ, instead of on us. Jesus was “numbered with the transgressors,” precisely where we should have ended up (Mk. 15:28). Now there is a new reckoning.

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing (the reckoning word) their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19).

Now how are we to add things up?

Therefore we conclude (literally, “count,” “account,” or “reckon”) that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law (Rom. 3:28).

And in our relationships with one another love is to control and guide. Paul advises a congregation to let love rule for their worship and individual lives. Love “thinks no evil” (KJV); literally, love “does not reckon the evil” (I Cor. 13:5).

Since our God has chosen not to keep a record of our wrongs, should we do differently? True, spiritual love does not keep a record of wrongs

which is free of distressing worldly elements already mentioned, in which—in a unity of faith—prayers, devotions, and study of God’s Word can be carried out in a God-pleasing manner....(James Pelzl)

...In deserting the truth, Erasmus was “serving his own belly and by good words and fair speeches deceiving the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18). That applies not so much to any purely materialistic interest Erasmus may have had, but above all to his humanistic inclination. In it he was influenced by his own belly, that is, his humanistic tastes and appetites. So Erasmus became the pawn of the pope and the Judas of the Reformation. How many when put to the test have not, like he, betrayed the truth because of their human feelings and appetites, and fears for their security and position and standing among men? So lies go marching on, on the feet of those who love their bellies more than they love the truth. (Otto J. Eckert)

...The thinking world of today finds modern life quite complex and considers Scripture inadequate to meet its needs. In spite of amazing progress in the scientific field, and in spite of endless symposiums, seminars, workshops, surveys and research in the religious and moral field they have come with nothing. The problem is great, but the solution is not yet found.

In passing, at the risk of oversimplification, we venture to say that life is not quite so complex as men would make it. Reference to the complexity of life is an easy way out.

It becomes the scapegoat for all our aches and pains, doubts and difficulties, mistakes and errors. At a recent council meeting one of our laymen set matters straight on this point with words to the effect that at a given moment on a given question it isn’t so difficult to determine what is truth or error, right or wrong. We labor over decisions because other things intrude, financial security, position and prestige, social standing and public image.

It hardly need be said among us that to admit that Scripture becomes antiquated is to destroy it completely. We either have an eternal, unchangeable Word of God or we have no Word of God. To say that it is anything less than a word that “liveth and abideth forever,” is to deny what it claims for itself, an eternal truth which “shall not pass away.” Doctrinally speaking, therefore, we must rule out any suggestion that the true doctrines of Christianity are irrelevant for any age....

It isn’t the Bible, it isn’t true Christianity that is irrelevant to life. It’s just that men don’t want what it gives. The fault is not with God and his Word, but with men. And they are the losers, not only eternally, but here and now. When we were confirmed many of us had this blessing spoken over us, “The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, make thee perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle thee, and keep thee through faith unto eternal life.” In this topsy-turvy world the words “settle you” take on new and deeper meaning. This God does through His very relevant Word. (Gilbert Sydow)

**Looking Back
in the
Lutheran
Spokesman**

From May 1963—

...We need the Ascension experience again and again. Though Satan could not dress up this festival with materialism, he has attacked it in another way. He has managed to make people forget it or ignore it. It has become the least of the festivals. In many churches Ascension Day services are being dropped. In others this service sets new records for poor attendance. And Satan breathes freely again.

For most churches have accepted the pre-Ascension thinking of the twelve. Let's restore the kingdom now; let's make Christ ruler on earth. Attack the social problems; reform the world; establish peace between nations; integrate the colored people; free nations from communism; stop the population explosion; spread democracy; build large congregations; build larger and stronger synods and church organizations. Everything is becoming earthly in the church, with earthly visible goals. We also are children of the age, prone to find joy in external growth, in the success of programs, looking for a continuing city on earth.

We need the Ascension experience to gain the Ascension Day posture of gazing upward into heaven. After the Lord had been here a little while to

perform His work He left the earth. That in itself is a condemnation Of this earth. Jerusalem is above. We are here a little while with a temporary call to be witnesses to all men. Both the right perspective and the strength for this great task come from the knowledge of a Lord who left this earth but keeps His hands over us in blessing wherever we may be. But Jerusalem will be destroyed in 40 years. (Winfred Schaller)

...In this present age it is a common occurrence to have the children carry home from the public classroom incident upon incident which the Christian parent cannot condone. Those of you who have had this situation firsthand in your home could probably compile quite a long list of just such incidents. The prayers and other religious elements are all too common. The theories in direct opposition to Scripture, especially in certain areas of science in which theories are often presented as fact, is another example of the "problems." It is difficult enough to try to counteract some of these which do filter home, but there are many other thoughts expressed by the teacher which impress themselves on the child but of which the Christian parent never becomes aware....

On the other hand, think of the blessing for a child of God if he has the opportunity of a Christian education. In the Christian school the Word of God is the supreme authority, all teaching is centered around Christ and the salvation won for all men. In a Christian School with Christian teachers we have a means of teaching

But God's Word did not need them and doesn't need the embellishments of man merely to appear tolerant, or merely to entertain, or merely to provide activity which is "relevant" to the secular needs of special interest groups. God's Word did not need then, nor does it need now, the superior methodology of the intellectually elite to make it come across and produce great numbers of members. "For," writes Paul, "the kingdom of God is not in word but in power" (v. 20).

Let all who proclaim the mysteries of God do so as faithful stewards who are dealing with the very power of God which needs no public relations gimmicks to "put it across." And so Paul deals with those rather arrogant Christians in Corinth, but in a most considerate, yet firm way. He does not name names or otherwise ridicule the guilty parties so as to back them up against a wall so as to bring forth angry denial, but rather does he allow them room for reflection and sincere repentance. He reminds them that teachers of the true Gospel are always going to meet with severe worldly opposition. Evolutionists consider us, for example, also as fools, stuck back in the medieval backwaters of knowledge along with the likes of those who believe in a flat earth.

Paul writes not to shame but to warn. v. 14. And it is very fitting for us all to remember, as we rely alone on the power of God inherent in the Word to get our message across, that the message did not win fame and fortune for its inspired apostolic originators. Rather did the apostles end up, in their singleminded purpose

to make disciples by "...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19), as fools for Christ's sake, dishonored, poor, homeless, persecuted, defamed, the off-scouring of all things.

In our main life's work of spreading the saving Gospel, let us remember our place as servants, not kings and lords over God's heritage, and imitate Paul who depended completely upon the power of God to work miracles of faith in the hearts of otherwise lost people.

Yes, there are now "Baby Boomers" within the fold of the Good Shepherd, but there are many more out there searching for what you, dear reader, already have. Be encouraged to do your part, as faithful caretakers of God's mysteries, in presenting the Word, relying upon God who assures you that the Gospel is still and always will be, without the need for intellectual wisdom to make it attractive or effective, "the power of God unto all who believe" (Rom. 1:16).

This power alone is that with which we can confidently address with a real hope for success "...the generation that forgot God."

—Pastor Bertram Naumann

