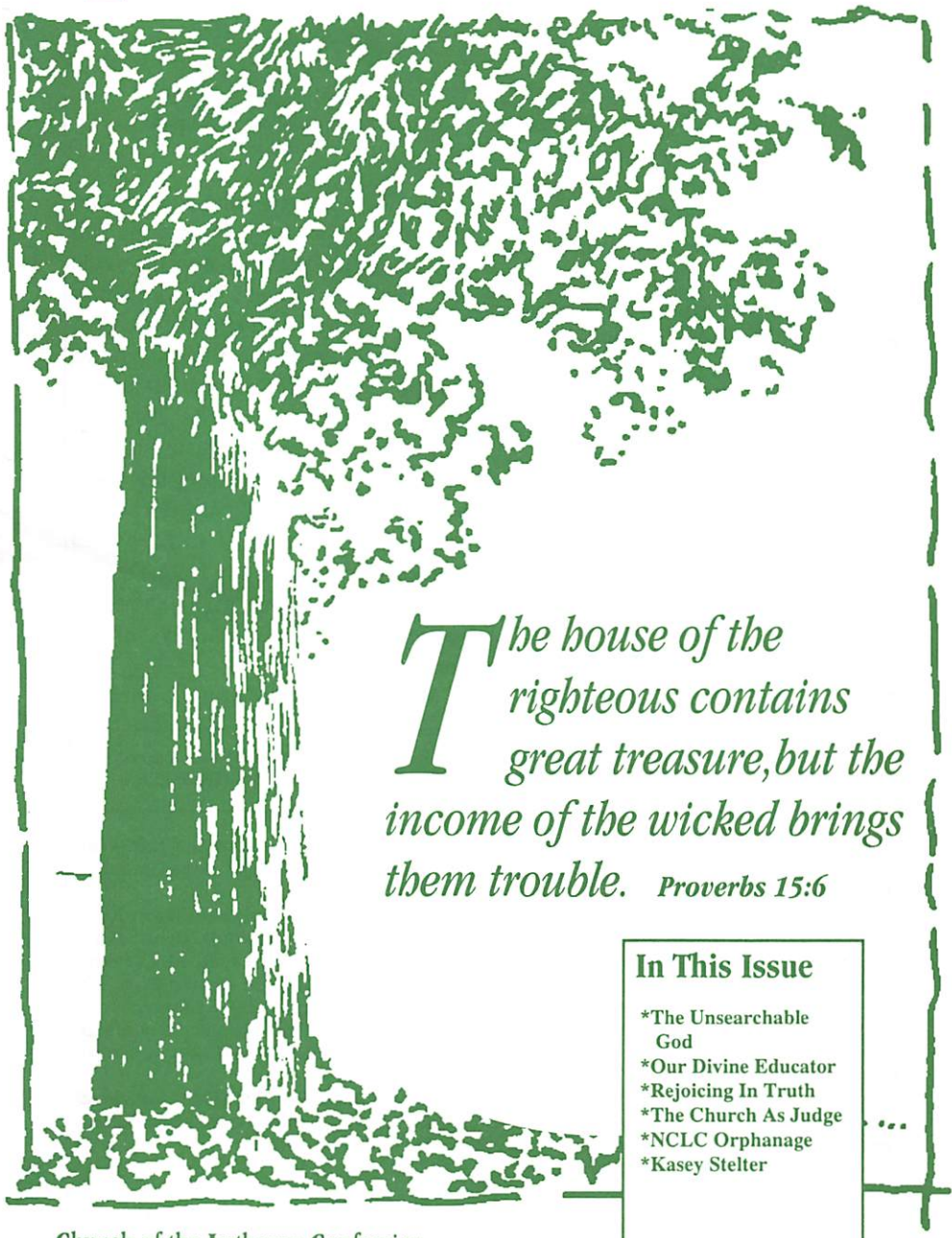


Lutheran Spokesman



*The house of the
righteous contains
great treasure, but the
income of the wicked brings
them trouble. Proverbs 15:6*

In This Issue

- *The Unsearchable
God
- *Our Divine Educator
- *Rejoicing In Truth
- *The Church As Judge
- *NCLC Orphanage
- *Kasey Stelter

Unsearchable, Yet Gracious

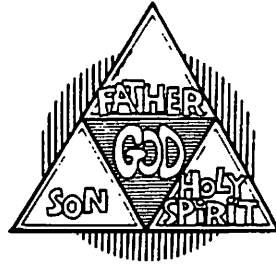
Ask any believer in a god, "Do you love your God?" and the answer would be an universal affirmative.

But what if you inquired, "Who is God?" The ancient Roman would have answered, "Jupiter, Bacchus, Venus, or Mars" (the gods of revelry, sensuality, and war) "and the black-forest Teuton, Thor" (the god of thunder and battles). The Moslem response would be, "Allah is God," a god of many sensual delights. The Unitarian would reply that God is the God of love who will eventually save all men from their sin. The Modern Religionist would respond: "He is the God of our consciousness, and of our own experience."

Now ask the Christian, "Who is God?" and his reply is, "The God of Holy Scripture, the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Yet how does one explain that?

An Inquisitive Creature

Man has always been an inquisitive creature. We seek to explain and



solve. The telescope and microscope are our tools to delve beyond the sun and the atom. We pray into the souls and characters of men: Why did Hitler order the delay of his tank offensive at Dunkirk, allowing the British time to escape? Why did Richard Nixon put his presidency on the line to seemingly protect Watergate burglars — whose real object may not have been to discover political information inside Larry O'Brien's desk, but to squash information on John Dean's big-time, party-time girlfriend? We search ever for answers, about ourselves and God.

Who is God? For the ancient

Postmaster: Second Class postage paid at Lake Mills, IA 50450. Send address corrections (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford Street North, Roseville, MN 55113.

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

Editor: Paul Fleischer, 710 4th Ave. S.W., Sleepy Eye, MN 56085; 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.

Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Fleischer one month before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Fleischer.

Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. Individual subscriptions: \$7.50 for one year; \$14.00 for two years; \$21.00 for three years. Subscriptions sent in bulk to congregations: \$6.00.

Roman down to the Modern Religionist, God is mainly as human reason conceives Him, even made to resemble the character of man who answers. But for the Christian God is inscrutable, unlike anything we can imagine. In fact, the Triune God strikes human reason as offensive and contradictory. How can He be One, as Scripture teaches (“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord”) and yet also be Three, as Scripture also instructs? Our human reason hurries to the microscope and multiplication tables for the answers. Three is three and one is one, they confirm.

Yet the Holy Spirit reveals what to human reason is preposterous: Three are One and One is Three. So in humble Christian faith we submit. We journey to the seashore with St. Augustine. We chuckle at the lad trying to pour the ocean into his hole in the sand. We end up laughing at ourselves for even attempting to empty the mystery of the Triune Godhead into our minds. There is nothing left but to rejoice in awe with the Psalmist: “God is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable” (Ps. 145:3).

But God is not only inscrutable in His being. “How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out” (Rom. 11:33ff). Questions come to mind. Why did God create man only to permit him to fall into sin? We cannot answer. “How unsearchable are His judgments” — and yet how gracious, for He almost immediately promised a Savior from sin. Why did God choose Old Testament Jews to be His special people, permitting the other nations to go their own way into the dark abyss of sin and ignorance?

“Who can know the mind of the Lord?” And yet how gracious He is in sending His Son to be the Light of the heathen world.

To God Be All Glory!

Scripture teaches that God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Jesus says: “Many are called, but few are chosen.” The Bible also says that believers are elected by grace in eternity. Are the rest elected to hell? NO! But who can figure this out? “How unsearchable are His judgments,” and yet how gracious, for if we are saved it is by God’s grace alone. “It is the gift of God.” If we are lost, it is our own fault entirely for rejecting His love and salvation.

A Saul and a David sin. Peter and Judas sin. David and Peter are lifted up to repentance. Saul and Judas die in their sin. Paul, the persecuting Pharisee, is called by God to be His apostle. Many other Pharisees are left to harden their hearts against Christ. Why? What gives? We cannot answer, beyond what we are told.

Who is God? He is the Triune God, whose greatness is inscrutable. Yet He has revealed Himself as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. He is our saving God who saves us from sin and death, who does so by His grace and mercy alone. “...Who has first given to (God), And it shall be repaid to him?” (Rom. 11:35)

So enough already of our impatient reasoning and clamoring questions. In our contemplation of God, whose greatness and ways are truly unsearchable, we end where St. Paul ended: “To (Him) be glory forever. Amen.” (Rom. 11:36)

—Pastor David Fuerstenau

PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit — Our Divine Educator For All Truth

“But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you everything and remind you of everything I told you” (John 14:26).

REASONABLE TRUTH

How would you and I fare with “all truth” on our own? For a moment let us apply our natural reason to a sampling of some basic human concerns:

1) Let's begin with Pilate's reasonable question or exclamation, “What is truth?!” We probably would consult a few philosophers about that matter. They confess to be SEARCHING for the truth, not insisting that their findings ARE the truth. Their reply would point us to some facts supported by “scientific” evidence, and, where that is lacking, to recognize as truth that which is “truth” for us. Is this the truth?

2) How about “Where did all this come from...the heavens with their stars and planets; the earth with its atmospheres, properties or minerals and chemicals, its vegetation and ecology; the animal creatures past and present, large and small; humankind of varied color and appearance?” Our best rational explanation today would be a superstition called “Evolution” based upon multi-billion year time estimates beyond comprehension. Is this the truth?

3) What about the social phenomena of crime, greed, tyranny, war, terrorism, and immorality? Our reason and experts in the social studies would offer several rather appealing explanations: a lack in the genetic background of individuals; or faulty environment for the born-innocent individual who is handicapped by parents, pastors, teachers, and other well-meaning counselors and friends who all contribute to the warping of his/her character and personality. Is this the truth?

4) What about knowing what is good, what is moral, who am I, why am I here, where am I going, how do I get there, and what (if anything) follows upon death and the grave? We could go to a variety of specialists, counselors, and authors, with their socially acceptable, reasonable answers to these questions. Perhaps one of them might appeal to our sense of truth. Or in desperation we might consult the Bible. But our natural reason would soon tell us that the Bible

was written for people of another culture, another age, another tradition, and far removed from truth for our day. At any rate, any reasonable person would soon realize that the Gospel of the Bible is foolishness. Is this the truth?

So much for a few examples of human reason and wisdom applied to life's questions and problems. Truth? Rather, nagging doubts about the absolute truthfulness of the rational conclusions that scholars, specialists, scientists, philosophers, or we ourselves have drawn. It leaves other questions completely unanswered.

WHAT IF there really is only one true God? WHAT IF He has told the world what is good and bad, moral or sinful, truth or error, life or death, time and eternity, heaven and hell? WHAT IF there really is a Day of Judgment for all humankind? The Day of Judgment will be one day too late for anyone to come to a knowledge of the truth!

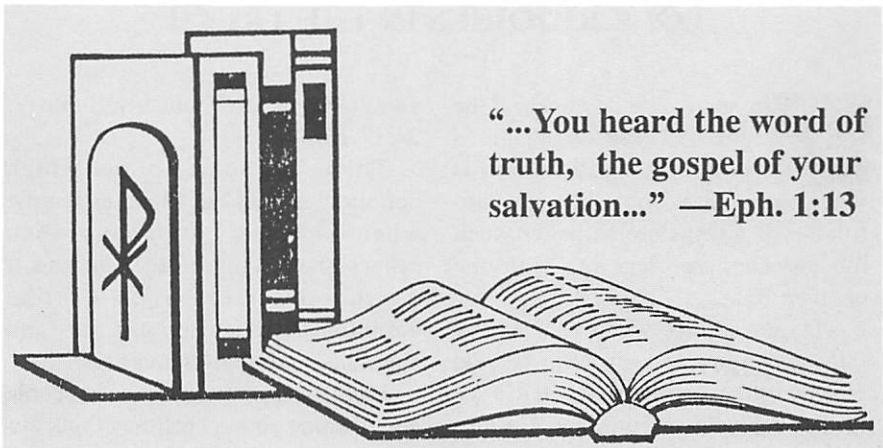
How can we come to know the truth about God, who He is, what He expects of us, what He has done for us, and what He wants us to know? How can we find the help, hope, and security for this life as well as for the eternity beyond this life of time?

ABSOLUTE TRUTH

The Bible says: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent" (Jn. 17:3).

How CAN we know? Even Christians confess: *"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, nor come to Him!"* Do not despair, that is not the end of their confession.

It continues: *"But the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers; and will at the last day raise up me and all the dead, and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life."*



This is most certainly true!"

What human wisdom and reason does not know and cannot learn, the love of God gives to man through the work of His Holy Spirit in and by His Word, the Holy Scriptures. Jesus Himself assures the believers: "But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you everything and remind you of everything I told you."

The Holy Spirit teaches us to KNOW by faith that in the beginning all things were created by God in six days; that all humankind fell into sin and is under the judgment of God through the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve; that the Holy Spirit worked faith in the hearts of many from the very beginning, including such familiar persons as Adam and Eve, Abel, Noah and his family, Abraham, Moses, kings David and Solomon, the prophets, the disciples of Jesus, the apostle Paul, the sinful woman, the thief on the cross, and the sum total of all believers down through the ages to the end of time.

THE DIVINE EDUCATOR

Indeed, the Holy Spirit is the ONLY teacher of all truth, absolute truth. God directs Him to our hearts through the sacred Scriptures, and He dwells within the believer's heart. What a sacred, personal, and intimate union that is...God's Holy Spirit dwelling within each believer to teach him all truth; to guide him to know (by faith) and to do (by faith) the will of the heavenly Father; and to lead him safely Home.

The festival of Pentecost is the celebration of God's Holy Spirit being poured out upon the believers and dwelling within them. The oft-repeated words from God ring in our ears: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:7). Thus we walk by faith in a knowledge of the absolute truth from God, and inherit the gift of life everlasting.

—Prof. Gordon Radtke



What Is This Thing Called Love?—

LOVE REJOICES IN THE TRUTH

In our upside-down world the type of thing which gives people great satisfaction is when those they don't like get into trouble. It always seems better when our enemies are bickering with one another. But...

"Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles. Lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, and He turn

away His wrath from him" (Prov. 24:17-18).

There are some things which definitely should not make us happy: when our enemy stumbles; when others are having sinful fun and it doesn't upset us; when we like planning to sin; when our sins and sinful habits don't upset us at all.

From time to time we hear people complaining about what they think are

the strictures of conservative theology. Is it *fun* to be a Christian? Maybe we don't like the choice of words. But I certainly have heard those who say being a Christian is no fun. Can't get drunk. No illicit sex. No violent emotional responses. No profanity. No fighting.

Standing apart from sin and enjoyment of sinning is one of those things which distinguishes a Christian in the first place. Sin shouldn't give him pleasure. We've been rescued from sin and its consequent death. What does give Christians a great deal of joy and pleasure is the truth.

Truth Suppressors

There are those who suppress the truth of God. Their evil deeds testify against them. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). It's bad enough to have a problem; it's worse to enjoy it. That's what happens when people exchange the truth of God for a lie.

Nowadays one of the lies exchanged for truth is that the truth can't be known anyway. In a survey of young adults (18-25 years old) 72% believe there is no such thing as "absolute truth." This is more than just an aberration in academic philosophy. The effect of relative truth has spilled over into mainline Christian denominations. One survey revealed that only 46% of members in these churches believe that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God.

"What Is Truth?"

That was the cynical retort of Pilate when Jesus told him about His

genuine followers. There are certain truths that even find the skeptical nodding their assent. It's so true that a classic example of a syllogism in logic starts with the premise: All men are mortal. One out of one dies. The rare exceptions: Enoch and Elijah. Even the incarnate Son of God died.

And therein lies a truth of astounding impact. His death (a truth which no one has trouble believing) was a satisfactory payment for the sins of the entire world. His resurrection from death (a truth which many do have trouble accepting) was and is God's eternal witness to the reality and value of His Son's redemptive sacrifice.

The truth is what gives us joy!

* Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn. 14:6).

* Jesus promised us: "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:31-32).

God wants everyone to "know the truth." "(God) desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4).

* Truth is a way of life for disciples: "...and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another" (Eph. 4:24-25).

—Pastor Michael Sydow

The Cost Of A "Miracle"

It is time to think, and maybe talk a bit, about subscriptions. The *Spokesman* operates with a year which runs from July through June. For the first time in seven years it has become necessary to increase the annual subscription rates. The April Coordinating Council approved the Business Manager's suggestion. The new rate is \$6.00 (up from \$5.00) for bulk rates to congregations and \$7.50 (up from \$6.00) for individual and gift subscriptions (2 years: \$14.00; 3 years: \$21.00).

It should surprise no one that, while the subscription rate and our total subscriptions (2,455) have held quite constant for seven years, the printing and postage costs have not. These have pretty much followed the inflationary spiral elsewhere in the economy. As it is, the copy you now hold in your hands, though it should have been covered by your last year's subscription payment, wasn't. The revenue from the new '93-'94 subscriptions will have to pick up the tab for this month.

What would be your guestimate as to the per copy cost of what you hold in your hands? Try 48¢ (up from 33¢ seven years ago). That's roughly what is needed money-wise to produce these 16 monthly pages, or \$6.00 for 192 annual pages. You can't get many worthwhile books of that size for such a price anymore.

One goal of the Lutheran *Spokesman* is to have three issues per year (Reformation, Christmas, and Easter) with a 20-page format. We have not been able to achieve that goal lately due to budgetary constraints (each additional four pages adds around \$400.00 to the monthly cost). With a "surplus" that had been accumulated due to the careful practice of Benno Sydow, our scrupulous Business Manager, a Macintosh computer was purchased

for the editor. This will, down the road, allow for more pages to be produced. With the material arriving at the printer in an electronic format, approximately 25% can be saved each month. Translated into each issue, this can mean more 20 page issues.

Other than that, we don't care to belabor anyone with a lengthy "pitch" to subscribe. We sincerely hope that the proof of the pudding is in the eating—that what is offered here for "four bits" each month is worth not only the minimal monetary cost but, more than that, the considerable efforts of the staff. Contrary to what some might suppose, writing is work—hard and time-consuming work—for most of us.

As the deadline rolls around each month, the motivation is the same as it has always been. Within our modest means and our even more modest abilities, to serve our subscribers—and our Lord—with biblically sound, orthodox and confessionally Lutheran, conservative Christian, reading material. If, by the supernatural gifts the Spirit supplies, we achieve that end each month, it might truly be termed a "miracle." That is how one subscriber says she reacts each month when the *Spokesman* arrives: "Another little miracle from God."

To Him alone the glory!

—Pastor Paul Fleischer, Editor



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

Chapter Five—

The Church As Judge

At the time of the gay march on Washington in April the secular press carried an agonized editorial.* John Leo favors a tolerant attitude toward people with a homosexual orientation. He sees no reason why such people should be victimized in any way. "Tolerance is the primary civic virtue of American pluralism," he says. His problem? **How can you practice tolerance of something without appearing to approve of it?** He has no real solution to offer.

To illustrate how some will seek approval under the guise of mere tolerance, Leo refers to the "rainbow curriculum" of New York City, where gays and their allies inserted a passage saying that first graders must be taught the "positive aspects" of homosexual families. As always, what asks for toleration soon demands approval. And it seems unlikely that the one can be granted without at least appearing to offer the other.

In these times too, it is a tough assignment to be a responsible Christian citizen. It is comforting to have the sobering counsel of I Corinthians to help us on a God-pleasing way. See chapter 4:1-5 (last

month's *Spokesman*), chapter 5, and chapter 6:2 for a primer on **JUDGING**.

WHOM?

Since our Lord warned, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Mt. 7:1-2), Christians might well be nervous about sitting on the judge's bench. And relieved to hear that it is no business of ours "to judge those outside the church" (5:12). Even though the Church of Christ will share in the judging of the world and of angels (presumably the angels that sinned). (6:3)

JUDGING THOSE INSIDE

In strongest terms, the apostle rebukes the congregation of Corinth for **tolerating**, and thereby giving implied **approval** to, a form of sexual immorality that was unheard of even among pagans in those days (today?). A church member was living with his father's wife, probably a step-mother. The Roman orator Cicero asserts that incest was practically unheard of in Roman society. How shocking that it should be condoned among Christians! (5:1) How shameful that

* *U.S. News And World Report*, Vol. 114, No. 17, p. 20

the Gospel of forgiving grace should be so defiled.

A kind of judgment was called for in Corinth. Paul had already made it, "just as if he were present." Now the congregation is called upon to be "filled with grief" and to put out of their fellowship the man who did this (5:2-3).

We don't know the *attitude* of the man toward his chosen course of sexual immorality. And that is a vital consideration in any case where we today might be called upon to judge. In that instance, it was apparent that the man was ruled in actions by his flesh, his sinful nature (Galatians 5:19). The purpose of their exclusion of the man was "that the sinful nature might be destroyed, and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord" (5:5). This would be accomplished by handing "this man over to Satan" (5:5).

Expelled from the accepting, supportive framework of fellowship in Christ into the world where Satan is god and holds sway, the man would know the dread consequences of his chosen course. This dread judgment could only be made "with grief" and pain. But also with hope that it might, in the end, be an instrument of his salvation.

And so it was. As we know from 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, the man did repent. He could be welcomed back with love and forgiveness. The tawdry matter had a happy ending. The Christians in Corinth did, finally, exercise the loving duty of judging the man's actions.

HOW?

Years ago a pastor (Now Prof. Paul D. Nolting) gave a memorable essay on I Corinthians. He pointed out the vital fact that the solution to each of the many problems that plagued the church in Corinth was—CHRIST. So in this case. Before the eyes of the delinquent church Paul holds up the image of Christ, the Passover Lamb pure and holy. Through His sacrifice for our sins He created a holy people, a "new batch" of bread made without the yeast of sin. And that "you really are."

Be what you are! Keep the Festival with the bread of sincerity and truth! Scrub out wickedness from among you as zealously as the Hebrew women searched out every particle of yeast in their homes when preparing Passover! Don't even associate with a professed Christian brother (especially in table fellowsh) who is sexually immoral (5:6-11).

AS FOR JUDGING THOSE OUTSIDE

It is somewhat surprising that Paul does **not** urge the Corinthian Christians to disassociate themselves from the world outside their fellowship. Not even from the immoral. To do so would be to abandon their saving, salutary role **in the world** (5:9-11). They are not to bear the burden of judging the world now, with an appropriate sentence of punishment. That's the job of government (Romans 13). Enough that they live and shine in the darkness of the world by their commitment to what is sincere and

true in behavior (5:8).

When Christians live out their passion for holiness in their church life and “outside” as well, there will be no confusion. No one can possibly take their tolerance for approval of

wickedness. “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:16).

—Pastor Rollin A. Reim



Gems From Proverbs—

“The house of the righteous contains great treasure, but the income of the wicked brings them trouble” (Prov. 15:6).

I am not sure why June is thought of as the time for weddings, but it is a time that brides and marriages are often displayed quite prominently. It is not a bad time, therefore, for us to remember again the blessings which are ours in marriage, home, and family.

With murder and mayhem, assaults and abuse so common in our day, one might well say that it is a barbaric age in which we live, and yet it is also an age which will vote for “family values.” It would seem that everyone wants families to succeed, parents to live in mutual love and esteem, and children to be healthy, happy, well-fed, educated and adequately sheltered. Heathens desire such things just as much as Christian folk. However, a question which is not answered so unanimously is how to achieve such valuable goals.

Some would have us look to our inward talents and strengths, others to certain legislation, still others to our moral behavior. “Honesty is the best policy” may at first glance seem to be



a restatement of our proverb, but there is much more to being “righteous” than mere honesty, and there is much more to the treasure than the things which the pagans run after.

What is righteous in the eyes of people is when someone lives according to their marriage vow, and keeps their marriage promises. They are not only faithful, but they also appear to love, comfort, honor and take care of each other in sickness and in health, as long as they both shall live.

What is righteous in the eyes of God, however, begins with wholeheartedly loving God. Any outward keeping of the marriage vow

without that love to God is just a going-through-the-motions, a veneer covering the hostility toward God which we inherited from Adam. If there is no love for God involved, God will see it, for He searches the heart. And if there is no love for God involved, then the "righteousness" has some other goal, some other treasure, besides glorifying the Father in heaven.

Of course, when the proverb speaks of the house of the righteous, it is not speaking of those whom the world might call righteous, but those whom God calls righteous. And "righteous before God" is just what Jesus Christ has declared us by His resurrection from the dead.

Now the house of the righteous has a heavenly Father to call upon in every trouble. The house of the righteous has life-giving bread, God's own word of forgiveness. The house of the righteous has comfort and companionship, and a joy that is shared by the angels in heaven. The house of the righteous has a line of

credit that has no end, assuring that food, clothing, and all earthly requirements will be added as needed.

More than the storage houses Joseph built to save for the seven-year famine, the house of the righteous is a treasure chest. But the treasures that the wicked run after, the very things that are added unto us, become their downfall. Like Judas' money-bag, they take over their lives and become a weight that drags down to despair and destruction. Because of their income, the wicked make the wrong choices, and end up hurting themselves. If they appear to succeed in this life, the fact that they are the "wicked" means that they have tossed the righteousness of Christ out the window, and are destitute, having no hope and without God in the world.

Oh, blest the house, whate'er befall,
Where Jesus Christ is all in all!
Yea, if He were not dwelling there,
How dark and poor and void it were!

Blest such a house, it prospers well,
In peace and joy the parents dwell,
And in their children's lot is shown
How richly God can bless His own.

—Pastor Paul Schaller

Nigerian Church of the Lutheran Confession (NCLC) Orphanage

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit the orphans..." (James 1:17).

"Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness" (Psalm 82:3-5a).

It seems that one of the hard questions for us as Lutherans to answer is the question of parsimony. As individual congregations we generally do not have funds that our

congregational treasurers have at their disposal to help the poor and needy who call our churches looking for help; nor do we join other churches in gathering special funds that are

collected and designed to do the same job; nor do we give to local civic, social organizations to do the job. So, it is generally left to the individual pastor to respond as his heart and pocketbook allow, or dictate, every time the call comes or the question arises.

Opportunities!

And yet God is clear in His Word. Read Deuteronomy 15:7-11. Consider and ponder passages like: "Blessed is he who considers the poor" (Ps. 41:1); "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard" (Prov. 21:13); "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse" (Prov. 28:14); Also Isaiah 58:6-12, Matthew 19:21, Galatians 2:10 etc.

But never let it be said that God, Scripture, or His ministers dictate in any way what Christians must do. God simply presents opportunities for those whom He has blessed with the means and the love to do something for those whom He has not so blessed. How marvelous then that, in both India and now in Nigeria, we of the CLC have an opportunity to help these poor and needy orphans.

How it could be that in the extended family system of care in Nigeria there could be orphans or motherless children, I don't know. The entire tribe or clan is usually "family" and, as such, all are expected to—and usually do—care for others. But even in such a system there are still those who "fall through the cracks." And so there are orphans—children whom no one claims as their

responsibility; children who are rejected bribe as not belonging under their obligations to care for; children whose fathers are gone and unknown; children whose mothers have died or disappeared, or who have no love for the children and abandon them. And so there are orphanages in Africa.

How wonderful then that a minister had enough compassion to be concerned for such children in his village area. He erected a 12' x 20' mud hut (without windows, and only one door) on his compound. He uses his own produce to try to feed these children. Under his care there are at present 14 children ranging in age from under one year old to about 12 years old. These children have nothing but a wooden pallet to sleep on, and whatever food and clothing that can be found for them.

God's Children

And yet they are God's children; so cute, lovable, and huggable are they that as one sees them one's heart goes out to them. *So adorable are they that one would like to take one home. How we came into contact with this congregation and the orphanage is a long story, but it is God's doing.

God truly works in mysterious ways. He brought this congregation and the orphanage into the NCLC. He gives us the opportunity to teach these children one hour a week of "Sunday School" each Tuesday. Not only the children of the orphanage come, but usually about 50 other children from the village and area also attend. After this I had the opportunity to instruct

*See picture in April Spokesman

many adults from the region for one hour also. Pray the Lord of the harvest that we are capable of doing His work among them, and accomplishing His will for them and all men "that they come unto the knowledge of the truth and are saved."

Much help is needed in many areas in the basic things of life and living for them. God has placed a unique opportunity before us. There is no real help for them from the governmental charities or relief organizations over there. It is an opportunity that God has laid before us. May He also give us the hearts of love to respond to this opportunity.

(Footnote to the original article: The CLC Board of Missions has authorized that an immediate free-will offering be taken so that we might send some money over with the new missionary {Rev. Bohde} when he returns to Nigeria at the end of July. In addition, in June at the pastoral conference the Board will consider an on-going monthly allowance for the NCLC Orphanage. Please send your financial help to the NCLC Orphanage in care of Project Kinship.

— Pastor Paul R. Gurgel



March of Dimes picks Kasota boy as child ambassador* -

“Kasey and the MOD squad”

It was against the odds that Kasey's birth defect wasn't detected before his birth nearly four years ago.

But it wasn't, and his first few weeks were uneasy ones for parents Jone and Mark Stelter of Kasota, who had lost a newborn in 1978.

On April 10, 1989 Kasey was born with spina bifida, a disease in which the spine doesn't form completely and limits a child's movement and feeling.

Once Kasey was born, immediately surgery was required, followed by a three-week hospital stay. Kasey could not lay on his back during his hospital stay and for the first two months at home.

That month, the March of Dimes was gearing up for its annual Walk-

America fund-raising walk, and Kasey became somewhat of a rallying point at a local company where his uncle Dave worked. Buttons passed out at the company encouraging participation in the MOD's Walk-America read "Walk for Kasey." That year, Kasey and his family took part in the walk.

That was Kasey's first year as part of the March of Dimes. This will be the family's fourth, with a touch of distinction added. Kasey is the MOD's 1993 Walk-America Ambassador Child...

The severity of spina bifida depends on where the opening occurs along the spine. Kasey's was in the lumbar level — allowing him some

**Adapted, with permission, from the March 17, 1993 Mankato (Minn.) Free Press. Mr. & Mrs. Mark Stelter and family are members at Immanuel, Mankato.*

movement to the knees, but nothing below. It also limits his skin sensitivity from the thighs down.

To help him walk, Kasey uses an RGO — Reciprocating Gait Orthosis — a cable-operated brace attached from the chest down that allows this 40-pound boy to move his legs by shifting his weight from side to side. He also has a hand-driven trike, and a wheelchair. He's very strong in his upper body, so his mobility is good.

As is his attitude.

"Kasey's a very motivated, very active, very pleasant child. He's happy. And he deals with it well," Jone said. "We stress the positive. There's a whole realm of things he can do. He'll just do them in a different way." Right now the boy's attentions are on sports. He likes watching his brother Nick, 13, and sister Tina, 16, play basketball for their teams at Immanuel Lutheran School, as well as dad's refereeing.

Physically, routine movements of



Mark & Jone Stelter with their children Kymberly, Nick, Tina and Kasey

muscles in his legs are worked on with Kasey at this early age to prevent muscle stiffness from non-use. This and other needs for Kasey play an important role in the Stelter family routine. "We do therapy with him daily for the range of motion, because muscles can become contracted if they're not used."

"It's a challenge, of course, day to day," Jone said. "He requires a lot of physical therapy. He gets weekly visits by a physical therapist." These days he's working on using crutches and negotiating doorways, and transitioning between sitting down and standing up."

They live in an earth-sheltered, one-level home, so he has a relatively clear path in the house. "We've been fortunate not to have to make a lot of adaptations to the home," Jone said.

While most children born with spina bifida undergo several surgeries in their lives, Kasey has had just one after his initial stay at the hospital. It was to release contracted muscles just to get into his brace.

Through the rough times, the Stelters received a lot of support and encouragement from friends and their church community, Jone said. "Our faith plays a great part in dealing with this whole issue," Jone said. "Even though we can't see it, we know God has a reason for all this."

Within the past six months, the Stelters have received encouraging news that as Kasey gets older, his mobility apparatus may be downscaled to just braces from the knees down.

But in the meantime, they want you to know that Kasey's just like every other kid. He likes Barney,

books about trucks and airplanes, and any game with a ball. "He's just a regular kid who happens to have a disability, and we'll cherish him as we do our other children," Jone said. "The disease just happens to be a difference, and other people have other differences."

Time of Worship

The summer service time (June, July, August) at St. Luke Lutheran Church, Lemmon, South Dakota is 9:00 a.m.

SPOKESMAN on Cassette

The *Lutheran Spokesman* will be available on cassette tape, beginning with the June, 1993 issue. While the intent is to reach the visually-handicapped in this manner, others may wish to order for devotional purposes. Individual subscriptions will be \$7.50. For purposes of postage it is necessary to know whether a subscription is intended for the visually-handicapped. Those interested should contact:

Pastor W. V. Schaller
100 4th St. W.
Lemmon, SD 57638-1499

Pastor Paul Schaller
N. 4724 Wall
Spokane, WA 99205

1993 DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE

The *Lutheran Spokesman's* annual Bible Reading Guide with suggested Bible readings for each day of the year was included as a removeable supplement to the December 1992 issue. Individual copies may be ordered from the Business Manager-Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. Please enclose \$2.00.



Decisions! Decisions!—1992 Convention