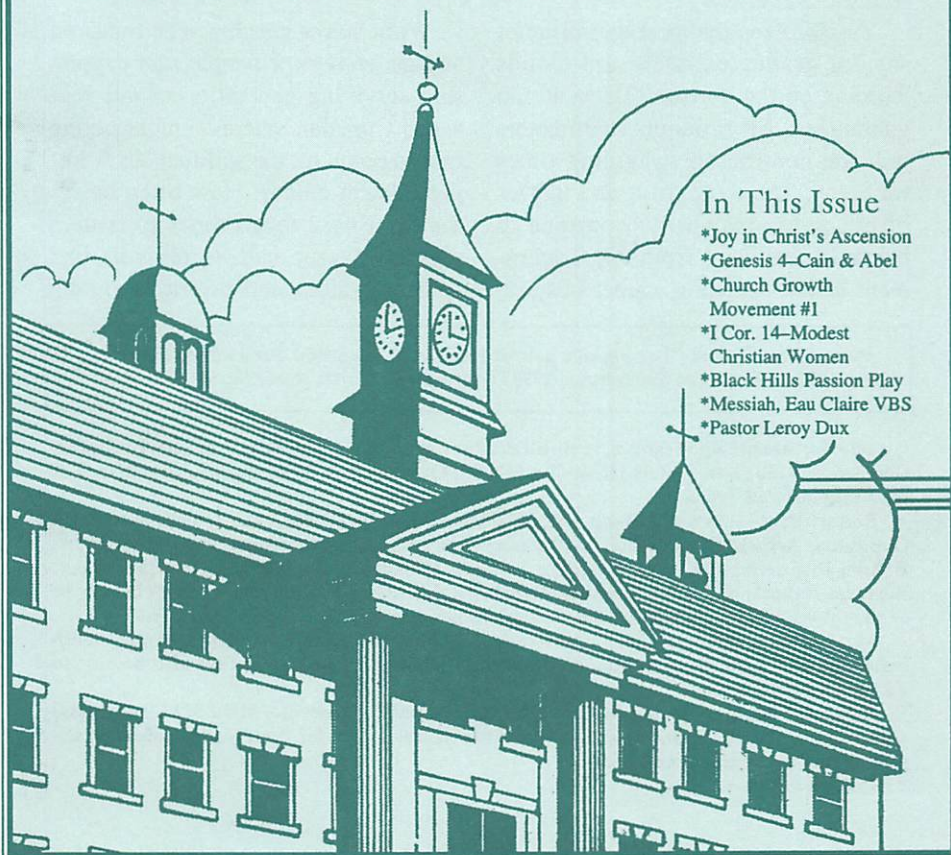


Lutheran Spokesman



GRADUATES 1994

*Lord, take my hand and lead me Upon life's way;
Direct, protect, and feed me From day to day.
Without your grace and favor I go astray;
So take my hand, O Savior, And lead the way.*



In This Issue

- *Joy in Christ's Ascension
- *Genesis 4—Cain & Abel
- *Church Growth
Movement #1
- *I Cor. 14—Modest
Christian Women
- *Black Hills Passion Play
- *Messiah, Eau Claire VBS
- *Pastor Leroy Dux



THE GRADUATION OUTLOOK

In a few short weeks the long-awaited day of graduation will arrive for many in our circles. Amidst the traditional graduation hoopla, many will not only experience the joy of goals achieved, but will also hold a myriad of dreams for the future. And so it should be.

Yet, for even the most optimistic of secular graduates, there are clouds looming on the horizon. There are no guarantees. All economic barometers indicate continuing struggling times for many. The moth, rust, and thieves of economic instability continue to break in and steal from us. Government deficit spending, career obsoles-

cence, a tight job market, layoffs, unemployment, skyrocketing health and entitlement program costs, social and moral instability, and crime will all continue to take their toll on the "quality of life" in America.

A Spiritual Silver Lining

While never wishing such times on any generation or people, the depression-surviving generation of our seasoned Christian veterans might be the first to point out the spiritual silver lining in such clouds. How often hasn't the Lord used tough times to issue a divine wake-up call, to rekindle lost spiritual values and priorities among

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His people? "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Lk. 12:15). Even in the bleakest of times, the One Thing Needful will not be taken from us: God's precious Word, His saving Gospel, the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation in Christ — a treasure of incalculable, priceless, and unchanging worth.

As the contrast grows between the views and values of our society and our church, it inevitably filters down to both educational systems as well. Perhaps this growing contrast can make us more aware and appreciative of the blessings of our own church educational system, wisely established and prioritized by past generations.

Cause For Optimism

And it seems to be happening. While our CLC membership has remained relatively static in recent years, there seems to be a joyful resurgence of interest in Christian education in our midst. Several new Day Schools have opened in recent years, and a number of our parents provide home schooling where Day Schools are not

available. Couple this with the blessing of our Sunday school and confirmation instruction and the "in home" spiritual nurturing by Christian parents — and there is cause for genuine optimism, even in these last days.

A by-product blessing may also be increased interest and commitment to the pursuit of the greatest career on earth — "WORD-Distribution," seeking to glorify our God through a life of service and sharing of the Gospel. For some, it represents the privilege of preparing and serving in the full-time preaching or teaching ministry; for many others, lives of lay dedication to their Lord, His Word, and His Church. Either way the Spirit-produced joys and blessings, sense of fulfillment, and retirement benefits are incomparable!

Graduation will soon be upon us. Educational plans for next Fall are already being considered by many. Parents, students — in your decision-making process, please remember your, and your child's, *greatest* need: the Wisdom that comes down from above. You won't ever regret it.

—Pastor David Schierenbeck

† † †

JOY IN CHRIST'S ASCENSION

Usually when a dear friend leaves us, we feel sad. That was true of the disciples too. Jesus was leaving them. He had said of them concerning His ascension: "Sorrow has filled your heart" (Jn. 16:6). Yet joy overcame their sorrow. Luke tells us: "And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Lk. 24:52).

There were two reasons for this joy. One was for Christ's own sake. The other was for the sake of man-

kind. Both are found in Hebrews 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

His ascension was a homecoming for Jesus. He had left the glories of heaven to take on the form of man and to live in this sin-filled world. He walked the dusty roads of Palestine,

spent long, uncomfortable nights in the open, encountered various trials, suffered under the hatred of the Jewish leaders, and died on the cross.

With His work now completed, He was returning to heaven where His greatest joy would be to welcome all those who accepted Him as their Savior. It was because of this joy awaiting Him in heaven that He endured the shame and the cross on earth.

When the disciples could no longer see Him, they knew that now He was at His Father's right hand ruling over all things for the sake of His Church. The disciples rejoiced over the joy Jesus had in returning to heaven.

That joy was not to be limited to those disciples assembled on Mount Olivet that day. It is also to be experienced by us. Looking toward Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, we may greatly rejoice as did the disciples. Jesus has salvation for us as well.

Jesus Will Come Again

He kept God's law for us. God now considers us as having kept it also. Jesus died for the sins we have committed, and paid the penalty for our sins. Since sin is the only thing that can bar the way to heaven, and since that sin is washed away by Jesus' blood, heaven is open to us. We are free to enter.

Jesus ascended to prepare for our arrival. He tells us: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also" (Jn. 14:2). He is our Forerunner who has gone



ahead to show us that we too will go one day.

He will come again to take us to heaven on the Last Day. Of that day we are told: "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17). That will be our ascension.

What is our joy in Christ's ascension? It should be joy over the certainty that we shall enter into heaven. In His ascension we see our own. Let us prepare ourselves for that great day, making use of the opportunities we have to hear and study God's Word so that we may be kept in faith.

Believing, we will rejoice to see the Day of the Lord. Believing, we may sing with the hymnwriter:

So whene'er the signal's given
Us from earth to call away,
Borne on angels' wings to heaven,
Glad the summons to obey.
May we ever, may we ever,
Reign with Christ in endless day!
(TLH #50)

—Pastor Keith Olmanson

LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4).

Genesis Chapter Four—

Cain And Abel: A World Apart

One of the major problems confronting the United States at this time is crime. It seems that every newscast brings the sobering details of another murder, another rape, another armed robbery. No doubt many wonder if the problem will ever get better. Others can't imagine how it could get any worse.

Although statistics confirm that violent crime is on the increase in this country, violent crime itself has a long history. In the fourth chapter of Genesis we are introduced to Cain, the world's first cold-blooded murderer.

The First Murder

Adam and Eve named their first-born son Cain, meaning “gotten.” They recognized this child as a gift from their Lord, possibly even the promised “Seed” himself. Adam and Eve were blessed with another son, whom they called Abel, meaning “vanity” or “nothingness.”

Like his father, Cain became a tiller of the soil. Abel became a shepherd. Both boys grew up with a knowledge of God and the promised Savior. They routinely offered sacrifices to this God. Scripture makes reference to one such offering each brought. Cain brought an offering “of the fruit of the ground” to the Lord. However, the Lord was not pleased with his offering and rejected it. Abel, on the other hand, offered “the

firstlings of his flock and of their fat” unto the Lord. The Lord was pleased with Abel's offering and accepted it.

Cain was visibly angry over the Lord's rejection of his offering. The Lord spoke to Cain and warned him of the latent sin that desired to overcome him. Cain, however, did not heed God's warning, but rather led his brother Abel into a vacant field and killed him. When the Lord later questioned Cain about the whereabouts of his brother, Cain said he did not know and asked, “Am I my brother's keeper?”

But our omniscient God knew what Cain had done and pronounced judgment on him. Cain was declared a wandering fugitive and was banished from his family. The ground would no longer yield crops for him. Cain believed God's judgment was more than he could bear, and he feared those whom he thought would avenge Abel's death. The Lord, therefore, put a special mark on Cain to protect him from those who desired to kill him.

Cain then “went out from the pres-

ence of the Lord” and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. There he and his wife began to raise a family. Included in his descendants were Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain, who excelled in the areas of agriculture, music, and metalurgy, respectively.

Hope For These Last Days

What lessons can we learn from the account of Cain and Abel? What hope does it provide us in these last days?

First, from the tragic figure of Cain we can learn what *not* to do. Cain was a hypocrite. Outwardly he offered a fine sacrifice to God, but inwardly his heart was far from Him. He had a knowledge of the Savior, but he did not put faith in Him. Because of a self-righteous heart, Cain was angry and resentful that the Lord rejected his offering. Instead of repenting of his sins when God confronted him, Cain let his anger fester until the hatred in his heart manifested itself in the slaying of his brother. Cain’s example should be a warning to us of the seriousness of unrepented sin. Unlike Cain, we should listen to God’s warnings in Scripture and plead forgiveness in Jesus’ name. We should also learn from Cain that God is not pleased with mere lip-service or outwardly godly living. He is concerned with the condition of our hearts.

Even after killing his brother, Cain never repented of his sins. Like so many violent criminals today, Cain deplored the consequences of his sin, but not the sin itself. He felt God was being too hard on him. The Bible does not tell us why God spared Cain’s life. Despite his prolonged time of grace, there is no indication that Cain ever repented of his sins and came to faith.

The Bible tells us comparatively little about Abel. In Hebrews 11:4 we learn that Abel’s sacrifice was pleasing to God because it was offered by faith. God declared Abel righteous because of the contents of his heart, not the contents of his offering. Abel was the first saint — the first human to die with faith in the promised Seed of the woman. Abel’s horrible death reveals to us the marvelous hope of the resurrection, which we too will experience through faith in Jesus, our Savior.

Finally, the account of Cain and Abel teaches us about the two opposing groups in this world today: God’s Church and the unbelieving world. Cain lived for this world only. Since he was not a believer himself, he hated those who were. Cain’s descendants also lived for this world. They used their many talents not to God’s glory, but to make names for themselves. They too hated and oppressed God’s Church. Abel, on the other hand, was “in the world, but not of the world.” He walked by faith, storing up treasures in heaven that could not be taken away. Abel probably had no physical descendants, but Abel’s offspring include all the members of the Church of Christ, who long to be with their Savior in the world to come.

Violent crime, I believe, will continue to increase in these latter days. God’s Church is still oppressed by the worldly descendants of Cain. But let us not live without hope. Like Abel, let us cling to our Savior who has promised us a home that is out of this world.

—Teacher Joseph Lau



“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’” (Mark 16:15).

THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT

(Part one of two)

(This article is adapted from a sermon by the undersigned.)

We want to concentrate our attention on a movement which is sweeping throughout American Christianity. There was even a cover story on it in TIME magazine a couple of months ago. At first glance it may appear to be a good thing, but upon further examination this movement could very well be a danger which could eventually snatch the very Gospel out of our hearts. We're not talking about the movements we have been familiar with in the past, such as the Charismatic Movement. What we want to talk about today is what has been referred to as “the Church Growth Movement,” or more simply “Church Growth.” We will take a look at its history. We will examine the teachings of “Church Growth.” And then we will examine it in light of Scripture and see how God really wants His Church to grow.

The Movement had its start in the mind of a Disciples of Christ missionary to India, Donald MacGavran. Missionary MacGavran was distressed that during the fifty years of his church's mission work in India, only 2,000 people had been converted to Christianity. He was convinced that God wanted His church to grow more than this.

MacGavran worked and worked to develop his ideas and theories for church growth. He left the mission in

India in the mid-1950's, and from there he eventually ended up at the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. There, with the help of a man by the name of C. Peter Wagner and a few others, they started the School for World Missions and the Institute for American Church Growth.

Over the years many people have attended and taught at this school—some with very famous names. Robert Schuller of the Crystal Cathedral, whom you may have seen on television, has been very involved with Fuller Seminary. There are many Lutherans who attend Fuller and its Church Growth Institute after they graduate from their own seminaries. This school has had an influence on every major denomination in the country, and even on churches right here in our own community.

“Felt Needs”

Now what does the Church Growth Movement teach? The following may be an oversimplification, but it gives you a fairly good idea of how “Church Growth” works. Studies are made of a community to see what its “felt needs” are. “Felt needs” is an important term with Church Growth people. Surveys are taken, studies are made, questionnaires are handed out, to see what people think their community needs.

The church will then try to fill those needs, and in that way get members of the community to walk through its doors.

For example, let's say that in a neighborhood or a community there is a large number of widows or widowers. In order to fill this "felt need" the church will have an increased number of activities for widows and widowers. Let's say that a community has a larger than normal incidence of alcoholism or drug abuse. The church will then have all kinds of classes on drug and alcohol abuse prevention so people will fill its classrooms. Or let's say that people in a community don't like denominationalism. So the church may change its name so that its denomination is not known—Lutheran churches across the country are taking the "Lutheran" out of their names, and they are simply known as "Grace Community Church," or "Living Word Community Church."

Furthermore, if the majority of people in a community don't like a liturgical worship service, well then, there is no liturgy. If people say they don't like 20 minute traditional sermons, the church may bring in clowns, or actors and put on a show. If the community feels that sin is an antiquated idea which has no place in

life in the 1990's, well, the minister will not talk about sin! Robert Schuller summarized Church Growth thinking well when he once said, "The secret of success is to find a need and fill it." In other words, give the people what they want!

All of this may sound good if you are trying to make a business grow, but a church? Some of the social programs which we mentioned are designed to help the community—and that is all well and good and admirable. But when that is the ESSENCE of a church's ministry, something is severely lacking. Notice another thing; yes, a major thing: where in all of this is the message of the forgiveness of sins in the blood of Christ Jesus our Savior?

(to be concluded)

—Pastor Stephen Kurtzahn

Living Word Lutheran Church
Hendersonville, NC



*(Note: Pastor Kurtzahn encourages our readers to read a recent publication which is an excellent critique of the Church Growth Movement. It is called *Law And Gospel: The Foundation Of Lutheran Ministry*, by Robert J. Koester; Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee 1993.)*



LUTHERAN? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Occasionally one is asked, "What religion are you?" The immediate response might be "Lutheran." In our day that is not much of a confession or witness. Theologically, as well as in application of the moral imperatives of Scripture, what passes for Lutheranism

in some fellowships who call themselves Lutheran is no longer the clear voice of Truth. To simply say "I am Lutheran" today may well identify one with something with which you would not want to be identified.

Yet we are not going to give up the name "Lutheran" because the name is being abused. Rather we should clearly state what kind of Lutheran church it is to which we belong. We are members of a church body known as the CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION (CLC). Most people will not be acquainted with the CLC. Then you can tell them!

The CLC is a Lutheran church which teaches all of the Bible as the inspired and unerring Word of God. It confesses the creeds of the Lutheran Church without qualification, as they are found in the Book of Concord of 1580. These confessions set forth the teachings of Scripture, Scripture itself being the source and foundation of Christian teaching. If the name of our church body is a witness to what we believe, it also is a continual reminder of our responsibility to be truly Lutheran, and therefore scriptural, in our teaching and practice.

At the same time we dare not think for one moment that we are above and beyond the reach of satan, the destructive peer pressure of society, or the temptations of our own flesh. We too will lose the right to the name, and the reason for our purpose, if we should ever bow to anything that is contrary to Scripture.

The name "Lutheran" was not a name coined by Luther. Luther did not name a church after himself, much less did he want the church called by his name. It was a name brought into use by the *enemies* of what he stood for. Those who stood for what Luther stood, namely SCRIPTURE ALONE, FAITH ALONE, GRACE ALONE, adopted the name for themselves in spite of Luther's plea: "I ask that men make no reference to my name and call themselves, not Lutherans, but Christians."

Yet as the use of his name persisted, Luther relented and said that he would permit the use of his name if by its use was meant that the church faithfully taught the doctrines of the Bible. Finally, he said, "If you believe that Luther's doctrine is evangelical,...you must not flatly disown Luther; otherwise you also disown his doctrine which you admittedly recognize as the doctrine of Christ."

And in spite of some recent public press, and even apologies that some Lutherans are making for some of Luther's counsel and advice, we appreciate the counsel of the Reformer who said, "Whether Luther is a scoundrel or a saint means nothing to me. His doctrine, however, is not his but Christ's own...Let the person go. But the doctrine you must confess."

And so we confess! We pray that we will always confess the doctrine of Scripture so our Father in heaven will guard and keep us in the Truth so miraculously and wonderfully rediscovered at the time of the Reformation, and that we will do so in a humble spirit. We further pray that those who in our day are departing from Scripture and who are abusing the name of Luther will return to the Truth.

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer



July 19-23 at Messiah; enrolled: 42 members, 38 non-members, 80 total.

Messiah, Eau Claire, Vacation Bible School

The Windows Of Heaven Opened

In Malachi 3:10 the LORD makes a striking proposal to His people: "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." I will open the windows of heaven. What a striking phrase.

In summer 1993 the LORD opened such windows and poured down upon Messiah "children" so that there was

hardly room to receive all of them. We are, of course, talking about our Vacation Bible School program. Messiah sponsored three weeks (see pictures) of V.B.S. with 136 members, 131 non-members, for a total of 267 children.

The LORD also blessed our studies as we considered the question "Who is like the LORD?" We examined the Bible stories which show the true God's unique role in the creation and preservation of the world, in His redemption of all sinners, in sanctifi-



July 26-30 at Fairchild; enrolled: 5 members, 47 non-members, 52 total.



August 2-6 at Messiah; enrolled: 89 members, 46 non-members, 135 total.

cation by the Spirit, and in the glorification of the Christian's decayed body on Judgment Day. Passages were studied and memorized, hymn 541 was memorized and sung, and crafts which centered on the Bible lessons were assembled. In addition students had refreshments and a game break, and, of course, opening and closing devotions were conducted each day.

Messiah tried a couple of new things; 1) Because attendance in 1992 was around 150 we added a second week of V.B.S. to try to spread out the

attendance. It helped some, but it also increased our overall attendance. We are presently planning on adding a third week for 1994. 2) We tried a traveling V.B.S. We took our staff and materials to a community thirty miles away where we have a few members. We rented the public school for \$20 and had an overwhelming response.

We are thankful to the LORD for moving the hearts of our members to sponsor this week and for His gathering in of the many children to hear of the Savior, Jesus.



The Members of Mt. Zion, Detroit (Story, p. 19)



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

Chapter 14

Praise God For Those Modest Christian Women

In February the Queen signed into Church of England Canon Law a provision for the ordination of women as priests. A thousand are said to be waiting for the opportunity. In the U.S. there are now 26,628 women clergy (up 40% from 1983). In the Church of the Lutheran Confession and some other communions, however, there are none.

How can this be?

We cannot answer for the women in those other bodies who do not crusade for change in church-life roles. In our fellowship, however, the reason is apparent. These Christian women voluntarily accept divinely established principle and a church practice that comports with it. When they declare themselves in agreement with the form and order of their congregational constitutions they submit themselves in faith and trust. So they accept for themselves a modest support role and entrust men with the leadership, confident that this is both right and good.

Willingly?

Does this overstate their willingness? At a recent seminar on the subject a woman (spiritually gifted and very successful in her endeavors) declared with all simplicity, "I wouldn't have it any other way." Her sisters nodded their agreement. In a church that seeks its wisdom in spiritual matters from "Scripture Alone" rather than from changing social atti-

tudes in the world, we do have a right to expect as much.

One of the basic scriptures for this matter is our 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians, where the apostle Paul directed that congregation into practices of assembly which would "build up the church" (v. 12) and get things done there "in a fitting and orderly way" (v. 40).

The Right to Remain Silent

Much of the chapter deals with something quite strange to our ears today. Like an echo of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit endowed many believers of apostolic times with the ability to speak in other languages, or "tongues," from the spirit, not the mind (vv. 2, 14). Paul prized the gift highly (vv. 5, 18) for self-edification and private devotion (v. 5, 17), but he directed that it should not be exercised in worship assemblies unless someone could interpret and so edify the congregation (vv. 27-28).

For congregational assemblies, the apostle urged the exercise of *the gift of*

prophecy (v. 1). In this practice, using intelligible words (v. 19), believers proclaimed gospel truth as the Spirit directed (v. 29). Others were to weigh, or judge, what was said (v. 29). So the church would be built up.

The Order Of Worship

Since “God is not a God of disorder, but of peace” (v. 33, NIV), Paul prescribes for Corinth an agenda for worship which was suited to their situation. A situation very different from ours today when the Spirit’s gifts take different forms (see chapter 12).

While we usually have a called pastor conducting worship services, they had numerous individuals in participation. “Everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. All of these must be done” (v. 26, NIV). How necessary were the strict controls provided (vv. 29-32)! The worshiper had the right to speak, but also — as love would require — the duty to be silent.

Women In Church

Since women believers also are endowed by the Spirit for prayer and prophecy (11:5, see Acts 2:17-18), it is to be expected that they would be actively engaged in the activities of the assemblies. Yet their involvement would need to be with great care, that it might be *fitting* and *orderly* (v. 40, NIV).

According to the apostle, there was a kind of speaking by women in church which could not be allowed (v. 34). In fact, it would be “disgraceful” (v. 33, NIV). And not just in the disorderly Corinthian church, but in

all the churches to which Paul addressed his directives (v. 33).

What Kind Of Speaking?

Obviously, Paul is not speaking of *all* speaking. To the Colossian congregation he wrote: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you *teach and admonish* one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God” (Col. 3:16, NIV). Yet this same Paul would not permit the type of teaching which would go along with “having authority over a man” (1 Tim. 2:12, NIV).

In this the Bible student has the key to understanding what Paul was alluding to for the Corinthians. Whatever kind of speaking in church would violate the timeless order of creation should not be allowed (v. 34). An example is the sort of prophecy judging described in verses 29-33.

The Golden Order

Can you imagine the effect if a woman were to challenge the correctness of something her husband had just uttered in prophecy? Hardly “fitting and orderly.” No speaking should break the golden chain: “The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God” (11:3, NIV).

In Genesis we read what happened when Eve became Adam’s teacher. After their Fall, women would be weakened and vulnerable in their role as mothers. But the Creator graciously arranged that the husband, the man, would exercise a benevolent kind of protective rule (and still be desirable!) (Gen. 3:16, 1 Tim. 3:14).

It is only in Christian marriages and some churches that we are likely to find women cheerfully submitting themselves in this order of things. Cheerfully, because it is with as much dignity as the self-submission of men to Christ, and even of Jesus to the Father. Cheerfully, because it means

much needed security where the men fulfill their role responsibly. Cheerfully, because this is *God's* way.

As one said, "I wouldn't have it any other way!"

Praise God for those modest Christian women!

—*Pastor Rollin A. Reim*



Looking Back
in the
Lutheran
Spokesman

From May 1964—

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS. "And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron in the house, while it was in building." 1 Kings 6:7. **The Church of God is Built in Silence.**

...The apostle Paul assures us that we are laborers together with God as well as His workmanship. We have orders to build the Church. We have instructions to go into the quarries of the world to bring men out and lay them like stones one upon the other until the whole building, fitly framed together, grows unto an holy temple in the Lord.

We are working; yet, in the judgment of some, not as we should. Our work seems to lack importance and our rating as laborers is very lowly, largely because we make so little noise at it. Who, after all, knows what is going on in our corner? How many people are made aware of who we are

and what we are doing?

Truly, we are put to shame by the loud and noisy way in which some pastors, congregations, and church bodies are building at the church, or seem to be. Among them the work is being done in a frenzy of sound and advertising. They want the noise of the hammers to be heard and recognized. Incidentally, we may add that the sound of the ax is regarded as a bit outdated.

In some sections of Christendom it is thought to be next to impossible to save souls without noise. At revivals and in what they call evangelistic meetings high-powered speakers shout and thunder, congregations scream and weep, and everything is in an uproar of holy zeal. On these occasions, it is claimed, sinners are converted by the wholesale, and the structure of the church rises in phenomenal fashion.

If we are sometimes disturbed by the seeming great success of noise, if we fear that we are somehow, in these critical days, failing as builders because we do not sound busy and effective, let us consider and be comforted by the notice that the Church of God is built in silence. Our Savior built His Church personally while here on earth, and He did it quietly. One of His prophets foretold this of Him, saying: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor

cause His voice to be heard in the street." His way of building is ours, and we are satisfied to learn of Him. If we are found laboring in silence, it is because as a church we are engaged in building only the Church of Christ and nothing else. We are not trying to reform society as such or to make the world a better place in which to live. Our task is the slow, careful work of laying one stone at a time and securing firmly those which we lay. This is neither fast nor sensational work, and attracts little attention, except in heaven where angels shout with joy over each stone truly laid...

(Prof. Egbert Schaller)

CROOKED STICKS AT AUGSBURG A.D. 1530.

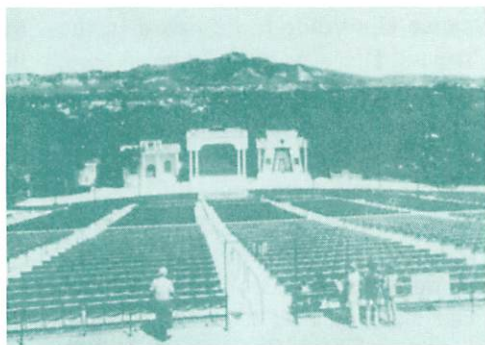
...Luther unlike Melancthon did not let any human considerations blind him. He still saw how crooked the crooked sticks of Rome's errors were. He would leave them in the fire where he had thrown them. He saw the great need of strengthening his wavering friend and colleague, Melancthon, to do the same. From the Coburg he wrote to him: "There can be no concord between Christ and Belial. As far as regards me, I will not yield a hair's breadth. Sooner than yield, I should prefer suffering everything, even the most terrible evils. Concede so much the less as your adversaries require the more." Before that he had written to Melancthon: "We must only have faith, lest the cause of faith be found without faith. If we fall, Christ falls with us, — I would rather fall with Christ than remain standing with Caesar." A more complete picture of the real Luther in all his firmness against any concessions where the

truth is denied (though willing to make them otherwise) is revealed in a writing of his to the Diet sometime after the reading of the Augsburg Confession on June 25, 1530. It is entitled *DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S REFLECTIONS ON SEVERAL CONTROVERSIAL ARTICLES ETC. GIVEN IN GERMAN AT THE IMPERIAL DIET AT AUGSBURG 1530.* In this writing ... we see the difference between Melancthon, who was carried away by human reason, sentiment, and emotion, and Luther, who brushed them aside and was guided by the Word.

Great is the temptation to consider the human side when it comes to being separated from others, especially if one has long been connected with them. But the Word must still stand as our guide. The same holds true when it comes to the ecumenical movement as such and especially the ecumenical endeavors of Rome in which it would bring all churches together under its influence and eventually make them under the Pope. A morbid religious sentimentalism and emotionalism is blind to the truths involved here and will lead many into the pit of Rome's soul-destroying errors. These errors deny the truth of salvation by grace, through faith alone, without the deeds of the law. A church that is truly of the Lutheran confession will never forget how important any truth of Scripture is and how important it is to know it and to stand for it. That, to be sure, is not the popular trend today. Rather, people will say that it makes no difference what you believe as long as you are sincere in it. It does make a difference with God. It made a difference with Luther. It should make a difference to us. Salvation depends on it.

(Pastor Otto J. Eckert)

A Black Cloud Over the Passion Play



Passion Play Amphitheater

While vacationing in the Black Hills area of South Dakota last August, we were looking for something special to do. What better way to spend a relaxing summer evening than by taking in the renowned Passion Play in the beautiful outdoor amphitheater in Spearfish, near Rapid City. If only the weather would cooperate.

It did! And we were delighted! Until...

A Premonition

Soon after the Play began, an ugly black cloud appeared. It hung like a ghostly pall over the amphitheater and over the events of the Play. An otherwise serene and comfortable summer evening was being ruined for us. If only we had known ahead of time.

Upon reflection, we guessed, it had been "in the forecast." Before the Play began one of the usherettes, with great excitement in her voice, told us: "Tomorrow we are expecting a record 170 buses filled with young people going to see the Pope in Denver. There will be 8,000 young people here to see our Play!"

Driving back to our motel after the Play, my wife and I wondered: Did

anybody else notice the black cloud? Did the Passion Play producers know it was there? They had to, we figured, but surely they didn't plan its appearance — or did they?

We decided to find out. My wife wrote to the Passion Play executives. Here, in part, is what she wrote:

We attended your "Passion Play" on August 5th and were very surprised. Since the Play has been running for years we assumed that the script had been written long ago also. Now, we understand that the Bible does not repeat what each of the disciples and Pharisees said, and you needed to invent some of those lines, but when you give prominence to a character like Mary in situations where she clearly was not mentioned in the Bible, it becomes obvious that you were trying to cater to Roman Catholicism.

Is it because the Pope is in the U.S. that you had to include Mary where she didn't belong? The Bible warns about false doctrine and heresy and in our opinion you are spreading that to some people who are not well versed in the scriptures. Your script can affect their faith adversely...

To second my wife's comments, I sealed the envelope, affixed the

stamp, and dropped the letter in the mailbox.

Mary was prominent, you see, in almost every scene. She was garbed in a glistening white gown and stunning blue mantel. If not at stage center, there she was at stage left, or stage right. Her posture was generally with praying hands next to cheek. It appeared to us that she practically upstaged her Son.

Equal Time

The Producer of the Black Hills Passion Play responded to my wife's remarks. The response, in part:

Thank you for your letter of August 15. It is always of interest to us to hear the reactions of our audience. You are quite right that the script was written long ago—actually it has evolved over hundreds of years, long before many people could read the Bible for themselves.

The "Criteria for the Evaluation of Dramatization of the Passion" prepared by the Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs tells us: "Those constructing a single narrative from the version of the events in the four gospels are immediately aware that the texts differ in many details. How is one to choose between the differing versions?...A guiding artistic vision sensitive to historical fact and to the best biblical scholarship are obviously necessary. Just as obviously, it is not sufficient for the producers of passion dramatizations to respond to responsible criticism simply by appealing to the notion that 'it's in the Bible.'"

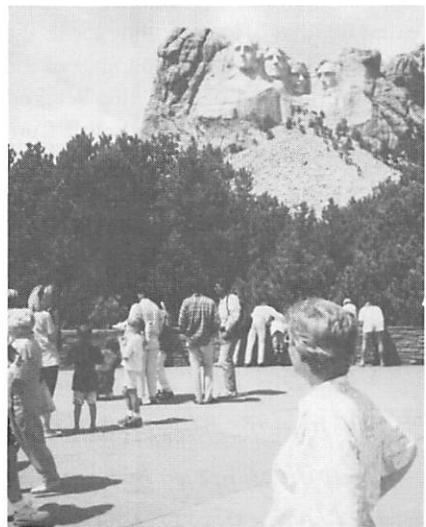
The Play Producer, who happens to be a woman, had more to say. She added:

Our Play has endured for so many years precisely because it is not meant to appeal merely to one type of audience, or be viewed on one level of interpretation...I think any production which has reached over ten million people must be commended for its persistence in speaking to the public, rather than condemned because it does not conform to one or another interpretation of Christ's message. We are all in God's service, no matter how we approach it....

Historical Critical Method

Dear readers, when the subject under discussion is how to understand the Bible, if you notice a reference to "evolution" of the biblical text, or if you hear phrases such as "levels of interpretation," beware. Such phraseology is commonly used by espousers of the historical-critical method of Bible interpretation.

The direction the historical-critical method takes is that even if, suppos-



Mrs. Laila Fleischer Enjoying The Black Hills Scenery.

edly, the Bible has errors it nevertheless contains germs of spiritual "truth." Who decides what is "truth"? The individual Bible reader is himself judge and jury over Scripture's words. Using this method the Old Testament and the Gospels are, as one man puts it, "pious but improbable legends, assembled and embellished over several centuries." Another puts it this way: "The New Testament interweaves myth and history."

Sounds much like the above words of the Producer of the Black Hills Passion Play, doesn't it?

To Bible believers the origin of the historical-critical method is ugly and it is devilish. It is reminiscent of the venom first spewed forth by the consummate Scripture-twister and distorter, Satan himself. You remember how, in the Garden of Eden, he subtly asked: "Yea, hath God said?..."

You have read about those "Jesus Seminars" being held in our day. By using historical-critical "scholarship" seminar members have concluded, for example, that "Jesus did not speak the words of John 3:16, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Wicked Tenants, or the seven final words from the cross. Nor did he speak of the end of the world or of his Second Coming. Furthermore, there was no Jewish trial of Jesus nor was any Jewish crowd involved in his condemnation...the

Lord's Prayer was written years after the crucifixion by early Christians, not by Jesus." (*What's Going On Among The Lutherans?* NPH, 1992, p. 81. If you haven't heard, this book is an excellent expose and refutation in layman's language of the "new thinking" of the historical critical method over against the historic Lutheran teaching that the Bible is both true and entirely free from error.)

To summarize: When viewing a "Bible-based" play, film, or television enactment of the Passion or any other of the Bible's contents — Christian, beware! Furthermore, good Christian, do not be afraid to assert: "It's in the Bible!" If it isn't, beware!

And out of love for God's Truth, we would suggest: If you have plans to take in the Black Hills Passion Play some day, it might be just as well that it rain on your parade. In our case, we wish the show had been rained out not only the day we were there, but also the following day when, unfortunately, 8,000 Denver-bound young people were.

But it wasn't. The sun came up beautifully the next day. And, unbeknownst to the youthful audience, that black cloud was there once more to spew its spiritual pollution.

—Pastor Paul Fleischer

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."—2 Pet. 1:20f.

Detroit Receives The Dux's



(l-r) Pastors Mark Bernthal, Leroy Dux, Mark Bohde, Karl Brandle

On January 2, 1994 Pastor Mark Bernthal of Saginaw, Michigan preached the installation sermon for Leroy Dux, who became the resident pastor for Mt. Zion congregation of greater Detroit. Basing his message on Psalm 102:12-13 & 16 the preacher emphasized the blessing that God was showing to Mt. Zion by providing a shepherd who would use God's Word to build His Church.

More than 60 people, including members and visitors from the congregation, attended the service which was held in the community room at the Huntley Square apartment complex. This room has served as the worship site for the congregation since the fall of 1993. The congregation in Detroit has been in existence since the early 1970's. Much of the time the congregation has worshiped in the homes of members.

A number of CLC pastors have conducted services here in the past. Prior to Pastor Bernthal, Pastor Paul Tiefel (then of Sister Lakes) served for many years. Pastor John Klatt served as the first resident pastor from 1976 through 1983. Through the years of her history the congregation has

been blessed with faithful pastors to serve those in Detroit united in their sincere devotion to the Word of God in Law and Gospel. The officers of the congregation are presently held by: Matt Fobear, President; Craig Ahrens, Vice President; and Dr. Fred Holland, Treasurer.

The members of Mt. Zion are happy to receive Pastor Dux, his wife Ann, and their children Megan, Ryan, Seth, and Miles. Pastor Dux was born in Wisconsin and attended Northwestern College, Watertown, WI and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, WI. He had served in the Wisconsin Synod as a missionary in Africa and as a parish pastor in the US. He and his family joined the CLC in 1992. In October, 1993 he was received by colloquy into the ministry of the CLC.



Pastor Dux with Congregational President Matt Fobear (l) and Treasurer Dr. Fred Holland.

(We thank Pastor Dux for submitting this information to us. And we bid him and his family "a hearty welcome" into our CLC fellowship! God's blessings rest upon you! - The Editor.)

Announcements

Address

The Rev. Leroy Dux
25784 Arlington
Roseville, MI 48066
Phone (810) 771-9490



Anniversary Celebration

On June 12, 1994 Luther Memorial Church will mark the 48th anniversary of Gerhardt W. Mueller in the teaching ministry. This service of thanksgiving and praise will be held at 3:00 p.m., followed by a dinner and reception in honor of the Muellers. We invite all our brethren of the CLC to join us on that day. Any correspondence in connection with this occasion may be addressed to Luther Memorial Church in care of Pastor John H. Johannes, 197 E. Pioneer Road, Fond du Lac, WI 54935-6111.



Minnesota Delegate Conference

Date: Sunday, June 12

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Berea Lutheran, Inver Grove Heights

Agenda:

Convention Prospectus

Business Meeting

—*Pastor Rick R. Grams, Secretary*



Wisconsin Delegate Conference

When: Begins at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, June 6 (CDT); closes at 12:00 on Tuesday, June 7.

Where: Luther Memorial of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

Agenda:

*Study of the 1994 CLC Convention Prospectus

*A Bible Study

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 7-9, 1994 beginning at 10:00 a.m. (CDT) on Tuesday through 12 noon on Thursday.

Place: Redeemer Ev. Lutheran Church, Bowdle, SD

Agenda:

**Devotional Study of James 1:27 - Layman Don Claeys

**Can Stewardship of Resources be a Scriptural Reason to Decline Medical Treatment? - Pastor Walter Schaller and Layman Ray Kolb (or alternate)

**In Light of our Doctrinal Stand of "Mark and Avoid" (False Teachers), are We Being Hypocritical in Sending our Children to Public Schools which Teach the Established False Religion of Atheistic Humanism? — Pastor Joel Fleischer

**Toward a More Effective ILC Recruitment in Our Congregations — Pastor Jay Hartman and Layman David Klatt

**To Borrow or Not to Borrow: Can a Lack of Funds for a Certain Thing be God's Way of Speaking His Will to Us (Gambling on the Future) - Layman Larry Dassow

Conference Chaplain: Pastor Lawrence Bade

Conference Speaker: Pastor Michael Wilke
—*Pastor Steven Sippert, Secretary*