

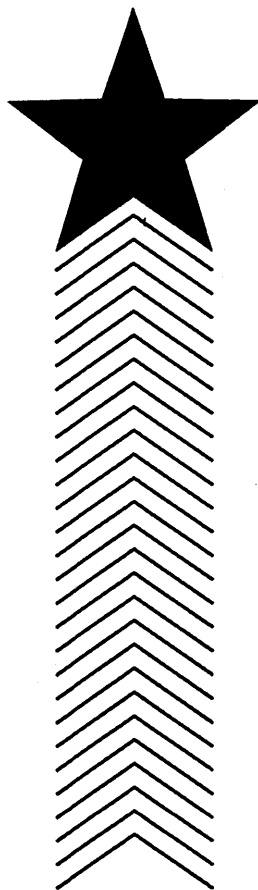
LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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*... the star, which
they saw in the east,
went before them,
till it came and
stood over where the
young child was.*

*When they saw
the star, they
rejoiced with
exceeding great joy.*

MATTHEW 3 : 9 & 10



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THE EPIPHANY TEST



Test Of Knowledge

No, this is not a spelling test. You know how to spell the word. And you know the unchanging date, always the twelfth day of Christmas — the 6th of January. You probably know that it means “manifestation” or “appearing.” Some Lutheran churches have a service on that day. Some churches even wait to celebrate *Christmas* on Epiphany day, recalling the biblical fact that certain people came from the “outside” world, following a star to the house where “King Jesus” was. This signifies something about Jesus’ incarnation. Can you guess what this is?

It was probably two years *after* Christmas when those Wise Men came — not actually on Christmas Eve itself — you probably knew that! You probably know what big city they came to at first, who the mean king was at that time, and what they were told (and even from which Old Testament book)! But do you know how *many* men came? Or where from, exactly? Or what really moved them to come in the first place? Who or what were these men anyway? Can you spell, correctly, all three gifts which these men brought?

This Epiphany business is getting to be quite a test. That’s the way it is for many folks: Epiphany is more of a question mark than an exclamation point because — besides all the lack of information — we just do not know what to *do* with Epiphany?!?

Test Of Faith!

It is one thing to be able to answer certain fact questions. But it is quite

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another thing to believe the meaning that is enclosed in the facts given. Actually, Epiphany is more than just a day. It is a season of the Church Year, like Advent and Lent are. If you like sports, then you know that, in golf or soccer or tennis or baseball, for example, it is one thing to strike the ball. But it is another thing to "follow through" after the hit.

Epiphany is like a "follow through" of Christmas. You know lots of facts about Christmas: Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, Bethlehem, God's wondrous great love for sinners everywhere. But do you follow through, making use of Christmas each day, applying it in your life? Oh, we believe all that the Scriptures tell us about Christmas. We believe it very sincerely!

And then along comes Epiphany! Epiphany asks serious questions, and gives firm answers. Is this Christ-Child just for us? No, He is also for others! Can you do something about that? Yes, you can! Here we have a test of faith — one which God helps us to pass. By His Word and sacraments we "follow through."

Grim Season - Great Opportunity!

Around Christmas, and into Epiphany, there are some gruesome dates on the Church's calendar. There's St. Thomas' Day (supposedly martyred); St. Stephen's Day, the "Feast of Stephen" (actually killed); St. John the Apostle and Evangelist

Day (intensely persecuted, finally exiled); then the Holy Innocents' Day (all murdered).

If nothing else, these dates are sober reminders that this is not a season for childishness and toys. There is a serious "follow through" that points all the way to the cross and beyond! Jesus saw it. And He went on to the cross, and beyond. Now He comes into our hearts and lives, and He calls us to swing and follow through to the cross, and beyond.

Only faith can do that. Only faith passes this Epiphany test. Faith alone in this Christ. God gives us that faith.

Not For Wimps!

The Old Testament promised that "outsiders" would be led to Jesus — to inquire, to believe and respond. St. Paul echoes this in Romans chapter 15. He was "the Apostle to the Gentiles." We remember his "Epiphany Season Church Calendar Date" this month — January 25th.

St. Paul faced the test. It was more than knowledge. It meant all the trouble of the "follow through." Hatred and persecution followed him, lying in wait around every corner, in most every city and town. He had knowledge, and he had faith, but he was also given the gift of love, to be able to declare Christ even under great stress.

The Epiphany season (like Christmas) is not for wimps. It is actually an excellent Mission Festival

season. That idea keeps Epiphany alive among us. For Jesus is manifestly on His mission, to the cross, to suffer and die for the sins of the whole world. He passed the biggest test of all, and the prize is ours. By faith in the virgin's Son we are forgiven, beloved children of our heavenly Father.

That is crystal clear! Epiphany reminds us that *other* people too have got to hear the test results, and become "wise (men, and women and children) unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

And now God gives us His Great Commission, and puts us to the test!

—Pastor Warren Fanning



A New Year's Message From Our CLC President —

OUR FAITHFUL LORD

With the passing of the old year and the entrance into the new, we are reminded of the passing of life. No one is the same as he was a year ago. If there has been a marriage, a birth, a death, our families are not the same. One's church may not be the same. There are new members, more members, fewer members. We can multiply the changes in our life circumstance over and over again.

As Christians we appreciate the fact that in all the changes of our life, God our Father has not changed. His love and compassion, His mercy and kindness remain ever the same. Not a profound thought, but a comforting one. With all the changes in our lives, it is so easy to forget the Word, as well as the significance of our Father's promise: "I am the Lord, I change not..." It is a word that is even more comforting read in its context: "Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob" (Malachi 3:6).

That is a Gospel word. The Gospel has not changed. It addresses another unchangeable aspect of our life: "We daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment" (5th

Petition). Scripture tells us: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:9). Our *faithful God* will not turn those away who come to Him in contrition and repentance. How better to start the new year than in contrition and repentance? How better to start the new year than with the assurance of divine forgiveness? We thank our Father for His steadfast love and mercy; His Son, Jesus Christ, for reconciling us to the Father; the Holy Spirit for the faith to believe — our God for His unchanging and unwavering faithfulness.

If our need, deliverance from sin and death, remains the same, and the answer to the need, salvation through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, remains the same, then our message must remain the same, otherwise how shall the need be filled? Members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession need not fear that the message from their pulpits will change. This is a pledge to members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession: Your pastor will not

change the message.

There is something we pray *will not remain the same*, however. Starting with the pastor and through each congregation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, we pray that the Gospel truth of salvation will inspire in us all *deeper* faith, *stronger* hope, *growing* commitment, *increased* love, *expanding* witness. May “the

God of peace . . . make you complete . . . in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13:20-21).

Our faithful God bless and keep you and your families, as well as your church family, in this new year.

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer



“New Creatures In Christ”

(2 Cor. 5:17)

Studies in Second Corinthians

Beginning a new Series — Chapter 1

The Ministry Of Reconciliation

Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians emphasizes the power of the cross as it is revealed in connection with the “ministry of reconciliation.” The key chapter of 2 Corinthians is chapter 5. The key words in this letter are the words “**IN CHRIST**” — “if anyone is **IN CHRIST**, he is a new creation” (5:17).

God has committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation. This ministry is the Gospel proclamation “that God was reconciling the world to himself **IN CHRIST**, not counting men’s sins against them” (5:19). In this book of the Bible the apostle Paul reveals the glory of this ministry. Like the Gospel itself, this ministry is a paradox, that is, an apparent contradiction. The glory of the Gospel is revealed through the lowliness of the ministry of reconciliation that brings us the Gospel. The paradox of

the Gospel ministry is revealed in Paul’s public ministry in the Greek city of Corinth.

The Gospel Ministry Under Attack

Paul claims that he is an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God (1:1). His ministry in Corinth was not easy nor was it outwardly successful. In his first letter Paul had dealt with the problems experienced within this congregation carved out of a pagan environment. The congregation struggled with problems of sexual

immorality, marriage, pride over spiritual gifts, misuse of the Lord's Supper, and questions regarding the reality of the physical resurrection. The apostle continually brought these Christians back to the cross of Christ. Beneath the surface the very Gospel ministry of the apostle was under attack. There were factions within which attacked the ministry of Paul as being weak and ineffective. His answer was that he was sent to preach the Gospel — not with words of human wisdom, because this would empty the cross of its power.

Paul was engaged in a battle for his very existence as an apostle. The battle was not for his ministry, but for the existence of the Gospel itself. Every pastor knows the human agony and pressure that seems impossible to endure when his ministry is questioned and attacked. Every true pastor of the Gospel realizes his human frailty and weakness. The lack of outward success and the lowliness of the cross seem to be a stumbling-block to the ministry. In this first chapter the apostle shares the difficulties of his ministry with the Corinthians. He speaks of the "sufferings of Christ which flow over in our lives" and the "distresses," "sufferings," and "hardships" which were a part of his ministry.

Paul had written the first letter to the Corinthians. He then sent Timothy as his representative to the congregation. The opposition to his ministry continued. He was forced to make a second visit to Corinth which is described as a "painful visit" (2:1, 13:1-2). Titus then brought to Paul the good news that the church expressed its affection, sorrow, and deep

concern for Paul. Yet there remained a core of opposition to Paul and his ministry. He was forced to end his letter (13:1-4) with the warning "I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me."

A Ministry Of God's Grace

God has committed to us the "ministry of reconciliation." This ministry, like the Gospel itself, is a ministry of God's grace. God uses the weak and foolish things of this world so that it is obvious that the power of the ministry rests in the Gospel. The saving grace of God is revealed through the apparent weakness of the ministry. In this chapter the apostle reveals the amazing things the grace of God accomplishes in connection with sufferings and pressures in connection with Christ.

Through distresses every pastor learns the truth experienced by the apostle Paul. "God comforts us in our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." The Lord prepares ministers for their Gospel ministry through the distresses and troubles connected with the cross.

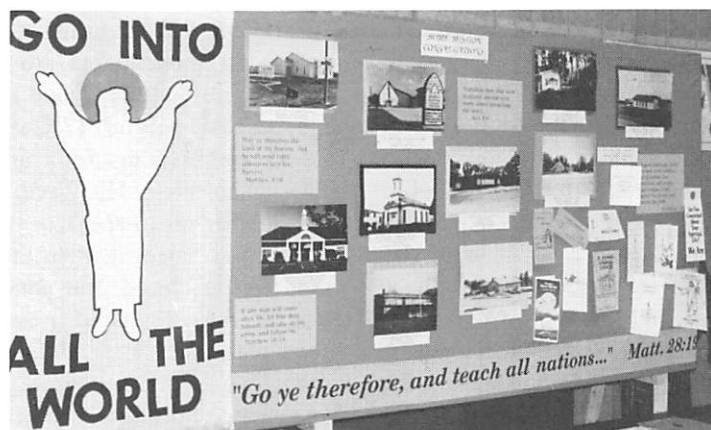
Through sufferings every pastor also learns not to rely on himself and his strength but on God, who raises the dead. There is always the danger of pride which leads people to conclude: "Look what I have done." The Lord uses the lowly and weak things of this world so that no one will boast in themselves. Like Paul we learn to boast in the Lord and in the power of the Gospel.

Through the hardships of the

ministry every pastor is driven to the grace of God in Christ. God saved us by grace in Jesus Christ. Our salvation is entirely the work of God. The Gospel ministry also emphasizes the undeserved grace of God. The Gospel ministry with its lowliness and weakness is the vehicle of God's

grace. "Now this is our boast: ...We have done so not according to worldly wisdom, but according to God's grace" (1:12). It is God who works in and through us in Christ. To God alone be the glory. For God has committed unto us the "ministry of reconciliation."

—Pastor John Schierenbeck



The Open Door

What is an open door for mission work or outreach?

In Revelation 3:8 we learn that the Lord set before the church of Philadelphia an open door which no one could shut. On Paul's second missionary journey there was definitely a closed door in Asia Minor. "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them..." (Acts 16:6-7). We today, however, are not privy to a direct message from God as to a specific open or closed

door.

On our part we should go back to the Great Commission given by our Lord to His church and repeated in all the Gospels. We are well familiar with Matthew's record in chapter 28 of how as we go we are to make disciples of all nations. In chapter 16 of Mark's Gospel the words of our Lord remind us again about going and that, in the process, we are to preach the Gospel to the whole of creation. Luke records the resurrected Lord's words to His church in the prophecy in chapter 24: "repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations." John records the scene that Easter evening

when the Lord said to His apostles: "I send you." In John's twentieth chapter the Gospel writer reminds all how the church represented there by the apostles has the precious proclaiming power of the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus, repeating the Master's very words. The assumption, the injunction, and the prophecy is that we will go.

Another assumption is to treat the world as an open door. Read through the contexts of the previously cited chapters and see no limitations. Wherever each of us is, it is as a witness to Christ — as one who declares the wonderful deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. As it is with the individual, so it is with a group of Christians. We have been given the power of the Gospel of forgiveness. This is the compass and stabilizer for our group's movement, as well as the heart for the life's trip of the individual.

Ambassadors For Christ

In life's divine manual (besides the direction being given us geographically) the will of God is explicitly stated. He is forbearing,

"not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Our God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Not only do we go and witness, knowing it is God's desire; it is also a fact. God in Christ has forgiven all mankind their sins. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us" (2 Cor. 5:19-20). As ambassadors for Christ we seek an audience for His Word. If they will not allow us to speak or if, upon hearing they reject it, then the door would appear closed. But notice that we make the attempt to present the Gospel message as His emissaries.

We see the closed door demonstrated after the attempt on the part of the seventy to give the Good News: "But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you; nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near'" (Lk. 10:10-11). On



The Commissioning of Missionary Bohde (cf. Story, p. 15). (L-R) Pastors James Sandeen, Paul Tiefel, Leroy Dux, Missionary Bohde, David Koenig, Mark Bernthal, James Albrecht.

Paul's first missionary journey after an initial receptiveness at Antioch in Pisidia, they "stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and went to Iconium" (Acts 13:50-51). The door closed for a time. But then Paul returned to that city of persecution, as well as to the others, strengthening the souls of the converts.

In sending out the twelve the Lord said the same to them as He did to the seventy: "And if any place will not receive you and they refuse to hear you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet for a testimony against them" (Mk. 6:11). In both cases the clearly stated assumption prior to the marking of the closed door is that they went and sought to gain a hearing for the Word. In Paul's case at Antioch of Pisidia, he and Barnabas were there, had

preached, and the Spirit had converts. Then the door was closed.

How can we today determine if a door is open or closed to the Word? There will most likely not be a vision of a man of Macedonia beckoning to a certain place, nor will there be a divine revelation of the Spirit to stay clear of yet other places. Rather, we should assume that all the world is the open door until we see — through the exercise of sanctified common sense — that the place, town, district, or nation is closed to the Word.

Individually likewise, I suggest that we should assume there are far more opportunities (open doors) to witness than we have generally taken advantage of.

Based upon what we have considered, we will consider next some practical applications of the Word to learn what is "open" and what is "closed."

—Pastor David Koenig



Looking Back
in the
Lutheran
Spokesman

CROOKED STICKS AT AUGSBURG A.D. 1530. . . . The Church's one commission is to preach the Gospel. Christ's kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).

But the Roman Catholic Church had become a kingdom of this world long before Luther's time. It crowned emperors in the Holy Roman Empire.

It exercised great power and influence over state rulers. It brought the authority of the papacy into the affairs of the state. On the other hand, the power of the state was brought into the affairs of the papacy.

This explains why both the Church and the State took action against Luther. The Pope formally excommunicated him in 1521 in an act of church discipline. In the same year at the Diet of Worms, Charles V took civil action against Luther by outlawing him . . . Here we see a very crooked stick — the Pope upholding his religious aims through the state and the state setting itself over the

conscience of its subjects in matters of religion. So it was also at the Diet of Augsburg. Pope and Emperor worked together to bring about an agreement with those who had left the Roman Church and to force them back into its fold.

. . . When all attempts at reconciliation failed and the Emperor gave Luther and his followers till April 1531 to submit or else feel the edge of the sword, Luther gave God His due and did not submit. His answer was the answer of Peter and the apostles in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Luther was dead set against his followers using the sword in his defense. He appealed against its use to his old friend and adversary, the powerful Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, then at the Diet, in a 10-page letter from the Coburg in which he pleads: "Since, as has been said, there is no hope of agreement in doctrine, I most submissively pray that your Electoral Grace will work together with others that our adversaries will keep the peace and believe what they

will, but let us too believe the truth which has now been made known before their eyes and found blameless." If his plea should fail Luther would choose to suffer the sword rather than obey the emperor and disobey God in whose Word his conscience was bound.

Thank God we are Americans living in a free country. We do not have to be afraid of the sword if we for conscience' sake take exception to any religious activities of the state. We may object to a tax-supported and state-controlled chaplaincy or to prayers in state schools. But aren't we sometimes afraid to speak out because of public opinion? Here too we ought to obey God rather than men and ever guard and defend our religious liberty and the scriptural principle of separation of church and state. Above all else let us avoid the unholy mixing of church and state as seen in many church bodies who feel that it is their business to hold forth on political and social questions. Let us stick to our business of preaching the eternal Gospel! (*Otto J. Eckert*)



The Hopeful Monsters of Evolution

Since the time of Darwin, evolutionists have looked to the fossil record for historical evidence of evolution. Most evolutionists now concede, however, that the fossil record fails to show the progressive transformation of any living organism into a distinctly different kind of organism. This has presented some nasty difficulties for evolutionists — but they have made it clear that they will not be dissuaded by the mere lack of evidence, nor will they turn to a

Creator to explain this enigma. Rather, evolutionists hope that monsters may come to their rescue!

All animals and plants appear suddenly in the fossil record and are not preceded by continuous transitional stages. While some of these fossilized organisms have become extinct, many have persisted right up to the present time in what appears to be essentially their original form, showing only a limited range of variation. Bats, for example appear

suddenly in the fossil record with no evidence of “pre-bat” ancestors. Fossil bats have all the same distinctive features we see in bats today, including extraordinarily long webbed fingers on their fore limbs and “backward” facing hind limbs. (Bat knees and toes face to the rear!) Even the distinctive shape of the bat skull, which serves to channel sound to their ears for navigation by sonar (echo location), is found in fossil bats just as it is in all modern bats.

The absence of even a single example of a continuous fossil sequence showing the progressive stages of evolution of any plant or animal would certainly seem to be an insurmountable problem for evolutionism. Evolutionists have long been aware of this problem and have felt compelled to try to explain it away by any means possible, short of abandoning their faith in evolutionism itself. In 1944 the evolutionist George Gaylord Simpson spoke of these missing transitional forms in his book *Tempo And Mode In Evolution: “Their absence is so nearly universal that it cannot, off hand, be imputed to chance, and does require some attempt at special explanation as has been felt by most paleontologists.”* Paleontologists have indeed been trying to imagine some “special explanation” for how progressive evolution could occur without leaving any fossil evidence. Since evolutionary speculations have rarely been restricted by the demands of experimental verification, evolutionists have allowed their imaginations to run free and have now devised a really outrageous explanation for their lack of evidence.

The absence of even a single example of a continuous fossil sequence showing the progressive stages of evolution of any plant or animal would certainly seem to be an insurmountable problem for evolutionism.

In the 1930s paleontologist Otto Schindewolf concluded that the missing links in the fossil record were not really missing at all, but rather were there in the first place! Schindewolf proposed that all the major evolutionary transformations must have occurred in *single large steps*. He proposed, for example, that at some point in evolutionary history, a reptile laid an egg from which a bird was hatched! This bizarre notion was championed in 1940 by the geneticist Richard Goldschmidt of the University of California at Berkeley. Like Schindewolf, Goldschmidt resigned himself to the fact that true transitional forms were not found despite over a hundred years of searching for them, and that evolutionary theory would simply have to accommodate this fact.

Goldschmidt sought to advance Schindewolf’s notion of evolution through single large steps by trying to imagine a plausible mechanism for it. He suggested that the answer might lie in what are known as embryological monsters, such as the occasional birth of a two-legged sheep or a two-headed turtle. Goldschmidt conceded that such monsters rarely survived very long in nature, but he hoped that over a long period of time some monsters

might actually be better suited to survive and reproduce than their normal siblings. Goldschmidt named this monstrously hopeless speculation the "*hopeful monster theory*." Since there was not even the slightest shred of evidence to support the hopeful monster theory, it was dismissed with derision by almost all evolutionists of his time. But Goldschmidt was quick to point out to his critics that there wasn't the slightest evidence for their gradual evolution either!

The hopeful monster theory would have joined the "recapitulation theory" in the scrap heap of abandoned evolutionary speculations, were it not for Stephen J. Gould and Niles Eldridge. In 1972 these influential evolutionists resurrected the long-discredited hopeful monster theory and gave it a more respectable name — "*punctuated equilibrium*." This theory speculates that the intermediate stages in the evolution of organisms do not appear in the fossil record because these transitional organisms were short-lived, extremely unstable species which, as luck would have it, quickly evolved into stable species. Thus, the evolution of any organism is characterized by long periods of *equilibrium* (no evolutionary change) during which time many offspring, and thus many fossils, are produced — punctuated by relatively rapid bursts of evolution that left no fossil record. In the May 1981 issue of *Discover* magazine, Gould explained that "*two outstanding facts of the fossil record — geologically sudden origin of new species and failure to change thereafter*" actually "*predict-ed*" this new evolutionary theory!

While most evolutionists have now

reluctantly accepted punctuated equilibrium as the only way out of a difficult situation (i. e. no evidence), a few stubbornly cling to classical Darwinism, and indeed, it is this discredited version of evolution that is generally taught as "fact" in our schools. Eldridge challenged classical Darwinists by reminding them that they could disprove the punctuated equilibrium theory if they were to find so much as a single series of intermediate forms in the fossil record; to date no one has. Of course the sudden appearance of relatively unchanging organisms in the fossil record is perfectly consistent with special creation, but most evolutionists find the idea of an omnipotent Creator to be simply unthinkable.

Many of the arguments that Eldridge and Gould have used to refute the beliefs of classical Darwinists sound like they are actually trying to support special creation, but this is hardly their intent. For example, in his regular column in *Natural History* magazine (May 1977, pp 12-16), Gould chided the gradual evolutionists for appealing to the "*extreme imperfection*" of the fossil record in an effort to explain the missing links. He countered that even if we were to grant this "*traditional escape*," it still would not answer the biggest question — the viability of the transitional forms themselves. Gould pointed out that it is difficult to even imagine how transitional animals passing through the intermediate stages of evolution would be benefited or even survive. He asked: "*Can we invent a reasonable sequence of intermediate forms, that is, viable, functioning organisms, between*

ancestors and descendants? Of what possible use are the imperfect incipient stages of useful structures? What good is half a jaw or half a wing?" Now that's a good question: one only needs to imagine a mouse-like creature slowly transforming into a bat to appreciate what Gould is saying. The reader may well ask at this point, of what use is evolutionary speculation itself — and why is it

being taught as a "fact" in our schools?

—Dr. David N. Menton

(Editor's notes: The highlighted sentence was chosen by us. The phrase "our schools" refers to the public school system. Dr. Menton welcomes reactions to his writings. His address is 11 So. Tealbrook Dr., St. Louis, MO 63141. Phone (314) 993-1406.)



From The Editor's Desk —

Diary Of A Fetus

A number of years ago I came upon this "diary" in some pro-life literature. Most every year when we come to the sixth commandment in catechism lessons I read it to the class. Many times I have been asked for a copy of it by students who have been moved by it and want to pass it along.

It goes like this:

October 5 — Today my life began. My parents do not know it yet. I am as small as the pollen of a flower, but it is I already. I will be a girl. I will have blond hair and blue eyes. Nearly everything is settled already, even that I shall love flowers.

October 19 — I have grown a little, but I am still too small to do anything by myself. My mother does almost everything for me, though she still does not know that she is carrying me under her heart. But is it true that I am not yet a real person? That only my mother exists? I am a real person, just as a small crumb of bread is still real bread. My mother is and I am.

October 23 — My mouth is just now beginning to open. Just think — in a year or so I'll be laughing; and later I'll start to talk. My first word will be "Mama."

October 25 — Today my heart began to beat. It will beat softly for the rest of my life, never stopping! After many years it will tire, it will stop, and then I shall die.

November 2 — I am growing continually. My arms and legs are taking shape, but I must wait a long time before those tiny legs will raise me to my mother's arms; before these little arms will be able to conquer the earth and befriend people.

November 12 — Tiny fingers are beginning to form on my hands. How small they are! One day I'll stroke my mother's hair with them. I shall take her hair to my mouth and she'll say: Oh nasty!

November 20 — Only today the doctor told my mother that I am

living here under her heart. How happy she must be! Are you happy, mother?

November 25 — My mother and father are probably thinking about a name for me! And they don't even know that I am a little girl, so they are probably calling me "Andy." But I want to be called "Barbara." I am growing so big.

December 10 — My hair is growing. It is as bright and shiny as the sun. I wonder what kind of hair my mother has?

December 13 — I am almost able to see, though it is night around me. When mother brings me into the world, it will be full of sunshine and overflowing with flowers. I have never seen a flower, you know. But more than anything, I want to see my mother. How do you look, mother?

*December 24 — I wonder if my mother hears the delicate beat of my heart? Some children are born with sickly hearts, and then the gentle finger of the doctor performs miracles to make them healthy. But my heart is healthy. It beats so evenly: *tup-tup, tup-tup...You have a healthy little daughter, mother!**

December 28 — Today my mother killed me.

The day you read this 4,400 babies (on the average) are being murdered by the act of abortion in our country. "But . . . murderers . . . shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

We hasten to add that abortion is not the unforgiveable sin. We truly hurt for and with those who may have ended the life of a fetus and who did not know the serious nature of that act. For all who repent there is forgiveness, for "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7). Turn to Jesus and be washed clean from sin.

—Pastor Paul Fleischer



DO NOT BE DECEIVED

This month is the twenty-first anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal in the United States. This practice with practically no legal restrictions has been with us now for over two decades, with abortions being performed at the rate of around 1.5 million per year.

What effect has the Supreme Court decision and millions of legal abortions had on the thinking of Americans? Clearly there are still

millions who are horrified at the practice, recognizing that every time an abortion is done a human life is taken. But — if the polls I have seen are accurate — a majority of Americans think that abortion should continue to be legal. Many of them may not really approve of the practice, but they still think it should be an option available to women who want it. Though not being actively for it, they cannot quite bring themselves to oppose it either. *Roe Vs. Wade* has

had a corrupting influence on our country.

We Christians ought to ask how twenty-one years of legalized abortions has affected our thinking on the issue. Are we not quite as concerned about it as we once were? Are we starting — at least in our thinking — to side with those who are “personally opposed” to abortion but think it should be a woman’s choice? Are we still appalled that men and women in positions of authority and leadership stand up and publicly defend abortion as a woman’s right?

We should understand that the open, widespread, and legally protected practice of evil can slowly take its toll even on those who do not participate in it or even approve of it. Abortion is only one example; we could mention also sexual immorality, the worship of mammon, and many other things condemned in God’s Word. What at first shocks and appalls us eventually becomes unremarkable. In our minds — if not out loud — we may begin to ask whether this or that sin is really so

serious. When this happens we have become weak and vulnerable to temptation. And even if we are not actually tempted to a sinful deed, we are not honoring God in our thoughts by upholding what He calls good and condemning what He calls evil.

Our Lord warns us against being deceived by the world’s casual attitudes toward sin. “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” (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Our defense against this danger is in the Word. It keeps us from becoming callous and indifferent to evil. It keeps our spiritual senses sharp. Not that we may be self-righteous, but that we may recognize and humbly confess our own sins, trust in Christ for forgiveness, find strength to avoid temptations, and warn others.

—*Pastor John Klatt*



Bohdes Bound For Thailand

On the evening of November 6 Mt. Zion congregation of greater Detroit hosted the commissioning service for Mark Bohde, the CLC missionary to Thailand. During the service Rev. David Koenig reminded Missionary Bohde that God had planned His work through him among the nations, using Jeremiah 1:1-10 as the basis for his sermon.

Several pastors from the Great Lakes Conference attended the service

and participated in the laying on of hands, with members from as far away as Madison, Wisconsin and Columbus, Ohio joining in the worship.

The tremendous blessings and challenges that lie ahead of Mark and Shelly and their daughters were placed into God’s hands. The hymns and prayers of the commissioning service reminded us all that the God of grace will go with them as Savior

and Protector.

It is by God's blessing that we of the CLC are sending a missionary to Thailand, and we hope this unique experience becomes common in our midst.

The Bohde family is busy preparing for their departure. (*At this writing they were to have left December 31 - Ed.*) We ask that the Triune God will grant the Bohdes temporal and spiritual rewards as they labor in our behalf.

Also, we pray that God would lead us to take seriously the mission fields of the unbelievers in our own neighborhoods that they too might hear the Gospel of Christ.

—Pastor Leroy Dux

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NOTE: The article "And they came with haste..." in the December 1994 issue was by Pastor Paul Schaller.

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Wintering In Arizona?

Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School, Phoenix, encourages all CLC members and friends to worship with us while in Arizona. If you are near Tucson please contact Robert Johnson at (602) 296-7750 for Phoenix worship information. If you are nearer Phoenix please contact Pastor Michael Eichstadt at (602) 866-2341.

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Rupprecht's Bible History References

The CLC Bookhouse has learned that the two-volume set of Rupprecht's Bible History references are still available, but in limited quantity (the supplier has about 400 sets), for \$20.00 per set. When this supply is exhausted, the set will no longer be available. Place your orders now!

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Kansas City, Missouri

A CLC member in Kansas City, Missouri would like to know of other members of the CLC in or near Kansas City. Please submit such information to Rev. Daniel Fleischer, 460 75th Ave. NE in Minneapolis, MN 55432 or to Rev. Michael Sprengeler, 620 E. 50th St. in Loveland, CO 80538.

Pastor Paul Schaller
N. 4724 Wall
Spokane, WA 99205

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LC Directory

Directory is available for purchase (sent with order) from the Lutheran Book Concern, Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1000 1st St. SE, Eau Claire, WI 54601. Prices are \$2.00 each.

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Great Lakes Pastoral Conference

February 14-15, 1995

Prince of Peace
Middleton, Wis.

Agenda:

1. OT Exegesis, Ecclesiastes 8:1-9 - Paul Tiefel
2. NT Exegesis, 2 Corinthians 8:1ff - David Schmidt
3. Relation of the Public Ministry and the Priesthood of All Believers - Professor
4. What should be our approach to former brethren organized into church bodies, and with conservative Lutheran groups in flux on doctrine? - John Ude
5. Can Public Education be Equated with Humanism? - John Johannes
6. The Usage of "Gospel" in the New Testament - Egbert Albrecht
7. Book Review: Continuation of Walther's *Law & Gospel* - David Koenig
8. American Legion - James Albrecht
Conference Speaker - Michael Sydow
Chaplain - James Sandeen

—David Reim, Secretary