

Lutheran Spokesman

I believe in the Holy Ghost...

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, nor come to him:

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, sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, 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.

(Luther's explanation to the Third Article)



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"We Now Implore God The Holy Ghost"

Or do we? How often do we use the word "implore" anymore? "Implore" seems to fall into a category with ideas like "appeal," "beg," "petition," — all of which suggest that the implorer/appellant/ beggar/petitioner is empty, desolate, impotent.

Perhaps a more popular translation might be phrased: "*We Currently Requisition God...*" As a society we're not very comfortable with the idea of beggarliness. We favor terms like "empowerment," "leverage," "human potential" — anything that implies that we have some sort of bargaining power that will win another's favor.

It's not surprising that this is the case in our convenience-oriented society. Speed, ease, and efficiency are the key words for many. I have friends who tend to think that anybody who's somebody must have an e-mail address. If you don't have one — if you don't even know what e-mail is — don't feel bad. The Holy Spirit doesn't have one either. And He gets along just fine without it.

Beware Of Obstacles

But how well do we do without the Holy Spirit? The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the heart of true fellowship with God. The Corinthians were told that, while His gifts are many, His primary gift is the creation of true faith: "no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). Conversely, He is described to the Romans as "the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). In other words, He makes both input (knowledge of the Lord) and output (the gift of prayer) possible for us.

Clearly then it is of interest to us to receive the Holy Spirit. But that is where we must beware of obstacles to His coming — obstacles that are fundamental to human nature. The book of Acts gives us an example in the case of Simon (chapter 8:9-15).

Simon was known as "the Sorcerer" because he had astonished the people of Samaria with his black

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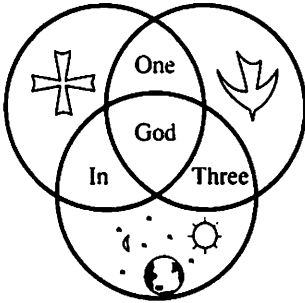
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Spiritual Beggars



arts. When Philip arrived in town, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and verifying his testimony of Christ with miracles and signs, Simon believed, and was even baptized.

But a little while later the apostles arrived and laid their hands on the new believers in apostolic blessing. The Holy Spirit came on the Samaritan church, evidently with some visible manifestation, perhaps as on Pentecost.

At this point Simon's blacker instincts took control. He saw the power of the Holy Spirit as an opportunity to increase his influence with the people (and most likely the size of his bank account). He approached the apostles, cash in hand, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit."

The response could hardly be called a "polite refusal": "Your money perish with you, because you thought the gift of God could be purchased with money..." The case of Simon is a crass example, but in its finer forms such a rejection from the Lord comes to all those who suppose they either merit the graces of the Holy Spirit, or desire them for less than God-glorifying purposes.

Which brings us back to the question of praying for the Holy Spirit. The word *bitten* in the original wording of Luther's hymn (TLH 231) means "ask," "beg," and yes, "implore." The coming and working of the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the nature of the kingdom of Grace — a kingdom where spiritual beggars, appealing to God for mere morsels of mercy, are stunned to find themselves heirs of the whole kingdom instead.

The Holy Spirit is Christ's gift to all who come to this conviction that we have nothing — nothing but Christ, whose righteousness alone justifies us before God. For that reason we often will want to test our thoughts and goals for their true motives: a pastor, for instance, does well to take a moment to consider whether he prepares his words to win the admiration of his listeners, or to convict sinful hearts and edify the penitent with the gospel. A church member will consider: does he or she interact with fellow members with the mind of a helpless one who has been helped by God, or are stubbornness or pettiness allowed to quench the Spirit?

At roughly the same time as Simon's attempt to play "Let's Make A Deal" for the Holy Spirit, there was another man, astonished, waiting, blinded by a heavenly light. Saul had reason to be afraid, since until now he had violently opposed the doctrine of Jesus as the Christ. He had once considered himself a Pharisee's Pharisee; now he was the poorest of the poor. He could only pray that the Lord be merciful to him.

There was a knock at the door. A

man was led into Saul's room. He came with only words, and a gift: "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with

the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17).
Shine in our heart, O most precious Light,
That we Jesus Christ may know aright,
Clinging to our Savior, whose blood hath
bought us
Who again to our homeland hath bro't us.
Lord, have mercy! (TLH 231:2)
—Pastor Peter Reim



How Much Of The Holy Spirit?

Those readers who never experience difficulty in initiating a discussion about our Savior with strangers sitting next to them on the plane, or with unbelievers working at their side or even sharing their home may skip this item and go to the next. This article is intended for those who, like the writer, ever need more help in their daily life of sanctification, and especially in becoming more effective in witnessing to others.

What is our problem? Scripture strongly suggests that a major part of the difficulty may be that we do not have enough of the Holy Spirit. Some may protest this, pointing out that they were baptized in infancy, and that in that Sacrament the Holy Spirit worked faith in Jesus as their Savior, and that they have the assurance of Scripture that the same Spirit has been living within their bodies since that time, sustaining and strengthening their faith through both Word and Sacrament. How then can it be suggested that they may not have enough of God's Spirit?

How Much Of The Spirit Do We Need?

Consider the case of the disciples of Jesus. They too had been baptized. The Holy Spirit had worked faith in their hearts, and dwelt within the temple of their bodies. When Christ asked their opinion as to who He was, the Spirit moved Peter to make the glorious confession: "You are the Christ,

the Son of the living God!" He was ready to take the sword to physically defend His Savior from His enemies.

But was he ready to witness to Christ in the face of the icy blast of the world's hostile unbelief? A servant girl, probably a slave, was enough to unnerve Peter completely in the courtyard of the high priest by observing: "You also were with Jesus, the Galilean." What an opportunity was presented to Peter for witnessing! Yet, though he had received three years of the best possible seminary training under the best possible teacher, under pressure Peter was capable of nothing more than an abject denial of even knowing who Christ was.

When the faith and zeal of the eleven was eventually revived by their resurrected Lord's bodily appearances before them, they took renewed interest in the things pertaining to His kingdom. The Lord commissioned them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. They may have thought they were

*"When the
Counselor comes . . .*



*He will testify
about me.*

ready to begin spreading the good news of the resurrection immediately, but the Lord knew they were still not fully equipped to make that witness. "He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father." Just before ascending into heaven, Jesus told them what they needed to wait for: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Now look at the *new* Peter, after he had been filled with the Holy Spirit! When hauled before the authorities and ordered "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus" Peter and John answered them: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we *cannot but* speak of what we have seen and heard."

How Much Of The Spirit Do We Have?

Only to the perfect, sinless Man, Jesus, has God given the Spirit without measure (Jn. 3:34). To others, the Spirit is given by measure. The Old Testament has many references telling how the "Spirit of God came upon"

Gideon, Samson, David and others when God empowered them to perform some special service for Him. In the New Testament we are told that on Pentecost all of the believers in Jerusalem "were *filled* with the Holy Spirit," suggesting that they were given as much of the Spirit as they could contain. All of God's people today also receive the Holy Spirit, but in varying measure.

Do you need more of the Holy Spirit to empower you to carry on a more active role in witnessing to your Savior? The amount of the Holy Spirit available to you in any area of your sanctified life is not fixed. You *can* obtain more of the Spirit. God *wants* you to have more. Jesus said: "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Lk. 11:13)

Notice that the Lord is not here making this promise to people who are still unconverted. Since such do not pray to the Father through Jesus, they cannot even pray successfully. He is promising this to those who already believe in Christ and *have* the Spirit, assuring them that He wants them to have more and will give them more when they ask for this important blessing.

How Can We Get More Of The Holy Spirit?

The key to receiving more of this best of all gifts is an open line of communication between us and the Holy Spirit. We have this when we spend much time *speaking to Him* in prayer and also regularly *permit Him to speak* to us through His Word in our

public worship and in our private study of the Scriptures.

When our prayer for a larger measure of the Spirit is graciously answered, our hunger for even more of that essential blessing will move us to keep coming back with requests for ever greater portions. Coveting is not always wrong. "Covet earnestly the best gifts!" Paul exhorts us (1 Cor. 12:31). When we covet a greater measure of the Holy Spirit, we are pleading for more of the Source of all spiritual gifts.

How Much Of The Holy Spirit Do We Want?

We don't really need to worry about being too greedy in our prayers for more of the Spirit. Why not? Because our sinful flesh would sooner have us get the seven-year itch than have us get more of the Spirit. Our flesh wants us to *forget* about praying for more of the Holy Spirit. It wants us to think that we already have a

great plenty of God's Spirit. "For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want" (Gal. 5:17).

So then, "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). And let the prayer for a larger measure of the Spirit be among your most urgent requests. Then you will have the boldness to rise to the occasion when the Lord leads someone to sit next to you on the plane that desperately needs the testimony you are equipped to give.

And about your unspiritual coworker. Have you ever thought about this that because of your close relationship with him and because of his respect for you and your way of life he may be more ready to listen to a witness about Christ from you than from anyone else? ". . . How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

—Pastor Norbert Reim



"New Creatures In Christ"

(2 Cor. 5:17)

Studies in Second Corinthians

Chapter 4

The Paradox Of The Gospel Ministry

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. (We are) hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; (we are) perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death

for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you" (2 Cor. 4:7-12).

In the Old Testament God whittled the army of Gideon down from 33,000 to 300 men. The reason God did this is so that Israel would not boast of itself or in its military might. This battle belonged to the Lord. In chapter one the apostle Paul spoke of Jesus and the cross as foolishness and a stumbling block. Paul also spoke of those whom God called to be His own: "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

Jars Of Clay

The paradox of the Gospel ministry is that this glorious treasure of the Gospel is contained in jars of clay. The contrast between the gospel of Christ and the person of those who preach Christ could not be any more emphatic. One reason that God chose us to serve as ministers of the Gospel is so that the emphasis would always be on Christ and the power of God.

God chose real sinners with real weaknesses to be ambassadors for Christ. The lowliness of the Gospel ministry is obvious. In an age which stresses style over substance and equates numbers and growth with success, our ministry stands out as one of lowliness and humbleness.

As believers and a church body we are jars of clay. The box that contains the diamond is unimportant. Often treasures were kept in the most common of carriers (clay pots) so that thieves would not be alerted to the real value of the treasure. You are a fragile container for the treasure of the Gospel. Every true Christian should be acutely aware of his personal sinfulness and unworthiness. The believer stands in his personal corner and without lifting up his eyes cries out, "Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner." Every child of God confesses his personal sinfulness and his sins of commission and omission to God. God has chosen forgiven sinners to proclaim the forgiveness of sins. Only a forgiven sinner could convey the joy of the gospel in word and in his personal life.

Every pastor because of his human weakness and fragileness is a jar of clay. Sometimes our own perceived inabilities cause us to despair and wonder. A young pastor is at first surprised when in marriage counseling, people do not seem to do what he clearly tells them to do. Membership losses within a congregation can cause a period of painful self-examination. I am convinced that when things are going well within a congregation, a pastor gets too much credit; and when things go badly, a pastor receives a disproportionate share of blame. Each of us needs to recognize our own areas of weakness, whether it is in preaching clearly or whether it is a difficulty in getting along with people.

Some of us have physical weaknesses that cause us problems in the ministry.

Glory In The Lord

Paul describes the jar of clay that is our ministry: we are hard pressed on every side, crushed, perplexed, persecuted, struck down. All of this is so that the attention of lost sinners is not directed toward us but is always centered on Jesus Christ. It would be a depressing contradiction to center people's attention on our religious experience and life, as the evangelical movement does. The Lutheran pastor is not a super-star that attracts people to the gospel. All of this is for the purposes of showing that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We add nothing to the power of the gospel. If anyone in the ministry glories, let him glory in the Lord.

Our ministry and its weakness constantly focus the attention of people on Jesus and the power of His cross. It is a blessed comfort to realize that whatever good is accomplished in our ministry is accomplished by the power

of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This needs to be realized by every pastor and then communicated to those who hear the message we proclaim. The message of the gospel is more important than the person of the messenger.

We need to emphasize the preaching of Christ and His cross in our ministry. The paradox of the Gospel is that God has given us this glorious treasure of forgiveness and life in jars of clay. Therefore we are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

"We have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:4-5).

Preserve this ministry
While harvest-days are keeping;
And since the fields are white
And hands are few for reaping,
Send workers forth, O Lord,
The sheaves to gather in
That not a soul be lost
Which Thou art come to win.

—Pastor John Schierenbeck



Last Fall's Pastoral Conference in Corpus Christi. Back: John Klatt, Mark Gullerud, Thomas Schuetze, Stephen Kurtzahn, John Schierenbeck. Front: Andrew Schaller, Terrel Kesterson, Michael Roehl.

**“Fools mock at sin, but among the upright there is favor”
(Prov. 14:9).**

Gems From Proverbs

There is much mocking of sin these days. It is the subject of jokes for stand-up comedians. Sins are spoken of as things thoroughly delightful, as though the greatest pleasures in life are to be found in those things that God has forbidden. New names are found for old sins to make them sound less evil, or even good.

Those who treat sin in such ways are indeed fools, for they deceive themselves about the nature of sin and its consequences. They act as though sin were nothing when it is an offense against God which He will surely judge.

But our proverb says even more than this. The Hebrew word here translated “sin” is used most often of an offering or sacrifice for sin. Whoever makes light of sin also makes light of offerings made to God to atone for sin, especially the offering of Christ who gave Himself to God as an offering for our sins when He suffered and died on the cross.

If sin is nothing — a laughing matter — then the sacrifice of Christ is unnecessary, something to be treated with scorn. And whoever mocks at Christ’s sacrifice is, more than anyone, worthy to be called a fool, for he treats with contempt the only source of deliverance from death and damnation.

The opposite of a fool, according to our proverb, is an upright person.

And the word “upright” must be understood in the context of Scripture. An upright person is not just a person who leads an outwardly upright life, who is a law-abiding citizen or a good neighbor. An upright person is one who is upright in the sight of God, not just in the opinion of his neighbors.

There is only one way to be truly upright and that is to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

Among the upright “there is favor.” The upright — those who are justified before God by faith in His Son — have God’s own favor resting on them. God is pleased with them, not because they are naturally better than others, but because they have been cleansed of all their sins by the precious blood of Christ. The upright enjoy God’s favor and need never fear that He is angry with them or that He will punish them. In all their life they can be confident that He will deal with them in love.

The modern way to deal with sin is to downgrade it. People try to deal with their guilt before God by belittling their own sins. But those who do so only insult God by denying the rightness and holiness of His law, and they make a mockery of the sacrifice of Christ, made to atone for sin.

It is a temptation for all of us to try to deal with our sins this way, to try to excuse our faults rather than confess them. May we rather confess the fullness and greatness of our guilt and trust in Christ, so that the favor of God may rest on us.

—Pastor John Klatt

Violence At Abortion Clinics

A word of clarification perhaps needs to be given regarding violence, and even murder, at abortion clinics by pro-life activists. No, we are not for it!

In "The Diary of A Fetus" in our January issue we used what some might call inflammatory rhetoric when we quoted Revelation 21:8 which says: "But . . . murderers . . . shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." We do indeed believe that those who perform abortions, and/or consent to them, are guilty of murder and stand in need of repentance. There can be no other conclusion for those who believe, as we do, that life as a creation of God begins at conception. However, the warning of the eternal fate of murderers applies also to those who claim to have a justifiable reason to commit it.

Some segments of the pro-life movement are now rationalizing violence and even murder at abortion clinics claiming that they are involved in a "war" to save the unborn. We disagree with the convoluted logic which would condone violence and murder in the name of the Creator-God. In a "just war" killing is, of course, permissible on the part of Christians in the armed services. But to claim abortion clinics are battle sites in a "just war" won't wash for those who recognize that, whether we agree with the law or not, abortion has been made legal in America.

In other words, it is not for us to "play God." We desire to educate people as to the serious nature and consequences of the abortion-act, but in doing this we are not suggesting that God would have us take the law into our own hands in His defense. "Vengeance is mine, and recompense" says the Lord through Moses (Deut. 32:35). This principle of divine retribution is repeated at least twice in the New Testament (see Romans 10:19, Hebrews 12:30).

Almighty God can and will defend His own honor when, and as, He sees fit. He sent judgment on the fallen world with the Noahic Flood, and on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone. He met the challenge to His honor, for example, with Pharaoh in Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon.

Our hearts hurt for every child who is an abortion victim. We heard an updated figure in the last month to the effect that abortions nationwide are down from the daily average of 4,400 to "only" 2,500. The reason given for this down-turn is that "the message of pro-lifers is getting through."

This is bittersweet news. We dare not allow this good news to desensitize our consciences to the evil that is the murder of even one unborn child. Within the legal boundaries open to us, we must not desist from speaking out in behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves (see Prov. 31:8-9).

—Pastor Paul Fleischer

Looking Back
in the
Lutheran
Spokesman

From June 1965

HOW EVERY CHRISTIAN SERVES HIS COUNTRY. When Christians get to feel the world's hostility — the "hatred" that Jesus said should not amaze us — they are often tempted to withdraw. The urge is to colonize; to seek out your own with whom to work and among whom to live.

Sound sensible?

Perhaps, but it is not the Savior's way. When He said GO He scattered His people like seed on the vast acre of the world. There is no Bible directive for a Geneva plan, or church controlled state, as John Calvin sought to establish. Nor is there in Scripture an "Amana" plan for a religious colony. We are to be in the world, while not of it. This is, of course, a harder way. But it is the only way in which our society can be preserved during its time of grace . . . by the salt-like, preserving character of the believers within it.

Should a Christian seek a position of influence in government, business, the arts, and the professions? Will the world *have* him? The surprise answer is *Yes!* Fact is, the world is often quick to appreciate the value of the gifts with which the Spirit enriches the children of God. In one midwestern town the business and professional men regularly gave priority interviews

to the graduates of a local Lutheran high school, even though this school was not as well equipped or as completely staffed as others in the community. You know why. The qualities of honesty, diligence, loyalty, and unselfishness all mean a great deal to any employer. You may not be sought after because of your faith in Christ, but you may very well be wanted for your natural and spiritual gifts.

The president of a substantial Wisconsin business firm was asked whether he found it hard to hold his position without being a member of one of the lodges which are supposed to hold the keys to power positions. His answer was, "If you have what the world wants, you are in. If you don't, even the lodge grip wouldn't get you very far."

Egypt had no love for Joseph's God, but it wanted what Joseph had, and it prospered through his Spirit-given abilities. There is no hint that Nebuchadnezzar or Darius of Persia ever bowed their knees to Daniel's God, but both were pleased to entrust their most vital governmental powers to this great Jewish statesman.

Should a Christian seek office in government? It will not be easy for him to maintain his Christian integrity (as Daniel found out), but this is no valid reason for withdrawing from opportunity. The world needs the services of God's children for survival. And it needs this service on every level in every department.

Savory Salt

The *world* as our Lord speaks of it is so large, while we are so small and so few. Can we possibly be of substantial influence in it? Remember, it

takes but a little salt to flavor and preserve the bulk of a ham; it takes but a small source of light to overcome the darkness of a room. Let us be what we are. What the effect will be is not our concern. Only do not let us hide our convictions, no matter how high or exposed our position might be.

The experience of Abraham's nephew Lot at Sodom and Gomorrah offers a vivid illustration. Peter tells us that Lot was vexed in his soul, day after day, by what he saw. Since he "sat in the gate" of Sodom, we may assume that he was active in local politics, for this expression was used for what we would call the city council. At the time of the angels' visit, he sought desperately to restrain the townspeople, whom he called his brethren, from committing the vice of "sodomy" and so became the victim of their taunts and fury.

Did Lot accomplish anything for these twin cities of vice? His disgust and his rebukes did not change anything, to be sure. And we are not told that he was able to sponsor any legislation to curb the delinquency. We know from Genesis, however, that those cities would have been spared

the frightful judgment of fire and brimstone *if there had been only ten people like Lot living there!* (Gen. 18:32) So we may know that any Christian citizen may serve his country in at least two ways. The fact of his *being there*, for one thing, is enormously important. And being there as a person who is obviously vexed in his soul by the evil around him . . . This may also help. The sins of our times must be reproved by God's people, for the world as such makes light of them. To whatever extent the world may then be restrained from course outburst of sin by such witness, to that extent the world is also granted a continuation of its time for repentance.

Quite a service to perform, is it not?

Let us be busy in thus serving our nation wherever we may live or work. Take courage from the prayer of Jesus, whose Savior-heart is filled with concern for His people as they fulfill their dangerous mission "out there." "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil" (Jn. 17:15).

(Rollin A. Reim)



Sickle Cell Anemia And Other "Good" Mutations Of Evolution

The marvelous ability of all living things to reproduce themselves after their kind is one of the most distinctive properties of life. This reproductive ability depends in part on a vast collection of precise genetic instructions, called genes (about 100,000 in humans), that reside in every cell of each living organism. It is believed that these genes provide the instructions necessary

for not only the assembly and function of each cell, but also for all the organs and even the entire body! A complete set of these instructions is stored in

the chromosomes, inside the nucleus of the cell.

The survival of every living species depends on its ability to pass on its precious genetic instructions, from generation to generation, without significant alteration. First, all of the genetic instructions must be precisely duplicated and passed on by the germ cells to enable the birth of each new individual. Then, from the very first cell of a new individual (a fertilized egg), the genetic instructions must be accurately duplicated for the subsequent production of every cell that makes up the whole organism — about 30 trillion cells (of several hundred different kinds) in the case of our own body! This process must continue throughout life in order to support growth and repair, as well as to replace cells that are continually dying. The red blood cells of our body, for example, are being produced at the rate of about two million per second, to replace older cells which are dying at the same rate!

If a species is to survive, the frequent duplication of its genetic instructions must occur with great precision. There are, in fact, several error-checking mechanisms in living cells that help to ensure the accuracy of their gene duplication. But even if copy errors are avoided, errors can still occur when the cell is not dividing or reproducing. We call such errors that creep into the genetic instructions of a cell *mutations*. There are several kinds of chemicals, viruses, and radiations that are known to cause mutations. Ultraviolet light from the sun, for example can cause mutations in our skin, resulting in a benign form of skin cancer called

basal cell carcinoma. Cancer is so closely associated with mutations that the terms *carcinogenic* (cancer-causing) and *mutagenic* (mutation-causing) are essentially synonymous. Nonetheless, evolutionists insist that some mutations are beneficial and lead to the gradual improvement of a species!

Chance mutations amount to random changes in the highly complex and integrated genetic instructions of the cell. Such changes would be no more likely to improve a living cell (or organism) than would a random interchange of connections in a television set be likely to improve the picture. Although some mutations have no noticeable effect, many are harmful and even fatal. Mutations are so harmful, in fact, that the very survival of all living organisms (from bacteria to man) depends on a complex biochemical mechanism in each cell that identifies mutations as they occur — and repairs them! This marvelous mutation repair mechanism involves an integrated sequence of special enzymes that actually cut out the erroneous (mutant) parts of each gene, and then splice in correct patches. The whole field of “genetic engineering” is based on the discovery, and use, of these naturally occurring “cutting” and “splicing” enzymes.

The importance of mutation repair to human life can be appreciated by examining what happens when it doesn't work properly. There is a human disease called xeroderma pigmentosum, which results from a single defect (itself a mutation) in the complex mutation repair process. This is a hereditary disease, in which the skin and other tissues react in a hypersensi-

tive way to any form of radiant energy. When people suffering from this disorder are exposed to sunlight or x-rays, for example, they develop progressive degenerative changes (more mutations) which lead to cancer, including the often fatal malignant melanoma.

Regrettably, some mutations manage to escape even the normally functioning repair process, and these accumulate throughout life. Some scientists have proposed that aging and death are the result of such unrepaired mutations. It is hard to imagine that anyone could find something good to say about unrepaired mutations — except evolutionists. Evolutionists, you see, believe that mutations (and even death itself) are absolutely essential for the chance evolution of all living organisms, including man! The reason for this, as evolutionist Theodocious Dobzhansky points out, is that “the process of mutation is the only known source of the new materials of genetic variability, and hence evolution (*American Scientist* 45:385).” Thus evolutionist Carl Sagan could say in his book, *The Cosmic Connection*, “we (humans) are the products of a long series of biological accidents.”

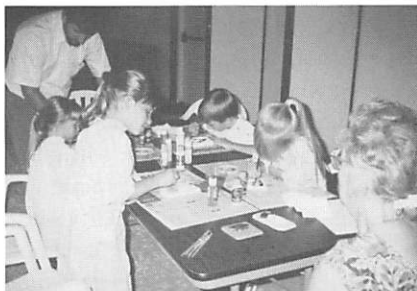
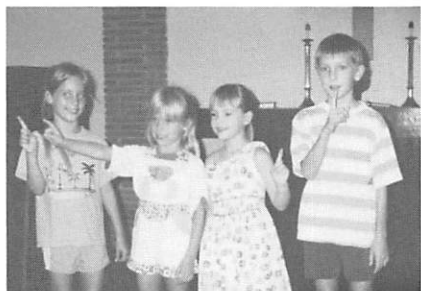
Are biological accidents (mutations) up to the task that evolutionists claim for them? Are there any known examples of unquestionably “beneficial” mutations? Ironically, the primary textbook example of a “good” mutation is one that causes the disease sickle cell anemia! This mutation of blood hemoglobin is considered “good” because people who have it (and survive it!) are more resistant to the disease malaria. The symptoms of

this “good” mutation include: acute attacks of abdominal and joint pain, ulcers on the legs, defective red blood cells, and severe anemia — often leading to death. One can only imagine what the “bad” mutations are like! No wonder that H. J. Mueller, who won the Nobel prize for his work on mutations, said: “It is entirely in line with the accidental nature of mutations that extensive tests have agreed in showing the vast majority of them detrimental to the organism in its job of surviving and reproducing — good ones are so rare we can consider them all bad” (*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 11:331).

The unquestioning faith of evolutionists in the occurrence and beneficial effects of “good” mutations is sustained despite overwhelming evidence against it. In his book *Genetics and the Origin of Species*, Dobzhansky admits that mutations arising both in the laboratory and in natural populations typically produce deterioration, disease, and monstrosities. He even concedes that “such changes, it would seem, can hardly serve as evolutionary building blocks.” Yet in his book *Mankind Evolving*, Dobzhansky insists that, “This is not inconsistent with the recognition that useful mutations did occur in the evolutionary line which produced man, for otherwise, obviously, mankind would not be here.” Such child-like and unquestioning faith is not found in all Christendom. Think about it, chance mutations or intelligent design — which explanation of the origin of the incredible complexity of life requires greater faith?

—Dr. David N. Menton

*Vacation Bible School
Church of the Lutheran Confession
North Port, Florida*



These photos show some of the fun we had at our very first ever VBS at the Church of the Lutheran Confession in North Port. The teachers were Judy Stewart, Guilda Mitchell, Dorothy Garcia, and Pastor Stewart.

Our congregation is made up largely of retired folks, some of whom were a bit unsure about starting a VBS program. Would it be an effective outreach and worth the effort? Would it be too expensive? Would we be overwhelmed with children and be unable to handle them all? Shouldn't we limit enrollment to 20 or 25 before we begin? Yet even with all these questions, the vote was unanimous to begin.

All the fears and doubts were unfounded, of course. The Lord sent the children, the helpers, and the funds to cover the cost of lessons and crafts. And He sent the Holy Spirit and joy for our hearts. And what a joy it was to teach Christ and Him crucified in lessons, songs, crafts, and games!

We have made a beginning. Our only disappointment was that some of the families who planned to attend were away on vacation or were otherwise unable to participate. So we pray that the VBS of the Summer of '95 will show their bright and shining faces in our picture of the joy of learning about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

—*Pastor Karl Stewart*



← **DuPont,
Washington
VBS. See story
on page 16.**

**Vacation Bible School
Ascension Lutheran Church
DuPont, Washington**

One of the most rewarding and encouraging means of mission outreach conducted last year by our mission church, Ascension Lutheran, was their Vacation Bible School. Since the Community Center, which is used for worship, also functions as City Hall on the weekdays, there were no facilities available for a VBS. Plans were made to conduct the school in the village park, and prayers were made that the weather would allow this type of endeavor. The Lord blessed western Washington with beautiful August weather during the week and each day there were 10-13 children in attendance.

Announcements

Little Rock, Arkansas

A CLC member in Little Rock, Arkansas would like to know of other CLC members in that area. For more information please contact Pastor Joel Fleischer, 811 South First Street, Lamar, CO 81052.

Amarillo, Texas

CLC members in the Amarillo, Texas area, or their pastors, are encouraged to contact Pastor Joel Fleischer, 811 South First Street, Lamar, CO 81052. Regular pastoral visits are being made to the area.

Minnesota Delegate Conference

Date: Sunday, June 11, 1995

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Faith Lutheran Church, Nicollet, Minnesota

Agenda:

- * Coordinating Council Reports
- * "The Benefit of Continuing to Convey the Founding Principles of Our Church Body"
— Pastor W. Mielke
- * "Reasons Underlying the Incorporation of Congregations" — Loren Borgwardt
— Rick R. Grams, Secretary

Mr&Mrs Bud Stratton
5018 N. Howard
Spokane WA 99205

ons For Colloquy

_____, a member of Ascension in DuPont, Washington, has applied for colloquy, desiring to enter the teaching ministry of the CLC. Please send correspondence to the President by June 19, 1995.

—Daniel Fleischer, President

Roland H. Gurgel has applied for colloquy for the purpose of entering the ministry of the CLC. Any correspondence regarding this request should be in the hands of the President by June 19.

—Daniel Fleischer, President

David Lundin, a member of St. Matthew's in Dallas, Texas, has applied for colloquy, desiring to enter the teaching ministry of the CLC. Please send correspondence to President Fleischer by June 19, 1995.

—Daniel Fleischer, President

Colloquy Outcome

After colloquy, held on April 25, 1995, the Board of Doctrine has recommended that James Shrader of Columbus, Ohio be declared eligible for ministry in the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

—Daniel Fleischer, President

Spokesman-On-Audio-Tape — \$10.00 per year. Order from Pastor W. V. Schaller, 100 4th St. W., Lemmon, SD 57638.