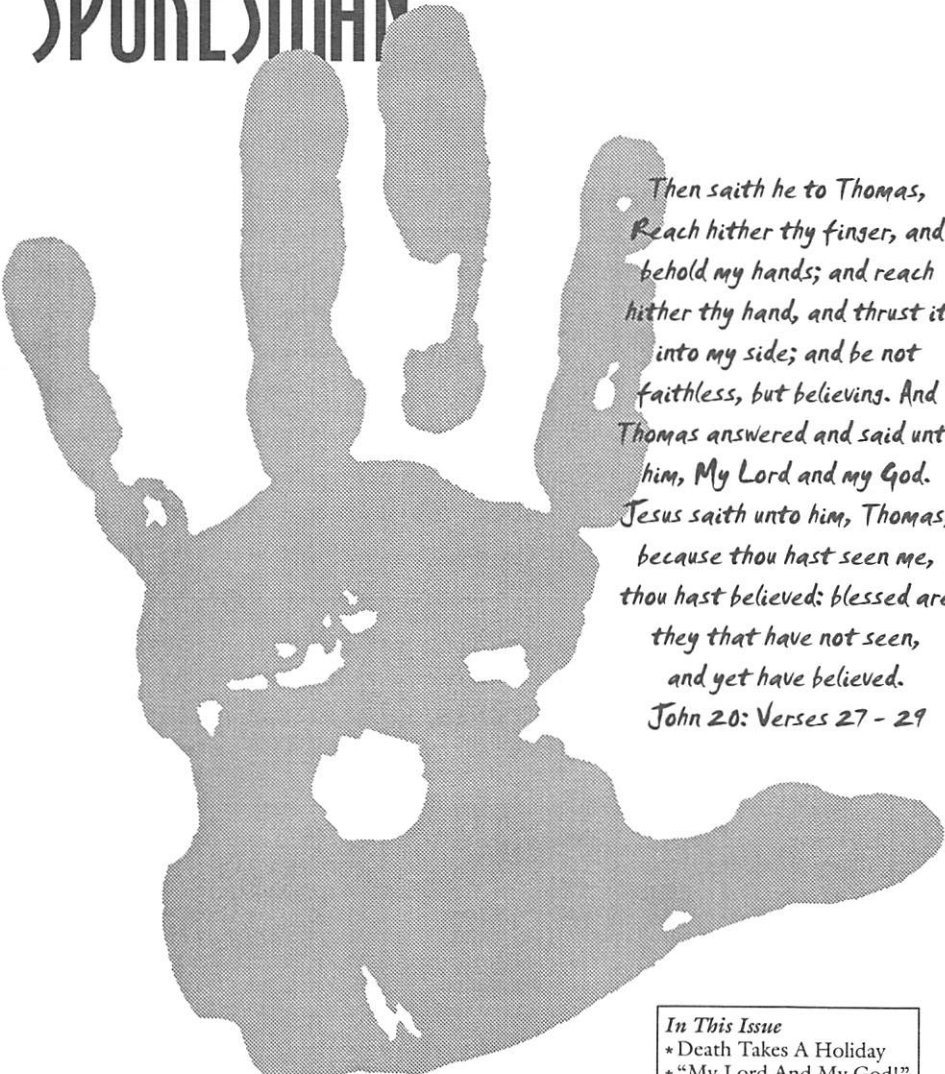


# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



*Then saith he to Thomas,  
Reach hither thy finger, and  
behold my hands; and reach  
hither thy hand, and thrust it  
into my side; and be not  
faithless, but believing. And  
Thomas answered and said unto  
him, My Lord and my God.  
Jesus saith unto him, Thomas,  
because thou hast seen me,  
thou hast believed: blessed are  
they that have not seen,  
and yet have believed.  
John 20: Verses 27 - 29*

***In This Issue***

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# Death Takes An Eternal Holiday

**S**ome years ago a TV movie was shown, entitled “Death Takes A Holiday.” In this film Death, which was personified, felt that people simply did not understand the wonderful purpose it served, but instead clung to “life” at all costs.

Seeing no other recourse, Death decided to “take a holiday,” to remove himself from the world for a 24-hour period. During this one day everything continued as usual — except no one died. Disasters and tragic accidents occurred, grave illnesses ravaged bodies and filled hospital ICUs, and the elderly continued their decline — but no one died.

Suddenly people began to realize that death is a vital part of life, that the world desperately needs it. The movie ended on a positive note with Death explaining how he stood for deliverance from all pain and unpleasanties.

The message of this film reflects the only possible explanation and comfort a godless world can draw from death — the end of earthly trou-

bles. And yet, as Scripture clearly teaches and even natural man senses, death is not the end. There is “something” beyond the grave; and that “something” involves facing some kind of divine tribunal who will judge them and their lives. Why else would mankind the world over bother with religion?

In all of our churches the somber Lenten season is now giving way to the joy of Easter. The Easter Story, far from being some humanly-contrived, fictionalized tale of false hope, is a divinely-inspired factual account of living and eternal hope. Its message: **Death Takes An Eternal Holiday!**

## Our Heavenly Homeland

Jesus once said: “If a man keep My sayings, he shall never see death” (Jn. 8:51). By, in, and through our crucified and risen Savior, death has been removed — not simply for 24 hours, but forever and ever. It has been overcome and obliterated by the Lord of Life and it shall never return.

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**"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD  
WHICH DIE IN THE LORD."  
REV. 14:13**

To be sure physical "death" still awaits us as a sin-residual. Yet in Christ it becomes the passageway to life eternal. Death's sting is gone, Grave's victory is lost. On the other side of the death tunnel lies a Land and a Life too wonderful for words to describe, our heavenly Homeland.

Yet, note that little word "if" in our Savior's words. Living forever with the Lord is not a guaranteed right of human citizenship. Sin and death are not "friends" to learn to cope with or find comfort in, but "enemies" which have destroyed man's life, his rela-

tionship with God, and his hope of Paradise. Only by "keeping Jesus' saying" (read the John 8 context), only by Spirit-created repentance and faith in Him "who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification," will man conquer real death.

Today man still seeks his own elusive and illusive ways of co-existing, coping, and being comfortable with death. All involve nothing more than spiritual "whistling in the darkness" of impending divine judgment. Yet without Christ, death must always remain that one last, great, mysterious, undeniable, and inescapable reality that simply will not go away.

There is an eternally better way — found in Him who is risen, who lives, and who promises His believing followers: "Because I live, you also shall live!" Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Thanks be to God, who has given death an eternal holiday!

—Pastor David Schierenbeck



***"I believe in . . . the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."***

## **EASTER JOY**

Easter joy has to do with Jesus' grave. What was in that grave on Easter morning? Almost nothing. Very definitely Jesus' body was not there. The disciples fully expected it to be. They had completely forgotten Jesus' promise to rise again the third day. They were prepared only to finish the embalming. Hope in Jesus as the Savior was at low ebb.

The women found something in the tomb. They found an angel who startled them with the news that Jesus was not there. They were assured that Jesus had risen and would meet the disciples later.

When the women reported that Jesus' body was gone, Peter and John rushed to see. All they found was the grave clothing with which the body

had been wrapped. The head cloth was neatly folded and lying by itself.

What did it all mean? It meant that Jesus had truly risen from the dead. His body had not been removed by either friend or foe. The disciples hadn't even thought of taking it from the tomb. At any rate, the guards would have prevented it. The grave clothes were proof that the body had not been snatched away during the likely event that the guards had fallen asleep. Any who might have done so certainly would not have taken the time to remove them, let alone fold them.

The best proof that Jesus had risen was the doubt of the disciples. They

did not expect a resurrection. It took a number of appearances by Jesus to convince them that He was indeed alive. But they were convinced. They were so certain that Jesus had risen that they spent the rest of their lives bringing that good news to others.

That good news is meant for us too. We are to believe that Jesus was not in the grave Easter morning. We are to believe what Jesus' resurrection guarantees to us. Our sins are forgiven. Through Jesus the way to eternal life is open for us. That is the reason for true joy at Easter.

May all of your Easters be truly joyous.

—Keith Olmanson



## *"My Lord And My God!"*

We are indebted to the twin among the apostolic band for a crystal clear confession of faith as to just who our Jesus is. As we continue the resurrection celebration, let's be reminded that such a bold confession is not one of words only. It is a confession that in the apostle's case also betokened a new life of service to the ever-living King.

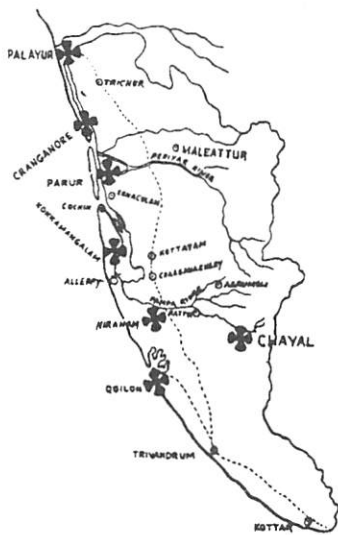
Once he had asked: "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Our Lord's answer in part was: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me" (Jn. 14:5-6). According to tradition, in the year A.D. 52 Thomas arrived in ancient India to present this one true God that He might replace the false Krishna, Siva, Vishnu, etc. in the hearts of both Brahmin and Out-



**"Behold My Hands and My Feet"**

caste.

There is evidence from as early as the second century that Thomas labored in India. The Syriac "Doctrine of the Apostles" refers to Judas Thomas writing from India. In the



The Land of Malabar on the South-western coast of India. Seven churches traditionally established by St. Thomas are marked by crosses.

apocryphal "Acts of St. Thomas" from the third century the story goes: "When the Apostles had been for a time in Jerusalem, they divided the countries among them in order that each one might preach in the region which fell to him; and India fell to the lot of Judas Thomas." According to the tradition, as Paul was on the outset of his third missionary journey, Thomas began evangelizing the west coast of India. During his possible ten years of labor along this coast, tradition says he reached many of the higher castes with the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ.

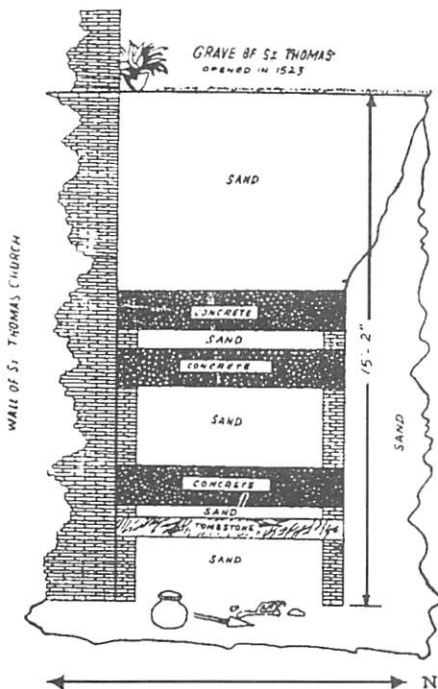
The newness of life that Thomas had in the resurrected Lord compelled him to work also on the east coast. After perhaps seven more years of witnessing to both kingly potentate and forsaken commoner, he was martyred in the southern part of what is now Madras. Once Thomas had said:

"Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (Jn. 11:16). He would die not with His Savior, but for Him. It is reported that an assassin hired by a local king's heathen priest did in Thomas as he prayed, piercing him by a spear. Thomas may have died about the same time that Paul did.

"And last a villain hastier than the rest,  
Pierced with a cruel spear his godly breast.  
Wept Ganges and Indus, true Thome, thy fate,  
Weep thee whatever lands his foot had trod."

Thomas does not weep though, as His soul awaits the glorious resurrection guaranteed to all who make the profession of Jesus: "My Lord and my God!" (Jn. 20:28)

Over the years there have been many things written about where



The grave of St. Thomas showing the alternate layers of sand and concrete. Note the tip of the spear, pieces of bone and the earthen vessel containing dirt bedewed with blood.

Thomas' body was and where it was taken. In 1523 the supposed grave of Thomas was opened. They found some bones, though many had long since turned to dust.

What a glorious day we have to look forward to, won for us by the resurrected Lord, when all the saints will

arise to glorious life everlasting. In the meantime, let us labor faithfully with the profession on our tongues and Christ in our hearts.

—Pastor David Koenig

See map showing possible journeys of St. Thomas on pp. 10-11. —Ed.



*An Easter Message From Our CLC President —*

## NO "I" IN THE GOSPEL

"Why are you saved?" asks the teacher. The student responds, "Because I believe." I suspect that that is not an unusual response. With deeper probing the teacher can ascertain that the student understands that the answer is incomplete. "I am saved because I believe in Jesus." This teacher does not accept that answer, at least without further explanation.

So then how *is* one saved? "But when the kindness and love of *God our Savior* appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the *Holy Spirit*, whom He poured out on us abundantly *through Jesus Christ, our Savior*, that having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:4-6).

Notice in that verse the complete lack of personal merit. I am not saved because "I" did anything. I am saved through the love of "God our Savior" — God the Father who sent His Son; God the Son "who gave Himself" for me (v. 14); and God the Holy Spirit who has regenerated and renewed me.

"Blessed be the *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ* from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3). Again, note the lack of any reference to "I."

There is no "I" in the Gospel. You will, however, find "me" in the Gospel. "Me" as the object of the redemptive love of God the Savior. So then, when I say that "I am saved because Jesus has died for me, and through His resurrection has made me partaker of life," I am giving credit where credit is due. By grace I am saved!

But is it not necessary to believe in Jesus Christ? Surely it is. But I am not saved because I believe. I believe because I am saved! Had God not sent His Son, had the Son not died and risen again, had the Holy Spirit not worked regeneration within me, working faith in my heart, I would not be saved. The fact is that the very statement "I believe because I am saved" testifies to the existence of faith.

But the whole matter is academic if Christ did not rise from the dead. "And if Christ is not risen, then our

## **“The Gospel is not the Gospel without the living Christ.”**

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preaching is vain and your faith is also vain . . . you are still in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:14-17). But Christ is risen. And that is the message which the Church is to proclaim without deceit or qualification. What a wonderful privilege!

Words are meant to mean something. However, if they have been emptied of their meaning they are useless. Today, “I believe in the resurrection of Jesus” does not necessarily mean the same thing to all who hear, or even to all who make the confession. Recently one involved in the so-called “Jesus Seminar” said he believed in the resurrection. He said, however, that it was a resurrection “within the heart” — whatever that means.

Scripture, and every true Lutheran, does not equivocate. We believe and we teach that the Lord Jesus Christ actually, physically, and bodily rose from the dead. His body is not moldering in the grave! To suggest anything else, or even to allow the possibility, means that whatever Gospel is being preached is a different Gospel than that which has come down from heaven. The Gospel is not the Gospel without the living Christ.

The tragedy is that they who have been fed another Gospel are left with nothing more than to say, “I am saved because I believe.” And even if they be pressed to say, “I believe in Jesus,” they yet believe in vain if the Jesus in whom they believe is not risen from the dead. In the first statement one emphasizes “I.” That is work righteousness. In the second instance, they are worshipping a corpse. The dead

cannot save the dead!

So the question again. Am I saved? Yes, because Jesus Christ, God’s Son “has redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver but with His holy precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death, that I should be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; *even as He is risen from death, lives and reigns to all eternity . . .*”

As I write this I think of how elementary and simplistic this message must sound to many in Christendom today. Surely the president of a church body should have a more profound statement for the Church, or at least lay out an agenda for the church as it moves toward the 21st century. Surely he should have a message for the world. Ah, but he does, and we do! You have read it. “I have not saved me. Christ has saved me.” Blessed are they who so believe.

And if any are looking for a commitment of this church, it is simply this, that we shall continue to preach and teach the Gospel without an “I.” “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:8).

May each who reads this find joy in Christ, and confidence unto salvation in the resurrection of Him who said “Because I live, you shall live also” (Jn. 14:19).

—Daniel Fleischer

*In April 1995 a young member (Mark, about 30 years of age) of Prince of Peace, Hecla, S.Dak. was killed instantly in a single vehicle highway accident. Pastor Paul Krause, who officiated at the funeral, wrote that "it was a highly charged, emotional time for all involved. Our church was packed. . . we had a sound system set up for people in the entry way and basement."*

*A member suggested that his pastor submit the funeral sermon to the Spokesman. We print a slightly abridged version. — Editor*

## Are You Ready To Go?

**T**his weekend we have been confronted with an unexpected tragedy — the life of a dearly loved one has suddenly been brought to a close. Along with our grief, we are brought face to face with the reality that our end could come at any time. Are we ready for the end?

We know from the Bible that the end will come suddenly. Paul says: "You yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And there is no escape." The Bible also states: "It is appointed for people to die once, and after death comes the judgment." It is on the basis of God's judgment that we will spend eternity either in heaven or in hell.

Are you ready for that final judgment? Where do you think you will go? Not many years ago a news magazine took a poll concerning heaven and hell. In that poll they discovered that most people think there is a heaven and a hell, and the vast majority of those feel that they will be going to heaven.

Are you ready for that final day of your life? As we have been reminded in this case, the end can come very suddenly. It is no wonder then that God encourages us in His Word to be ready. Jesus says: "Watch therefore, for you

know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

We need to know what it takes to be ready. God's Word is clear: "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." We need to be perfect; we have to be pure and without sin in our thoughts and words and actions. Complete holiness is needed.

Are you ready to go? Mark was! Don't get me wrong — I am not saying that he was perfect. He may have been a wonderful person, and a terrific friend, but he was far from perfect. And all of us are the same. All it takes is a brief look at ourselves in the mirror of the ten commandments, and we all have to admit that we have not kept any of God's law at all. The Word says: "If you keep the whole law, and yet break it in one place, you are guilty of breaking the whole thing." One sin is all it takes for a person to stand condemned in God's eyes. And because we have broken God's law, God's Word says that we will die. "The person who sins shall die."

No, Mark was not ready for the end because of who he was or what he had done. He could not be ready on his own. Nor can we prepare ourselves. Even if we could keep the whole Law, we still also have that terrible sin that we inherit from our parents and their parents all the way back to Adam and Eve. Paul wrote the Romans: "Just as through one man's sin (Adam's), so





judgment came upon all men.”

Mark knew this about himself. We need to know this about ourselves too. Left to ourselves we are not ready for heaven; nor can we get ready on our own — all because of sin. We too deserve God’s anger and deserve His harshest judgment — that is, an eternity in hell with the devil and all his evil angels.

We cannot save ourselves! Sounds rather desperate, doesn’t it? And it would be if it were not for our loving God. He is well aware of our miserable condition. And so out of love for the whole human race, He has made it possible for us to be ready.

**G**od provides us with everything we need. “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” To remedy our situation, He made plans to send His Son into the world to pay for all the sins of every human being who has ever lived. “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Jesus as true God came down to earth, was born of a virgin, became

true man, and kept the Law perfectly in our place. To top it all off, He also suffered and gave His life in death on the cross. In that way all of God’s anger over sin is taken away. On Easter morning God declared for all the world to see that what Jesus had done was satisfactory — He showed this by raising His Son from the dead.

And there is more! Since we were dead in our sins, completely unable to come to Him, God has come to us with the good news of the Gospel of forgiveness of sins. Through that Gospel He is able to create faith in the hearts of those who hear.

This was how God prepared Mark for the end. God came to him through the Gospel at his baptism and created faith in his heart. Through Sunday School instruction and confirmation class, and in the days since by coming to church and adult Bible study, he learned to appreciate more and more what his Lord had done for him.

It was through his God-given faith that Mark, and all of us who believe, are credited with all that Jesus has done. Jesus Christ and His perfect life and His innocent sufferings and death are all credited to us. God looks at those who believe in His Son as holy for Jesus’ sake.

No, Mark was not ready for heaven on his own; no, he could not have gotten ready on his own; but yes, God in His mercy prepared him. He brought him to faith in Jesus as his Savior, and thus for Jesus’ sake He declared Mark to be righteous in His sight, and gave him the free gift of forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation.

Are you ready to go?

Let us hold tightly to the promise that God has made, that for Jesus’

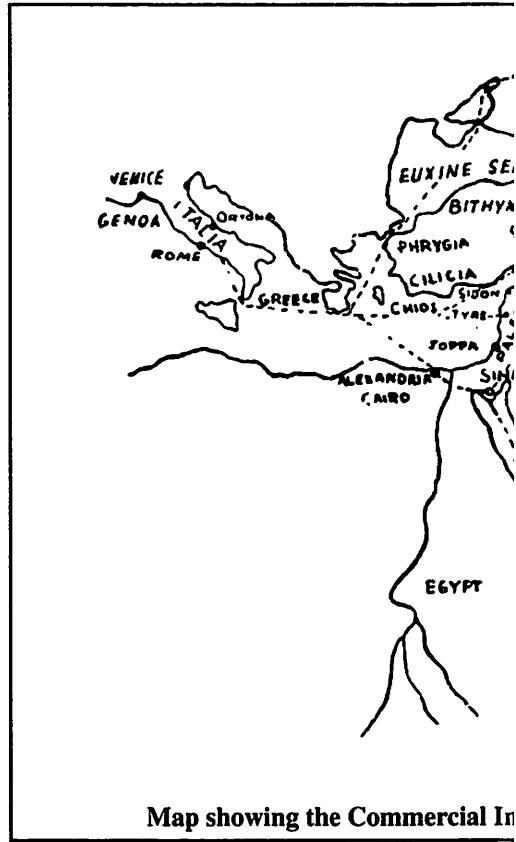
sake Mark is with God forever in heaven. Remember that through the same God-given faith we too can be ready when our time comes, and inherit the kingdom of heaven prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

Through faith in Jesus Christ cling to His promise: "Because I live, you shall live also." Hold on tightly to His words: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live, and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." Amen.

"I AM THE  
RESURRECTION



AND THE LIFE."



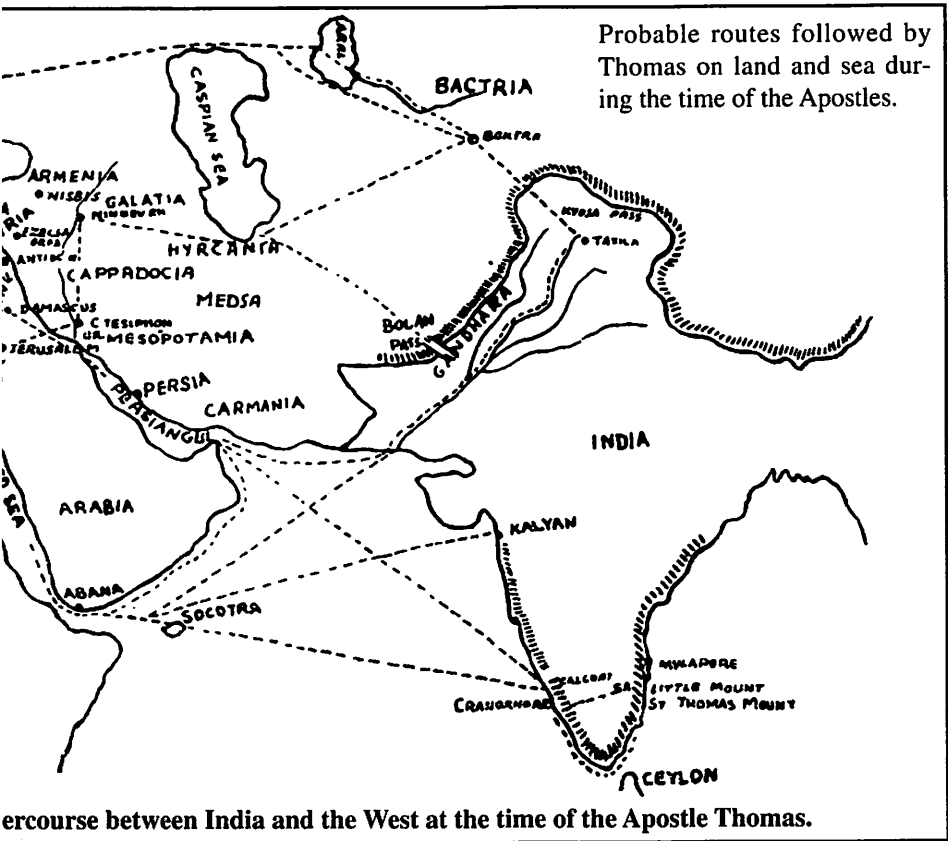
*"For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." — 1 Corinthians 15:25-26*

## Death - Friend Or Defeated Enemy?

Notice in the Bible passage above how the apostle Paul calls death an "enemy."

By contrast, I clipped an article from a magazine a few months ago. It said: "Once college students flocked to courses on social and political concerns; today, courses on death and dying are among the most popular." The article goes on to tell how a "new doctrine" is emerging about death "emphasizing that death is a natural part of life. We should not fear death (the new doctrine says), but accept it as the last 'passage,' the natural culmination of our lives. Some even urge that we welcome death as a friend...."

Interesting approach. But a futile and a sad one. The Bible hardly speaks about death as a friend. It speaks of it as unnatural — as the consequence of sin.



“For dust you are, and to dust you shall return” God told Adam after he sinned (Gen. 3:19). “...By the one man’s offense death reigned...” (Rom. 5:17) and “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23), writes Paul. Job did not mask death when he said: “...though after my skin, worms destroy this body...” (Job 19:26). When our Lord Jesus faced death, He did not welcome it as “a natural part of life,” but rather prayed that, if His Father was willing, He might be spared.

The answer to death is not to euphemize it. Our American funeral customs bend over backwards to give death a pretty face with cosmetics, gleaming caskets, and bouquets of flowers. Yet the finality, the ugliness, of death remains.

What then is the answer? The Christian religion teaches that this ugly thing called death has been defeated, destroyed, abolished! The testimony of the empty tomb is visible and concrete evidence that “our Savior Jesus Christ . . . has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10).

God is the creator and author of life. Satan is the architect of sin and death. By Christ’s innocent death on the cross for us, and triumphant resurrection from the dead, Satan has been defeated and destroyed. Since death’s architect has been destroyed, so has death, the fruit of his work: “For this purpose the Son of

God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn. 3:8). “That through death (Christ) might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14f).

Dear readers, there is no need to euphemize death as a friend, to paint a pretty face upon it, or to call it natural. Rather, learn to know Jesus Christ and what He has done to defeat, destroy, abolish that ugly enemy.

Jesus promises His believers: “Because I live, you will live also” (Jn. 14:19). Because Jesus’ grave is empty, death is but a “sleep” for us. As Jesus conquered death, so shall we!

Convinced by Spirit-given faith of His victory, we are enabled to say with Job: “. . . After my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:27). And with St. Paul: “I am persuaded that . . . death . . . shall (not) be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38).

In the 16th century the great Lutheran Reformer, Dr. Martin Luther, took chalk and wrote in huge letters on his desk: *VIVIT* — Latin for “He lives!” Imprint that word, or those words, as a motto over the mantel of your door and over the bed where you repose.

And then sing your “alleluias” in death’s face!

—Pastor Paul Fleischer



## After The Death of Luther — How the Formula Of Concord Was Forged

(Ten Parts)

### *Part Five*

### *Melanchthon and the Synergists*

**L**uther said that the devil attacks Christianity from three columns. One denies the divinity of Christ; another His humanity. The third column denies in some way that He has earned salvation for us. After Luther died in 1546, all three columns were attacked in earnest.

George Major, following Melanchthon, declared that “good works are necessary for salvation.” The Syner-

gistic controversy is another way of saying that man must do something or contribute something for salvation. Luther taught clearly and vehemently that man’s will is passive in salvation, giving all the glory to God who works through the Law to make the heart contrite and through the Gospel to create faith.

Melanchthon listed three causes of salvation in his 1543 doctrinal book,

*Loci Communes*: 1) the Word of God; 2) the Holy Spirit; 3) the human will, assenting to and not resisting the Word of God.

Melanchthon's love for philosophy led him to allow reason the wrong place in interpreting Scriptures. Instead of letting his reason serve the Word of God, Melanchthon let his reason judge the Scriptures. In addition, he was always looking for ways to harmonize Luther's doctrine with contrary confessions. Roman Catholicism teaches that the human will cooperates in salvation.

Melanchthon's synergistic statements grew bolder after Luther's death, and he was joined by John Pfeffinger, Victorin Strigel, and others. The Gnesio Lutherans opposed them with Luther's doctrine.

Strigel wanted to speculate about why some were saved and others were not. Those who dwell on this question, whose answer is known only to God, will fall into rationalistic answers, such as double predestination (Calvin) or some form of synergism.

Liberal Lutherans who have drifted dreamily away from Luther's doctrine have been attracted to synergism. Rather than give credit to the power of the Holy Spirit working in the Word and Sacraments, they honor their will, their ability to make the right decision, and their strength in remaining believers. In this way the third column has repeatedly thrown Lutherans into doubt and confusion.

The Gnesio Lutherans opposed the Synergists, but Flacius took an extreme position. In pointing out the lack of spiritual powers of the unconverted man, Flacius stated that the "substance of man" was sin.

The Formula of Concord settled the issues in Articles I and II. The Concordists distinguished between man's nature and original sin in Article I. In the second article of the Formula they stated that the unconverted man has no power or ability to understand spiritual matters (1 Corinthians 2:14). "God the Holy Ghost, however, does not effect conversion without means, but uses for this purpose the preaching and hearing of God's Word, as it is written, Romans 1:16." (*Concordia Triglotta*, p. 787).

Clearly, Melanchthon's unionism and compromise led to many errors. At the same time the Biblical doctrines of Lutheranism are all linked together in one great unified expression of the Triune God's holy will: sola scriptura, Law and Gospel, justification by grace through faith, the efficacy of the Word, the Means of Grace, election, and so forth. These great treasures are given by God to be preserved in truth and purity.

—Pastor Gregory L. Jackson



## LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

*Genesis Chapters Thirty-nine And Forty*

### Joseph Sold Into Slavery

“Bang” goes the gavel. “Sold!” cries the auctioneer. Then comes the rush of thoughts and feelings: accomplishment, elation, relief, satisfaction. Yet these are only the thoughts and feelings of the buyer and seller; what of the thing sold? What? Do *things* sold have thoughts and feelings too? We know that in our nation’s history, as well as that of the world, people were bought and sold like so many things.

Put yourself in the position of one sold. Joseph is an example — sold for only a handful of coins to traveling merchants. Place yourself deeper into his position. Sold, for that handful of coins, by your own brothers! Our families are to be a place of earthly refuge from the dangers of this world, and these “brothers” sell one of their own as if he were common livestock! Thoughts and feelings! We can easily supply them for our poor brother Joseph: shock, unbelief, fear, anger, bitterness, and yes, even hatred.

Before we become too smug in our evaluation of Joseph’s brothers we shall ask the blessings of the Holy Spirit on our continued study of Joseph and his brethren.

#### **How Many People Have We Sold?**

It is relatively easy for us to iden-

tify with the underdogs in the Scriptures. We readily see ourselves in the positions of those put upon by this sinful world — the traveler set upon by thieves, poor Lazarus, and Joseph. But we often have difficulty casting ourselves in the role of villains — the priest and Levite passing by, the rich man, or Joseph’s brothers.

We know we sin. We know that sometimes we might even be the “bad guy” in a given situation. But Joseph’s brothers sold a human being! Long before they had bartered their brother’s life, the elder sons of Jacob had already sold themselves. They were not leading lives that God or Jacob would have them lead. Some of their acts of deceit and sin are recorded to remind us that children of God often sell themselves short.

Do we sell ourselves short? When duty calls, do we gladly step forward to serve the Lord and our fellow servants? Often we’re caught in some alleyway dealing for some of Moses’ excuses — I’m no good; it’s not my forte; let someone else do it. When the Lord asks for workers in the Vineyard and helpers to gather the Harvest, are we selling ourselves short by buying into even more excuses — let the pastor handle it; I need more family time; I need more me time.

Our Lord Jesus died on Calvary's cross to purchase our souls and lives so we are no longer in slavery to Satan, the world, or our sinful flesh. Let us take care against forfeiting this great gift by selling ourselves short.

### Jesus "Sold Himself" For Us

Joseph's being sold by his brothers was merely an outgrowth of their having sold themselves. They had to get rid of him — he was a conscience pricker. He told on them and pointed out their errors. What can you do with a person like that? When Cain was confronted by the Lord about his weak offering, what did he do? He turned on the one that made him look bad. Rather than seeing a righteous example in his brother Abel, Cain mistakenly saw the source of his sin problem. Joseph's brothers reached the same conclusion. Kill him! Throw him in a pit! Say! Let's at least make a profit and sell the boy!

When a fellow believer comes to us with Christian criticism, how do we

take it? Do we write them off as a flake, nit-picker, or holier-than-thou type? Do we complain because his nose is in our business? In short, do we sell out our fellow Christian by turning on him rather than turning to our Savior?

Let us rather remember the One who sold Himself by leaving His eternal throne for a humble stall so that we might have heavenly mansions! Remember — He sold Himself for thirty pieces of silver so that He might purchase us with His holy precious blood. Remember — He sold Himself into separation from His heavenly Father so that we might be with Him forever.

Let us take comfort in the knowledge that all our sins have been forgiven through our Savior. And may the Holy Spirit keep Christ's purchase of us in our hearts and minds that we may avoid either selling ourselves short or "selling out" our fellow Christians.

—Teacher David Bernthal



## ***Pietism And Promise Keepers —***

*(Most have heard of the occasional "Promise Keepers" gatherings around the nation. Wanting to offer our readers an assessment of the movement from the perspective of orthodox Lutheranism, we asked Pastor Gregory Jackson to give one. He has consented to do so, and we thank him. This is the first of four articles. — Ed.)*

### ***Lutheran Pietism***

Since 1990 the massive growth of the Promise Keepers, a unionistic laymen's group, has attracted a lot of attention. Started by a football coach, Bill McCartney, Promise Keepers has swept across the nation and caused great concern in Lutheran congregations. Laymen actively and aggressively recruit other men to join them

in mass religious rallies and in small prayer groups. I know, because I was asked several times by a non-Lutheran businessman when we were living in St. Louis.

Promise Keepers has its origin in a religious movement known as Pietism, which began in 1675. Pietism has had a major influence on

Lutheranism by undermining the doctrine of justification by faith (receiving Christ's righteousness, God's promise) and replacing it with a righteousness based upon human works (keeping promises). Adolph Hoenecke, the great Wisconsin Synod theologian, wrote: "At first glance the total difference seems absolutely paltry, but in truth the dangerous direction of Pietism is made apparent: life over doctrine, sanctification over justification, and piety not as a consequence but declared as a stipulation of enlightenment, leading to a kind of synergism and Pelagianism."<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, Pietism continues to bewitch many Lutherans by covering lupine false doctrine with the fleece of piety. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mt. 7:15).

Philip Spener, a Lutheran, began Pietism by publishing a small work in 1675 known as *Pious Wishes*. Spener found Reformed theology appealing and rejected baptismal regeneration and the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood in holy communion. Like the other Philip, Melancthon, Spener sought an external unity between Lutherans and non-Lutherans by masking doctrinal differences.

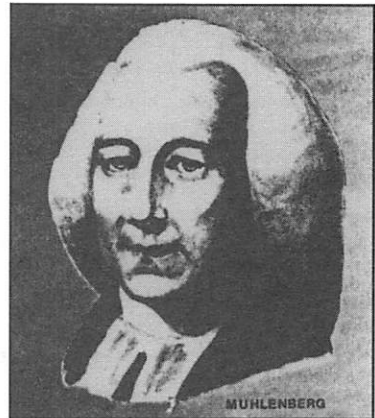
By setting aside the source of piety, orthodox doctrine, and seeking visible results in the Christian faith, Spener created a pharisaic system which undermined all denominations, not just the Lutherans. Promise Keepers will finish the work Spener began, with the best of intentions and the worst of all possible results.

Spener set up *collegia pietatis* (cell groups of piety) in people's homes to

encourage prayer and Bible Study. The meetings were lay led and caused enormous conflict, but they spread everywhere as a church within the church. Spener and his disciple, August Francke, also set up charitable institutions in Halle, Germany, which became a holy city for Pietism, supported both by the Reformed and the Lutherans.

Halle's influence was global, training 6,000 pastors and impressing people with the visible results of unionism and Pietism. American Protestantism is almost exclusively derived from Halle, whether it be the radical homosexual activism of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the forbidding of women wearing any make-up in certain fundamentalist sects.

Henry Melchior Muhlenberg was trained at Halle and became the



founder of the first and most liberal Lutheran body in America, the General Synod. The General Synod promoted revivals (because they worked!), used grape juice for communion during and after the Temperance Movement, and had a lax attitude toward Lutheran doctrine, worship,





August Francke

and the Book of Concord. The liberal Muhlenberg tradition in the Eastern US is a major component of ELCA today, along with the Scandinavian Pietism of the Midwest.

Spener's influence entered Methodism through his godson Nicholas Zinzendorf, founder of the Moravian Brethren. John Wesley was deeply affected by the Moravians. The hysterics of the Methodist revival spread across America, emphasizing salvation based upon an emotional experience of conversion rather than the objective truth of the Word of God.

Methodism grew tired of banning movies, dancing, lipstick, and any

alcohol, even communion wine, so they turned their attention to the liberal form of Pietism, political activism, the Social Gospel Movement. The social reforms of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal (Social Security, child labor laws, protection of unions) were the stated agenda items of the Social Gospel Movement and the Federal Council of Churches (now the National Council of Churches).

When Methodist Pietism turned liberal, the conservatives broke off and started their own denominations, which still banned lipstick and dancing. Still, conversion was based upon an emotional experience, so Pentecostalism grew from the old-fashioned Methodists who needed visible proof of God's invisible work.

The main recruiting forum for all Pentecostals is the lay-led prayer or Bible Study group, where sincere people are taught they must speak in tongues to be sure they are "baptized by the Holy Spirit." For them, the Promise Keepers cell group is fertile ground.

1. *Evangelische-Lutherische Dogmatik*, 4 vols., ed., Walter and Otto Hoenecke, Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1912, III, p. 253.



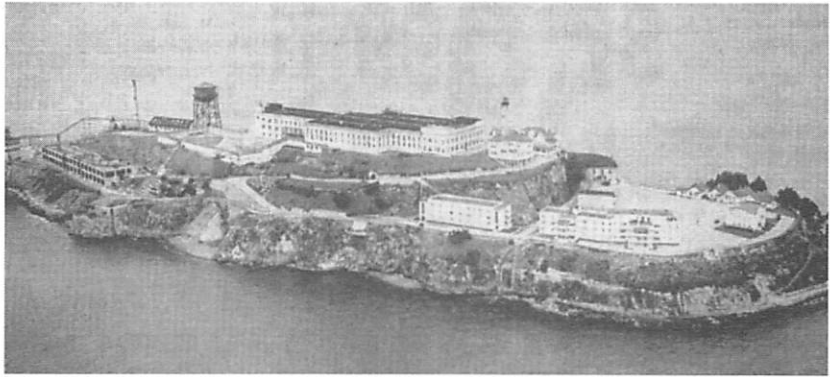
*Pacific Coast Conference News* —

## CHURCHES SEND PASTORS TO JAIL

*"To whom it may concern,  
"I would like to thank you deeply for the . . . Bible I received from Pastor Bruce on your behalf. It is really informative for a young Christian as myself growing in the Word. . . . Being*

*incarcerated where most forgot about us, or cast us out as misfits, you were there, and the Lord has many blessings in store for you. . . ."*

This from Inmate #9425646 of the San Jose Main Jail is one of many let-



The Pacific Coast pastors took an excursion to Alcatraz, the “archetypal prison.”

ters from prison. They stir the spirit of anyone who is concerned about the Kingdom coming to others.

### You Were There!

Two of our coastal congregations are developing prison ministries. A year ago **Ascension** of DuPont (Tacoma, Wash. area) sent Pastor Wayne Eichstadt to the Federal Penitentiary on McNeil Island. Group meetings were held in a room next to a recreation hall where a noisy bingo game was likely to be a major distraction. Difficult circumstances, yet there were always some willing ears for the Word.

Since July 1995 Pastor Paul Naumann has been serving Ascension. The congregation wants him to continue the prison ministry. He is preparing for certification at monthly orientation meetings.

### San Francisco Bay Area

The program of **St. Stephen** in Mountain View started in March 1994 when Pastor Bruce Naumann had lunch with the Director of Volunteers for the county.

Initially there were one-on-one interviews with inmates requesting a

visit by a clergyman. This led to regular Sunday evening classes in the day rooms of two high security floors in the Main Jail. Depending on how many men are released from their cells by the Commanding Officer, from seven to thirty-five attend the meetings.

For whatever reason they might come, they get to hear the Gospel—currently from studies in Luke, where Jesus is portrayed as the Savior of ALL, with special attention given to the socially outcast.

### The Glad Response

It is always difficult (and sometimes dangerous) to evaluate the



Pastor Bruce helping to free the captives.

results of gospel ministry. Especially in the touch-and-go environment of modern imprisonment. One must marvel, however, that the Spirit manages to do His calling and gathering even in such tough and often hardened circumstances.

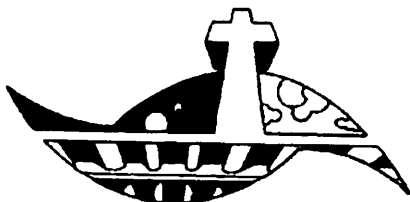
Eight prisoners have been moved to confess Christ as Lord and be baptized. Enough to alarm the Director who feared that someone might request immersion baptism! Restriction followed. When another man wished to be baptized our pastor found a way. A previously baptized inmate was equipped for this. He then was able to baptize the new candidate in his cell.

The Gospel will not be hindered.

### Congregational Support

One of the best things about prison ministry is the opportunity it provides for others to share in the work. Work that is essential. For newborn faith needs much nourishment and fraternal encouragement. St. Stephen Women's Auxiliary and members of a weekday morning Bible class have committed themselves to 1) intercessory prayer; 2) purchase of Bibles; 3) participation in an Inmate Instruction Program.

The instruction program is, of course, by correspondence ("first



names only"). The letters convey the pastor's course materials with personal encouragement and prayer. Sometimes the message exchanges continue for a surprising time. In one case, for example, the address has changed to San Quentin, a federal prison, where a grateful inmate faithfully answers his mail.

### A Satisfying Mission

The western churches now sending their pastors to jail are fully convinced that this is a most promising kind of ministry, especially for smaller churches that enjoy the services of pastors who are well-suited to this unique kind of outreach.

It does not take much money. It allows for meaningful involvement by church members. It frequently receives a warm, grateful welcome.

**"You were there!"** — A letter from jail.

**"I was in prison and you visited me."** — Jesus.

—Rollin A. Reim, Reporter

## Announcements

### Missions Conference

*(Note: While this conference is not synodically sponsored, we pass the information along for those who may be interested —Ed.)*

All are invited to a third missions conference in the Great Lakes Conference.

**Date** — May 4

**Time** — 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Place** — Peace Thru Christ Lutheran, Middleton, Wis.

### Agenda —

\* David Baker and Pastor David Schmidt will each lead in a presentation of evangelism activities they've been involved in.

\* David Holland, who has experience as a jailor, will lead a study and discussion of jail/prison ministries.

If interested, contact Pastor David Koenig, phone (608) 233-2244.

## Nominations

The Board of Regents for Immanuel Lutheran College announces the following nominations to fill the vacancy created by Professor P. D. Nolting's acceptance of a call to serve in the pastoral ministry (See the March 1996 issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman* for description of this position):

James Albrecht	Bruce Naumann
Leroy Dux	Paul Naumann
Vance Fossum	Paul Schaller
Paul Gurgel	David Schierenbeck
Joseph Lau	Paul Sullivan
Douglas Libby	Michael Sydow
Dean Marsofka	

All comments from members of the CLC congregations regarding these nominees should be in the hands of the undersigned no later than April 13, 1996.

Mr. Marlin Beekman  
ILC Board of Regents  
3708 Halsey  
Eau Claire, WI 54701  
—Pastor Vance Fossum, Secretary

### Change Of Address

Rev. Elton A. Hallauer  
P.O. Box 146 (614 1st St)  
Hancock, MN 56244-0146  
Phone (320) 392-5524

Pastor P.W. Schaller  
4724 N. Wall Street  
Spokane WA 99205

## 1996 CONVENTION

of the  
Church of the Lutheran Confession



**Date:** June 17 (1:00 p.m.) — June 21

**Site:** Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

**Theme:** "We Appreciate The Means Of Grace"

### Essays:

- I. *The Means Of Grace - Emphasis Of The Reformation* — Pastor David Naumann
- II. *The Means Of Grace In Our Worship Life (liturgy, preaching)* — Pastor Leroy Dux
- III. *The Means Of Grace And Mission Work* — Pastor John Ude

**Organist Coordinator:** Pastor Paul Schaller

**Convention Reporter:** Teacher Joseph Lau

**Chaplain:** Pastor Michael Eichstadt

**Communion Service Speaker:** Pastor Michael Sydow

**Communion Service Liturgist (& Bulletin):** Pastor Michael Sprengeler

**Memorial Service Speaker:** Professor Gordon Radtke