

Lutheran Spokesman

“Thy Word is Truth”

revelation
of Thy love

NOTHING MORE PRECIOUS

Grow

*in understanding
and knowledge*

Feel at home
with Psalms

Prophets

Gospels

Epistles

for guidance

counsel comfort

strength healing

forgiveness

Daily
read Thy
Word

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At all times speak of the hope that is in the heart through faith in the crucified Savior.

“Let the man who would hear God speak read Holy Scripture . . .”

--Martin Luther

WHY READ THE BIBLE?

What can one write about Holy Scripture that has not already been written? Not much, if anything. More has probably been written about this Book of books than any other literary work in the history of mankind. Of course, we know that it is more than just another literary work. From catechism, indeed, from the Word itself, we know that the Bible is the word-for-word, verbally inspired Word of God; that it is God's Word in its entirety, without error.

With Spirit-breathed words the apostle Paul writes to Timothy: “From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation . . .” (2 Tim. 3:15). How did Timothy come to know the Holy Scriptures? How did he become wise unto salvation? This knowledge is not in-born in man. As the Lord told Nicodemus: “That

which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn. 3:6).

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Timothy, Paul, you and I, and everyone else who is wise unto salvation through the faith that is in Christ Jesus got that way, not by our own wisdom but by the Holy Spirit working through God's Word.

Nothing More To Learn?

There was a young student who, after returning to the seminary from his second tour of summer vicaring at a congregation, strolled into the classroom and announced to his fellow students: “I'm ready to go pastor a congregation right now! Why take another year of sem?” But that student soon discovered, upon entering his first parish following graduation, that

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he had much learning to do. In fact, he often wished he could return to the seminary for another few years.

Though our young seminarian/pastor could not return to his sem professors, he took comfort in the fact that he could return to the Word, could sit at the feet of his Savior, could be schooled by the Holy Spirit again and again—and that he could always learn something there relevant to his spiritual condition and the salvation of sinful man, himself included.

Like our young seminarian who soon learned better, it is easy, when reading God's Word, to slip into a mindset that says, "Oh, I already know all of this!" And then to skip over it. Or, when pressed for time, to skip one's daily reading. After all, "I know what's in there." True, good Christian, you do know what's in there. That's why you are a Christian — the Spirit taught you from that God-breathed, without-error Word about your Savior. But how do we suppose that we shall continue to know what is in there? How do we expect to grow in the faith that leads to eternal life? How do we expect to "... always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you," (1 Pet. 3:15) unless we continue to read that Word, study it, and learn it?



What can be written about the Bible that hasn't already been written? Most likely there's nothing that you'll read in this article that you haven't already heard or thought of yourself. This is because all that has been said by confessional Christian writers of years past concerning God's Word still holds true today.

Spirit And Life!

Why read the Bible? First and foremost, because it is God's Word by which He would reveal to sinful man everything that is necessary for man's salvation. It is the Bible that shows us our sin through the Law of God. Each of us daily sins much. We are in need of having our sinfulness regularly pointed out to us. But the Bible also shows us our Savior Jesus Christ from the blessed Gospel of the forgiveness of sins apart from the Law. Each one of us needs regularly to receive the assurance of God's forgiveness and the assurance of eternal life.

Why read the Bible? Because it is through that Word that others will be brought to faith. By knowing that Word we will better be able to instruct our children and grandchildren concerning their Savior. Furthermore, if we study the Word and know it we will be prepared to speak that life-giving Word to unbelievers as God gives us opportunity. Rather than saying to others, "This is what my church teaches . . ." we will be equipped to answer, "This is what God's Word teaches . . ."

Why read the Bible? Because, as Jesus says: "The words that I speak, they are spirit, and they are life" (Jn. 6:63). It is God's Word by which He would speak to us and by which the

Holy Spirit would work and strengthen faith in God our Savior; that Word is life, spiritual life, the power for a God-pleasing life; and

that Word is eternal life for us and for those with whom we share it.

—Pastor Joel Fleischer



LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

Exodus Chapters Nineteen Through Twenty-four—

The Voice of God

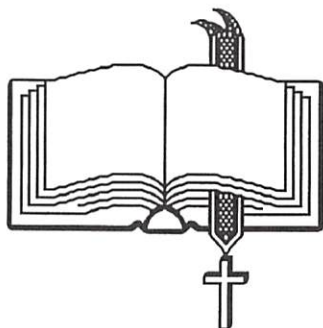
When you go to church on a Sunday morning, do you feel a shiver of terror as you pass through the door into the sanctuary and sit down in a pew? This is an almost silly question. Of course we don't feel terror as we come to worship God. Christian worship is a joyful, uplifting activity.

But what a remarkable thing it is that this can be so, for in our worship we invoke the name of the Holy Trinity. And He is present among us as we worship Him, according to Christ's promise that He will be in the midst of those who gather in His name, be they only two or three in number. We are sinners, and yet the presence of our holy God does not send us fleeing in terror.

It wasn't always this way. When God appeared to Israel at Mount Sinai to give them His Law, the experience for them was indeed terrifying. The Lord told Moses to warn the people not to go near the mountain or touch its base, for anyone who did so would be put to death. When God spoke to the people from the mountain it was in the midst of thunder and lightning,

thick smoke, and a trumpet blast that grew louder and louder.

The people couldn't stand to listen to the voice of God; they pleaded with Moses: “You speak with us, and we



will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Ex. 20:20). God did speak to the people through Moses; the people received the holy will of God through the agency of a mediator. And the people learned that because of their sins they could not approach God except through a mediator.

The Perfect Mediator

Nor can we approach God without a mediator. But we have a better one than Moses. We have a perfect Media-

tor, God's own Son Jesus Christ. He did more than communicate to us God's will; He also fulfilled that holy will, fulfilled it perfectly by His holy life. He fulfilled it in our place, for us; He was "born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law" (Gal. 4:4).

Now we hear the voice of God in His Word. His law still terrifies the Old Adam in us, for it condemns with its absolute, holy "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." But the voice of God to us in His Word is especially the Gospel, assuring us that our sins are forgiven for the sake of Jesus, who took them upon Himself and died for them. Because we have Jesus as our Mediator we can listen to the voice of God with joy.

The writer to the Hebrews summarizes the difference between the voice of God at Sinai and the voice of God in the Word. He writes: "You have not

come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. . . . But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. . . ." (Heb. 12:18-24).

When you come into church on a Sunday morning, or when you open your Bible at home, thank God that He speaks to you not in the terrifying voice of Mount Sinai, but in the familiar, comforting voice of Jesus.

—Pastor John Klatt



Three different answers to one question:
**"What does a communicant receive
 in the Lord's Supper?"**

According to "Reformed"
 churches (Protestant but not
 Lutheran)

Bread <i>only</i>
Wine <i>only</i>

"Representation"

According to the
 Roman Catholic
 Church

Body <i>only</i>
Blood <i>only</i>

"Transubstantiation"

According to con-
 fessional Lutheran
 churches

Bread Body
Wine Blood

"Real Presence"

What did Jesus really mean when He said "This is my body" as He gave the Lord's Supper to His disciples?

Reformed churches (such as Bap-

tists, Methodists, Presbyterians) as well as Pentecostal and Holiness bodies teach that in the Lord's Supper the bread and wine merely *represent*

Christ's body and blood—in other words, they are only symbols.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches *Transubstantiation*. This means that during the “mass” — the Catholic rite of communion — the bread and wine physically change into Christ's body and blood, and are no longer bread and wine. Catholics further teach that their mass is a re-sacrifice of Christ's body and blood to pay for sins.

Confessional Lutheran churches (those Lutherans who are still true to the Scriptures) teach that in the Lord's Supper bread and wine are received by the participants. They are not changed physically, yet *Christ's true body and His true blood are also present*. They are present in a miraculous way which is beyond our powers of human reason. (It is important to note that Lutherans do not teach anything about a re-sacrifice for sin — Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary was a final and all-sufficient payment for all sins.)

Which of these three differing views is Scriptural?

Note the simple words of Christ: “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me” (Lk. 22:19). “He took the cup, and

gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mt. 26:27-28).

But could it not be allowed that Christ's meaning was something like “this *represents* my body . . . my blood”? First of all, the usage of the original Greek does not permit this interpretation. Secondly, other Scripture passages do not support this theory, but rather speak against it. Paul speaks of a real “communion” (or sharing) in Christ's body and blood, given together with bread and wine: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16)

It is not only believers who receive Jesus' body and blood in communion, but also those who do not believe — but they receive it for their harm! “For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body” (1 Cor. 11:29). This shows that the Lord's body IS truly there, whether the communicant perceives it or not. If our belief were that the bread and wine were only symbols, the true value of communion would be lost to us. We would not be “discern-



ing” partakers at all!

When we rightly discern Christ’s real body and blood in the sacrament, along with the bread and wine, our faith in His redemptive work for us is strengthened. It is not merely an ordinance of the Lord that we obey. Rather, it is a *means of grace*, a special way in which God imparts forgiveness and faith to us. It is a strengthening of faith that says “Christ gave His body and shed His blood for

ME, personally.”

There are many aspects of the doctrine of the Real Presence that strain our sense of reason and logic. But when reason and logic contradict God’s Word, we can well do without them. When God’s Word is clear, we should become like little children in our faith, and take Christ’s words as they stand: “*This is my body . . . this is my blood.*”

—Submitted by Pastor Bruce Naumann



Studies In Galatians

Standing Fast In The Liberty By Which Christ Has Made Us Free (See 5:1)

Chapter 2:11-21

Why Did Christ Die?

In the last segment of Galatians, chapter 2:1-10, Paul relates how, in an effort to strengthen the unity of the Body of Christ and to enable various segments of the Church to speak the same thing, he came to Jerusalem to counsel with “pillars” of the Church, namely the Apostles, in what became the first “Church Council” in New Testament history. The effort ended in an edifying manner with the general acceptance of Paul’s principle that the truth of the Gospel should not be hampered by legalistic baggage, while also encouraging a general interest in the well-being of fellow Christians, both Gentile and Jew.

But a general agreement in itself did not guarantee perfect implementation, as Paul soon discovered. A short

time later an incident revealed how a spirit of legalism creeps into our behavior with and toward others. This incident which some might have regarded as rather innocuous was taken very seriously by Paul, who drew from it for the Galatians the essential question: “Why did Christ die?”

An Evangelical Spirit

The Christian life pursues holiness as a result of faith. Ideally we would let the light of the gospel shine in our lives, namely that we have been redeemed from the wretchedness of sin not by our deeds, but by the free gift of righteousness through Christ. To be the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” our lives should

exhibit truth, love, and peace.

But we are beset by the impulse of the sinful flesh and the promptings of the world in ways that cause us to deny the faith we profess. So it happened with Peter. His actions in Antioch began to obscure any clear answer to the question: "Why did Christ die?"

Following the Jerusalem Council which recognized that full acceptance into the Christian Church was based entirely upon a true faith in Christ Jesus, and not at all upon the adoption of the Jewish law and traditions, Paul returned to his home church in Antioch. Peter arrived some time later. This was a mixed church, containing Jewish believers and (uncircumcised) Gentile believers. Under Paul's instruction an evangelical spirit reigned, with the Jews recognizing the Gentiles as full partners in the Kingdom. Peter, who well knew the principle that all believers were "clean" (acceptable) in Christ, joined in with this open and evangelical spirit.

But when some other churchmen came to Antioch from Jerusalem, things changed. The 'Judaizing' spirit came with them — that attitude that only those who submitted to the Jewish laws could be full partakers in the kingdom of God. Those who associated with Gentiles polluted their own 'righteousness.' This matter of association was especially evident in the practice of dining, which for the Jews was regarded as a time of spiritual fellowship. In the Antioch church it most likely included the celebration of the Lord's Supper. When they came together to eat, the Jerusalem party avoided mixing with the Gentiles. Their avoidance was obvious. What stunned Paul was that Peter, who had

previously mixed with the others on his own, was suddenly embarrassed or ashamed or afraid to do so in the presence of these newcomers. He ate with the Jews.

A Grave Offense

When we sin openly we all too often draw others into sin themselves. Peter's "hypocrisy" (as Paul identified it) infected others who knew better. The offense was grave — especially for Paul who recognized that it gave the lie to the central message of Christianity, namely, that we are saved by grace, entirely apart from the works that we do. For the Gentiles were left to assume they were somehow incomplete and not fully accepted into Christ's apostolic Church.

Paul was not embarrassed, ashamed, or afraid to speak in defense of the truth. In this case an open rebuke was justified. In his own brilliant manner he identified the problem at hand and then traced it to its theological roots. He employed sharp, logical reasoning to show how Peter's cowardice and hypocrisy was no less than a denial of his faith. Briefly, it went something like this: Peter has himself "lived as a Gentile," but now by his actions he would "compel Gentiles to live as Jews." Yet even he and Paul, who had lived the sanctified life of believing Jews, had come to realize that all their sabbath-keeping, food-abstaining, righteous-living ways could not count as righteousness toward God. Only by drinking deeply of the righteousness of Christ, through faith, were they justified before God. They had "died to the law," that is, the law could no longer condemn them, in Christ, Beware! If now they somehow

gave the impression that their works made them more worthy than others, they would quickly find themselves subject to the law's condemnation.

When we profess ourselves to be Christians, we invite the question from the world: Why *did* Christ die? Paul regarded himself (that is, his fleshly ways and impulses) as dead before God. The only works that count are those that flow from faith in Christ, the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." If, in that

spirit, we manifest open-hearted love toward others, and particularly toward our Christian brother or sister, we give evidence that Christ died to save sinners.

If, in the conceit of self-righteousness, we distinguish ourselves from, and exalt ourselves above, others by reason of the lives we lead, our actions cry out that grace is all bosh, and "Christ died in vain."

What answer would you give?



SMORGASBORD

* FROM THE 'SAY IT ISN'T SO' DEPARTMENT —

At times we read some compelling words to which we can only add: "Well said!" Here is one, with comment.

(From *The Concordia Lutheran*, Sept.-Oct. 1996). The writer, commenting on Jude 3 ["Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"], says: "We can 'contend for the faith' only if we KNOW WHAT IT IS. Therein lies the first challenge of every true Christian in Jude's exhortation. It is a sad commentary on the state of outward 'Lutheranism' today that in the so-called 'teaching church' there is precious little real teaching going on. Indoctrination is not only regarded with suspicion by those laymen and pastors who pride themselves in their freedom and ability to 'think for themselves' and to 'do the right thing' without being made to 'conform' to a standard of doctrine and practice, but 'the time [has] come

when they will not endure [that is, put up with] sound doctrine' (II Tim. 4:3).

"And sadly, Lutherans today (more notoriously than those in other Protestant denominations) are known to despise instruction. Bible classes are poorly attended where they even exist; interest in studying Christian doctrine is at an all-time low; and pastors very frankly tire of leading unwilling horses to water, much less of trying to interest them in drinking. No doubt one of the reasons for such lack of interest is that people don't want to be held responsible for judging between truth and error, for standing up to be counted, and for 'contend[ing] for the faith'; and with knowledge comes responsibility. Then, of course, there are also many pastors who, like those in Luther's day (whom he addresses in his preface to the Small Catechism), do not themselves know Christian doctrine, do not themselves have any interest in learning it, and therefore themselves have no zeal for teaching it in spite of the mandates of God's Word

that they do so (John 21:15-17, Acts 20:28, II Timothy 4:1-5; I Peter 5:1-4; etc.). . . .”

Comment: We did some investigating. The earliest annual statistics available to us (1971) revealed an average of 962 of a total 6,817 CLC communicants (or 14%) attended Bible Class on a regular basis. The same figures for 1996 reveal 1,109 of 6,657 (or 17%) attend Bible Class regularly.

With the percentage up, shall we conclude all is well? It's not easy when it's still less than one in five who, on the average, attend Bible Class. In other words, it would seem CLC members haven't escaped the



“despising instruction” bug mentioned above.

Living as we are in the midst of rampant heresy and/or a cacophony of anti-christian voices, “Bereans” are needed. We refer to those first century Christian believers who were more noble than their counterparts in Thessalonica because they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether they were being taught what Scripture teaches (cf. Acts 17).



Looking Back
in the
*Lutheran
Spokesman*

From September 1967 —

THE DEATH OF HERESY—We shouldn't be shocked. We shouldn't even be surprised. It had to come in this age of doctrinal indifference. Yet it is hard to believe when one first sees it in print. But the Episcopalians have said it and this month the Episcopal General Convention will be asked to pass on it. A special committee of theologians reached the conclusion that heresy is out of date and that “the word ‘heresy’ should be abandoned.”

The committee was formed because of the troubles brought on by the incessant mouthings and writings

of the famous Bishop James Pike of California. As you know by now he didn't fool around with little stuff. He wanted to junk the doctrine of the Holy Trinity among others. He called the doctrine of the Trinity “a heavy piece of luggage” which the church should no longer try to carry.

Heresy is false doctrine. But now there is no longer false doctrine. Why not? Because there is no longer true doctrine. This is the ugly and destructive attitude of the ecumenical age: there is no absolute truth. You cannot label anything false doctrine or heresy because there is no standard of true doctrine by which to measure. As Eve once changed the “surely die” to “lest ye die” so all of modern theology has become a *maybe* theology. There is no sure truth left. In the first garden Satan successfully removed the absolute authority of God and this has been repeated in the various gardens of the churches today. Poor Adam didn't have a committee to tell God there

was no such thing as heresy.

The tantalizing vision that Satan painted has now come fully true: ye shall be as gods. Every preacher, teacher, professor, and bishop in the church is a god answerable to no one but himself. No longer must man listen to God, but each man can proclaim his own doctrines. James Pike is like a god with authority to manufacture truth and dispense it to the public.

What the new morality did for human behavior has now been achieved for doctrine. The new morality abandoned worn out words like adultery and the new theology abandoned the word heresy. Only the latter is worse. It would be less harmful for mankind to approve of murder than it is to approve of heresy. For false teachings destroy man completely, separating man from that gracious God who came to the garden and gave man Paradise again in His Truth, in His Gospel, in His authoritative and inerrant Word.

This tragedy is not restricted to the Episcopal Church. The major denominations are all in the same situation even if they haven't taken the word heresy out of the vocabulary of the church. Where the inerrant Word has been discarded or mutilated, wherever there is toleration of teachings that contradict Scripture, God has been effectively removed as the author and only source of truth.

Thus it is not surprising that Elson Ruff, editor of the LCA *The Lutheran*, discusses this very subject and does not disapprove of the committee recommendation. He considers "Jim Pike . . . a man of keen intelligence and alert and vigorous in his search for

truth." Ruff includes his church body as "a part of the great company of believers of all the Christian sentries, who have been through many and difficult adjustments of their thought to the world changing around them."

Even the Missouri Synod has taken the same route. In accepting the report that agreement has been reached with the ALC they accepted an agreement that does not condemn the errors which in the past divided these two church bodies. This was already true of the Common Confession adopted in 1950. From Paul to Luther and to the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord every proclamation of the Gospel has included the condemnation of the false doctrine. The "we condemn" sets forth the heresies which have arisen in connection with the doctrines, labels them as such, and makes clear that they will not be tolerated. When the "we condemn" is removed, then again the word heresy has been abandoned. There no longer will be nor can there be suspending of pastors and professors who teach contrary to the true Gospel of our Lord.

When will sinful man learn the horrible lesson? Again and again he rebels against God's authority and fails to realize only in God's Garden where only God may speak Truth to man, only there is freedom for the children of God. When will he learn that each time he seeks to be like God he becomes the most miserable slave, a slave to the teachings of Satan, or man-made religions, or man-made salvations?

Christianity in America has become a farce. Having cast out the Son it no longer can claim to be the only way of salvation. It has become

another moral force alongside of Judaism and all other religions. And how we each must tremble and shake. In this universal attitude of rebellion against God's authority how can we escape the spirit of the age? How can we remain submissive to the will and word of our Master? We realize that our sinful hearts are also filled with Satanic rebellion against the Word.

With Luther we must despair of our strength, our loyalty, our purity, our faithfulness, and cast ourselves upon God's mercy and strength. This is the way Luther teaches us to pray the 12th Psalm: (*Ed.—There followed six stanzas of Hymn #260 from The Lutheran*

Hymnal. For space considerations, we print two.)

May God root out all heresy
And of false teachers rid us
Who proudly say: "Now, where is he
That shall our speech forbid us?
By right or might we shall prevail;
What we determine cannot fail;
We own no lord and master."

Defend Thy truth, O God, and stay
This evil generation;
And from the error of its way
Keep Thine own congregation.
The wicked everywhere abound
And would Thy little flock confound;
But Thou art our Salvation.

(*Winfred B. Schaller*)



HERESY ALIVE AND WELL

Spokesman editor at the time, Winfred Schaller Jr., hits many nails on the head in what he wrote thirty years ago in "*The Death Of Heresy*" (reprinted in this issue).

At first we were going to reprint only excerpts of the article. After all, why bore our readers with details of some sorry happenings in the church a generation ago? Why dredge up what took place at a 1967 Episcopal Church Convention with regard to a now-deceased bishop? Why quote what the editor of a magazine of a no-longer existing church body (LCA — which became part of the current ELCA) had to say in rave support of a heretic bishop?

Why? Because it is all so timely! Because, we think, it will be of value to remind our readers of another example of the scriptural truth that the leaven of error, unpurged and thus

unchecked, keeps on working its way until the entire batch is permeated.

This writer had been in the ministry only a few short years when Bishop James Pike gained notoriety in the secular as well as religious press for his openly anti-christian — to us, heretical — teachings. This young minister just couldn't understand how a purported bishop, who publicly denounced one after another of the basic articles of the Apostolic Creed, could still consider himself, or even why he wanted to be considered, a Christian. (We would add that what is being said could also go for Bishop John A. T. Robinson, an Anglican churchman of the same era, whose claim to fame was his authoring at the time [1963] a popular presentation of liberal theology entitled "*Honest To God*." In this book Robinson rejected at least everything Pike did; his book

Luther on 'Heresy' and 'Heretics'

+ The word "heresy" comes from the Greek language. (It) means to choose, select, and separate. Therefore heresy means a separate, selected, self-made, individualistic doctrine and manner of faith and life, apart from the commonly accepted one. . . . Therefore the word "heretic" really designates a person who is self-willed in matters pertaining to God, a queer fellow . . . who knows of something better and chooses his own way to heaven, a way the ordinary Christian does not travel. (p. 630)

+ Our adversaries (papal Rome—ed.) are not competent to judge what is heretical or Christian. For an understanding of Holy Scripture is necessary for this judgment, because, according to the testimony of all ancient and modern teachers, heresy is nothing else than an error stubbornly adhered to against the Holy Scripture. (p. 631)

+ All heresy has flown and risen from the fact that reason wants to master and rationalize Scripture. But reason is much too blind to be able to judge and criticize Holy Scripture. (p. 634)

+ Even though we have God's Word in truth and purity, we must not imagine that we shall retain good peace and undisturbed security and

that the true doctrine will always be preached. For many will oppose it violently and teach the very opposite. Carefully see to it, then, that you are not misled by them. We must not imagine that everybody will share our faith. On the contrary, if you are in the church of God and have God's Word undefiled and pure, know that the devil seeks to deprive you of it and walks about day and night as a roaring lion, trying to cause offenses and put obstacles in your path over which you will stumble . . . where God has begun to build a church and His true worship, there the devil at once puts a chapel on the adjoining lot. There the (sects) take pains to promote their false doctrine and draw people away from the true doctrine. Therefore, after you have heard God's Word, do this too: pray diligently that God's name be hallowed, saying: Dear God, sustain me in the true doctrine; protect us so that this doctrine may not be falsified and heretics may not destroy and hinder Thy kingdom. (p. 635f)

+ The church has no pest more harmful than a godless teacher, a godless and false prophet, a heretic. No poison is deadlier than godless doctrine. (p. 646)

(All quotations from Volume II of What Luther Says.)

spawned such bumper stickers as "Your God May Be Dead—Mine Isn't.")

The Farce Continues

Time can do many things. It can heal. But it can also reveal or uncover a festering, cancerous sore. In this case,

time has shown that men like Pike (d. 1976) and Robinson (d. 1983) were Satan's tools to plow the ground and set the tone for the sad condition of the visible Christian church at the end of the millennium. Satan has no problem with allowing that church to continue so long as he can have a hand in running it, and particularly if he can

disembowel its doctrine. One way he seeks to achieve his ends is by convincing people that unbiblical, anti-Christian teaching — historically known as heresy — is dead and buried.

“Christianity in America has become a farce” wrote our *Spokesman* editor in 1967. Thirty years later the farce continues, the cancer keeps spreading. Most mainline Christian churches, including mainline Lutheranism, have rejected an inerrant Bible as determinative for its teachings. Consider that the same Episcopal Church which exonerated Bishop Pike of heresy is one church body (others being the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church in America, and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.) with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is now contemplating the establishment of full communion fellowship. And where does Pike’s church stand today? “The Episcopal Church is now broad enough to allow for churchmen who deny almost all the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. It has been ordaining practicing homosexuals to the ministry. When the case of Bishop James Pike came before the 1967 convention of the Episcopal Church, the church body in effect ruled that all heresy is now an anachronism, “everything goes” within the church. . . .” (*Christian News*, November 11, 1996, p. 1).

All sorts of noxious weeds have sprouted since heresy was declared dead and the afore-mentioned bishops helped plow the liberal ground for the “everything goes” jungle of doctrinal liberalism. Consider the Jesus Seminar group which has stepped into the

heretical bishops’ shoes. That Group which began its “quest for the historical Jesus” in 1985, has 125 “scholars” who have endorsed what’s called the “historical critical” method of Bible interpretation. This method throws out everything in the Bible that is supernatural and miraculous, or that isn’t compatible with human reason and science. (The August 4, 1997 *U.S. News & World Report* quotes a Seminar founder as saying that a new Reformation or “reinvention of Christianity” is envisioned “that would supplant traditional Christian theology and practice.”) The Seminar group rejects the “historical-grammatical” method of Bible study, the method Luther and all true Reformation Lutherans have used. This method begins with the presupposition that all things are possible with God, that the Bible is God’s book, divinely inspired and wholly without error in all its teachings, including when it speaks on geographical, historical, and scientific matters.

The farce continues also in that one-time beacon of Synodical Conference confessional Lutheranism, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS). Another lead article in *Christian News* (July 7, 1997) rues the fact that within Missouri “tongue-talkers are tolerated, open Communion tolerated, unionistic and syncretistic activities are tolerated, desecration of Christian houses of worship by allowing worship of a false god tolerated, denigration of C. F. W. Walther and his teachings tolerated, and a tireless pursuit of the *Zeitgeist* by high church officials tolerated.” The article accuses Missouri of having “rubber” doctrine

which “may be twisted, convoluted, expanded, contracted and made to fit any shape at all.”*

Not Dead After All

The word “heresy” may be — in many quarters has been — abandoned by majority vote. That won’t change the fact that false doctrine retains its soul-destroying capability, as the Bible defines it and as faithful Bible teachers and defenders have always taught. “. . . There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the truth will be blasphemed” (2 Pet. 2:1-2). Yet heresy does have a positive twist as St. Paul teaches: “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Cor. 11:19 KJV).

The three-volume compendium *What Luther Says* has a total of 18 pages under subject titles heresy/heretics. Reading the samples given (see box), is there any doubt how Luther would react to 20th century assertions that heresy is dead?

As far as the “American Luther” is concerned, Dr. C. F. W. Walther spoke as follows on Dec. 5, 1884: *“It is written, Heb. 13:17: ‘Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.’ Alas what terror will seize all false teachers on the great day of account when all the souls led astray by them shall stand before the judgment seat of God and raise accusations against them!*

What terror will seize Arius, who questioned the deity of Christ and wanted to snatch the crown of divine majesty from Christ’s head! What terror will seize Pelagius, who denied that a person is made righteous and saved solely and alone by the grace of God! What terror, greater than these, will seize the Popes, who have formed all anti-christian doctrines into a system! How will they quake with terror when the souls without number whom they have led astray and whose hearts they have poisoned will stand in the presence of God! On that day every false teacher will wish that he had never been born and will curse the day when he was inducted into the sacred office of the ministry. On that day we shall see that false teaching is not the trifling and harmless matter that people in our day think it is” (*Our emphasis*; *The Proper Distinction Between Law And Gospel*, p. 88).

—Pastor Paul Fleischer

*For those interested the “everything goes” doctrinal liberalism in mainstream Lutheranism is laid out clearly opposite the orthodox position in the helpful book “What’s Going On Among the Lutherans?” (Northwestern Publishing House, 1991)



Announcements

Installation

In accord with our usage and order Joel Fleischer, who was called by Calvary congregation of Marquette, Michigan to be its pastor, was installed on June 1, 1997. Assisting in the installation were Prof. Clifford Kuehne and Pastor Robert McDonald.

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer

Withdrawal

Rev. Leroy Dux and Mt. Zion of Detroit

CLC. Rev. Egbert Albrecht and St. Luke's of Stoddard and St. Mark's of Onalaska have left the CLC. These former brethren have disagreed with the substance of the on-going study on self-esteem.

—*Daniel Fleischer, President*

West-Central Pastoral Conference

Dates: Sept. 16-18, beginning at 10 a.m. (MDT) on Tuesday through noon on Thursday
Place: Mt. Olive Ev. Lutheran Church, Lamar, Colo.

Agenda:

- 1) Old Testament Exegesis: Isaiah 55:8-11 — Pastor James Schrader
- 2) New Testament Exegesis: Romans 7:1-13 — Pastor Frank Gantt
- 3) Isagogical Study of Hebrews — Pastor Norman Greve
- 4) Review and Discussion: Walther's Law And Gospel — Pastor Peter Reim
- 5) Expository Preaching — Pastor Steven Sippert
- 6) What Impact Does the Minister Have on the Effectiveness of the Word that He Preaches? — Pastor Michael Schierenbeck
- 7) An Evaluation of the Evangelical Free Church — Pastor Paul Larsen
- 8) A Study of the Fourth Commandment with Special Consideration of the Attached Promise — Pastor David Fuerstenau
- 9) Book Reviews: *The Sermon*, by Lenski — Pastor Michael Roehl
Brave New Schools, by Bergit Kjos — Pastor John Johannes

Conference Chaplain: Pastor Michael Wilke

Conference Speaker: Pastor Norman Greve
—*Pastor Steven Sippert, Secretary*

Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council of the CLC will meet in Eau Claire on October 22 & 23, 1997. Each board will meet at the call of its chairman. The first session of CC is at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday.

—*Daniel Fleischer, President*

Appointment

Pastor Steven Sippert has been appointed to the Board of Education to replace Pastor David Schierenbeck who has resigned.

—*Daniel Fleischer, President*

New Address

The Rev. Horst Gutsche
1128 42nd St. SE
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T2A 1L6
Phone 403-207-1725



Pastors in attendance for the ordination/installation of Pastor James Naumann at Mt. Olive Lutheran, Lamar, Colo. on June 29, 1997: (Back) Vance Fossum, Delwyn Maas, Norman Greve; (Front) Peter Reim, Bertram Naumann who installed his son, James.