

Lutheran Spokesman

Ob, for a Faith That Will Not Shrink 396

Luke 17: 5
William H. Bathurst, 1851, alt.

C. M.

St. Peter
Alexander R. Reinagle, 1835



- 1 Oh, for a faith that will not shrink Tho' pressed by man-y a foe;
- 2 That will not mur-mur nor com-plain Be-neath the chas-t'ning rod,
- 3 A faith that shines more bright and clear When tempests rage with-out;
- 4 That bears unmoved the world's dread frown Nor heeds its scorn-ful smile;



- That will not trem-ble on the brink Of pov-er-ty or woe;
But in the hour of grief or pain Can lean up-on its God;
That, when in dan-ger, knows no fear, In dark-ness feels no doubt;
That sin's wild o-ccean can-not drown Nor Sa-tan's arts be-gulle; A-men.



- 5 A faith that keeps the narrow way
Till life's last spark is fled
And with a pure and heavenly ray
Lights up the dying bed.

- 6 Lord, give us such a faith as this;
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en now the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home.

“Now faith is the substance of things
hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Hebrews 11:1

AN UNSHRINKABLE FAITH

If you could choose any one thing in the entire universe that would make 1998 a happy new year for you, what would it be?

For a lot of folks the answer is this simple: "Just let the Sweepstakes van pull into my driveway at the end of this month. Yes, with that kind of money—millions of dollars at my disposal, nothing in the year ahead could get me down."

Others might say, "If only I were feeling better and could do the things I used to do . . ." "If only I owned my own home; if only we had a different car; if only I were promoted at work; if only . . ." — on and on the list could go.

Maybe finances are especially tight at the moment and maybe you have been living with excruciating pain. Perhaps a new home or car would help, but none of those things can provide what we need to overcome the unforeseen troubles lurking in the future. What can?

Consider the prayer expressed in

Hymn No. 396 in *The Lutheran Hymnal*:

*Oh, for a faith that will not shrink
Tho' pressed by many a foe;
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe.*

What each of us needs, really needs, is an unshrinkable faith.

Just what is "unshrinkable faith"? "Faith," Scripture teaches, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Faith is the conviction that what we believe is true even though we cannot see it with our eyes. This distinction is worth remembering, because what we see with our eyes is sometimes just the opposite of what we believe.

The Bible also shows us what an "unshrinkable" faith is. Only here it does so by example. Of Abraham Paul

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writes: "Who, contrary to hope, in hope believed so that he became the father of many nations, . . . and not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead . . . and the deadness of Sarah's womb" (Rom. 4:18-19). God had promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, but the years had ticked by and now a childless Abraham had grown old with his wife.

What Abraham saw were the same things that any of us would have seen. He saw that his body was as good as dead and so was Sarah's womb. He also knew that the odds against his 90-year-old wife giving birth were colossal; in fact, humanly impossible. That's what he saw with his eyes. Just as today—what we see is oftentimes in contrast to what we believe.

So, we pray for a faith that doesn't shrink:

A faith that shines more bright and clear

*When tempests rage without,
That, when in danger, knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.*

Abraham "did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief . . . being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform" (Rom. 4:20-21). Despite incalculable odds, Abraham clung to God's Word. Behind that Word was the limitless power of the One "who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Rom. 4:17).

For us to have an unshrinkable faith means trusting in the same God, and for the same reason. He is the God of all power who does literally anything. He is also the God of all grace, who has redeemed us from our sins through the life, death, and resurrection of the promised Seed of Abraham, His own Son Jesus. His sure, powerful Word is both the cause and the basis for a faith that will not shrink.

*Lord, give us such a faith as this;
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en now the hallowed bliss,
Of an eternal home.*

—Pastor James Albrecht

❦

"My times are in Your hand"

—Psalm 31:15

There is a creeping malaise of pessimism seizing the hearts and minds of people today. This feeling of helplessness and frustration is heightened by the passing of another year and the approaching end of another century. There is a paralysis of spirit that is gripping not only the world but also us Christians. Of course, this is nothing new. David expresses these

same feelings in Psalm 31. "Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; my eye wastes away with grief. Yes, my soul and my body! For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away" (Ps. 31:9-10).

The problem today is that people have been led to believe that they are in

control of their lives and their destinies. The advances of science and learning should hold out the promise of unlimited opportunity, but the very opposite is happening. At the end of another year, the world seems poised at the edge of some unnamed disaster. In spite of the advances of modern medicine, we still face aids, Ebola, and super germs. People don't know whether to worry about El Nino or global warming. The prosperity we enjoy in the United States and the rising stock market seem increasingly fragile. It is a terrible burden for people to feel and think that they have to solve these unsolvable problems. Mankind feels "my times are in my hands."

The Christian is not immune from these problems. The Christian is also tempted by Satan to think that his salvation and his future are dependent upon him. The religious world also seems gripped by the fear of impending doom. This bunker mentality is seen in its extreme form by David Koresh and other "Christian" groups who are arming themselves in anticipation of the impending violent fall of society. Many preachers are dwelling on the collapse of the economy and the monetary system. Christians are urged to hoard gold and canned goods and move to the wilds of Montana. Some speak of the collapse of society due to the computer's inability to handle the programming changes needed in the year 2000. We experience the inroads of the immorality of the day in the breakdown of families and the feeling that the next generation is going to hell in a handbasket. Among conservative Christians there is an increasing feeling of hopelessness in facing the future.

God In Control

The answers to these feelings are not to be found in ourselves or in trying to escape the wickedness of this world by cutting ourselves off from the world. David in Psalm 31 fled to the Lord. "I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, for You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities" (Ps. 31:7). David found hope in the unfailing goodness of the Lord. "Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You in the presence of the sons of men" (Ps. 31:19)! David realized that his times, his future, was in the hands of the covenant God. Our text is a beautiful expression of the Christian's faith. "But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in Your hand" (Ps. 31:14-15).

God is in control of our lives and our future. Jesus reminds us that we are not to worry about our tomorrows because they are in the hands of our Creator and Preserver God. Live as people who take no thought for tomorrow. God has never yet forsaken in need the soul that trusted Him indeed. The promises of God in Jesus are sure and certain. We have just celebrated the fulfillment of God's promises in the birth of Jesus Christ. God's love has shined into our hearts and into our world. The book of Revelation assures us that the Lamb on the throne is in control. All the events and circumstances of life are in the hands of the Lord who is our God. What more could we ask?

Instead of being frightened and out of control, we need to leave all things

to God's direction and praise Him for His love and deliverance.

David ends Psalm 31 with the positive assurance of praise. "Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD preserves the faithful, and fully

repays the proud person. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the LORD" (Ps. 31:23-24).

Hope in the Lord this upcoming year.

—Pastor John Schierenbeck



The Child of Hope – A Light to Share

The wonder and joy that surrounds the arrival of a newborn infant is something to behold. When a parent or grandparent gathers up that small bundle for a first look, there is always a sense of awe at the miracle of new life, and the amazing potential that lies in such a tiny and helpless package.

Just such a special scene took place one day in the city of Jerusalem, when an old man named Simeon met a very ordinary-looking young couple, with their infant son, in the temple. He was not a grandparent; in fact he was not related at all to the couple or their child, as far as we know. Yet he was more closely tied to this little baby than to anyone else in the whole world.

The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that the child he would meet that day would be the Christ, the Lord and Savior of the entire world. As he took this infant in his arms, he beheld not only the miracle of new life, but the supreme miracle of light and life for the world. The hopes and fears of all people throughout history rested in his arms as he gazed at the tiny face. His heart swelled with joy, and he burst into a psalm of praise—words which are familiar to us in the song which follows our communion liturgy, the "Nunc Dimittis":

The Nunc Dimittis

*Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart
in peace according to Thy word,*

For mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation:

*Which Thou hast prepared before the
face of all people,*

*A Light to lighten the Gentiles and the
Glory of Thy people Israel.*

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;*

*As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever
shall be, world without end. Amen.*

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Lk. 2:29-32).

After waiting for a lifetime to see the fulfillment of the Lord’s promises, one aged man was now ready to leave this world whenever the Lord might call him. His heart was at peace now that he had seen the Child of Hope. By faith he was able to look beyond the poverty and plainness that Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus presented. The Spirit within him testified that this was the Lord’s Christ.

We now know that Simeon’s faith was well-founded. The tiny infant voice that arose from the swaddling clothes belonged to the almighty God who had entered this world to take upon himself a human nature. This was the same voice that would cry out from the cross, under the crushing burden of the sins of the world: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” And then, having paid the full price for our salvation, that same voice would call out in triumph: “It is finished!”

Blessings And Opportunities

How fitting it is that we echo the words of Simeon at the conclusion of our celebration of the Lord’s Supper. For it is there that we personally meet with the Lord Jesus by partaking of His true body and blood. By the work of the Holy Spirit, our eyes see beyond the humble outward form of bread and wine as we recognize the presence of the Savior of all people. The joy of sins forgiven and heaven assured makes us, too, ready to leave this world for the life to come whenever the Lord might call.



But the Lord in His wisdom does not immediately take believers out of this sin-sick world. Instead, He gives them the task of taking this light of the Gospel of Christ to others. When Simeon sang of Jesus as a “light to lighten the Gentiles,” he was referring to all the people who are still in need of a personal encounter with the Child of Hope through the Word of the Gospel.

And that’s where YOU come in. Have you been blessed to see in the Christchild your Savior from sin? Has the light of His Gospel reached your eyes and shown you a clear path to eternal life? Has the message of forgiveness through His death for you on the cross touched your heart? Then consider carefully your assignment, from God Himself, to carry the torch of the Gospel to others:

“So the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth’” (Acts 13:47).

This saving Gospel is a message that the Lord wants to shine in the heart of your neighbor, your co-worker, your friend; and YOU are the best person to show them what this Child of Hope really means to them. The Lord wants this Gospel to shine in your community, and your congregation has the message and the means to make it happen. The Lord wants this Gospel to reach to

the ends of the earth, and through your church body you can do your part to see that this work, too, goes forward.

Like aged Simeon, these blessings and opportunities come to us only through the work of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord give us increasing joy as

we hold the Child of Hope, the Light of the World, in our hearts. And may we ever hold His Gospel up as a beacon for the world to see, that they may also be drawn to the light of salvation.

—Pastor Bruce Naumann



Studies In Galatians

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

Chapter 3:5-15

The “NANNY SERVICE” of the Law

Is it important for us to know what the Lord’s apostle wrote in this part of his letter to the Galatian Christians? It was addressed to a specific problem, namely, the threat of the “Judaizers.” These people were tormenting Gentile believers, asserting that faith in Christ is not enough. To be justified and acceptable to God, they taught, it is necessary that certain requirements of Moses’ Law, such as circumcision, be observed.

This may not seem to be a problem for us today. Yet ancient heresies do keep coming, dressed in some more modern garb. If someone tells you that you must obey some religious law (tithing, for example, or observing a Saturday-Sabbath), follow some church custom such as calling yourself Lutheran, or fulfill *any* human work to qualify for the inheritance of the saints in light, this Scripture can serve you well. It can help keep you in the truth

of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone.

What Law?

When Paul writes about “The Law” here (v. 19), he speaks of that splendid gift once given to Israel by God through Moses on Sinai. It was a legal code that was to govern every aspect of life for the covenant people. This divine revelation defined their religious life. It gave them a perfect constitution of civil law. Its centerpiece was the “Ten Words,” the commandments which taught how their love toward God and neighbor should behave.

With good reason, every pious Jewish patriot would pledge allegiance to this national treasure. Understandably, many who became Christians continued, by choice, to live “kosher” in some matters (See Acts

15:28-29). Yet Paul would not allow, even for a minute, that Gentile believers should be placed *under that Law*.

Why Not, If It Is So Good?

Our Scripture portion tells us that the Law of Moses did have a place and a purpose for a time, a “supervisory role” (v. 25). That mission was accomplished. That Law is no longer in effect. God has “canceled the written code with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; *he took it away, nailing it to the cross*” (Col. 2:14).

It is vital to the biblical line of thought to understand that the Law of Moses had only a *temporary* function and purpose. Important, but only *temporary*. Speaking as a Jew born under The Law, Paul says that The Law “was put in charge to lead us *until Christ* that we might be justified *by faith*” (v. 24, NIV).

The Tough-love Nanny

In Bible times well-off people often had someone who would see to it that a child would get safely to school and back home again. Much like the modern nanny supervising children until mom and dad come home, keeping them out of trouble and enforcing the rules of the house.

During four centuries of slavery in Egypt the family of Abraham got along without a “paidagogos.” When liberated, however, and moving as a populous nation toward occupation of the promised land, Jehovah met them at Sinai. There, through Moses as mediator, the two-party covenant of The Law was established to serve until the

promised Seed would come. “*Because of transgressions.*” Even God’s privileged, chosen people would be prone to sin. If they were to fulfill their destiny as the matrix of the Messiah the nation would have to be kept together with a rigid code of law, a law of “do’s and don’ts” with threats of punishment for sin and reward for good behavior.

Important as this service was, Paul warns against allowing it to set aside the covenant previously established by God with Abraham, thus doing away with *the promise*. In other words, you can’t have it both ways. Is it your hope to receive life and salvation by doing The Law or by believing the Promise (the gospel)? In his own graphic way, one of our founding fathers in the CLC (Maynard Witt) used to ask whether you are a “Moses lover” or a lover of Christ.

Think About It!

The covenant of promise which God made with Abraham and continues to us in Christ is unconditional. It requires no doing on our part. “Only believe.” That’s why our glorious present and future in Christ is so sure. With Paul we can exult, “Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of The Law” (v. 25).

Good-by

“Thanks, Nanny. You did a great job, but we won’t need your services any more. The children are now mature enough to discipline and care for themselves!”

—Pastor Rollin A. Reim



SMORGASBORD

● **YOUR TV, A THREAT TO FAITH**—(From a Sunday bulletin this fall at St. John's Lutheran Church, Okabena, Minn.; Vance Fossum is pastor)

It is becoming a fairly regular happening: as the new TV programs air every fall, they fall to new depths of moral depravity. Over the years we can mark each step downward. The daytime soap operas started the plunge to the pits of porn. In the sixties and seventies, evening affairs like *Peyton Place* and then *Dallas* and *Falcon Crest* added a touch of class to the bed-hopping of the afternoon soaps. The sinful affairs and pre-marital fornication of the unprincipled principals in each story were presented ever more frequently by the writers as "understandable," even "acceptable." "Hey, what's wrong with two people being attracted to one another and doing what is 'natural'?" they challenged us. So censorship was trashed for sensual trash.

The downward trend has continued through decades of moral decadence. Made-for-television movies like *Rich Man-Poor Man*, *North and South*, and a rash of other so-called romantic novels have further desensitized the American public—especially our children—to the lewd and the nude. In the last decade a plague of popular shows like *Doogy Howser*, *MD* and *Beverly Hills 90210* have made sexual activity seem like the one pervasive and all-important goal of all young people, except, of course, those very few "undesireables" who want to keep their virginity. *NYPD Blue* added

to the screen the screams of victims of violence, as well as nudity and sex, making it all seem so "real" in order to bring the lovers of violence and the lovers of sex in front of the TV. *Picket Fences*, far from being white or protective of the American family, broke down still more barriers to evil with episodes like the one featuring two high school girl-friends in bed together, kissing one another. The ground was being prepared for the "coming out" of Ellen Degeneres and other lesbians and gays!

The devil is not done yet! All of television's temptings that have fallen every fall for the past 30-40 years has been aimed at this one goal: **that the temptings—the suggestive scenes and "in your face" immorality—may make the lie more acceptable.** That lie has finally been stated in the new series entitled *Nothing Sacred*. We happened to see a few minutes of (the premier) episode. A man and woman who have been living together for some time are talking about their marriage the next day, while the woman is seducing him. "Wait until tomorrow," he says, when we are married. "We'll be together the rest of our lives." "But," the woman counters, **"It's more fun when it's sinful."**

Shades of Eden? No doubt! The "forbidden fruit" has ever since been the most sought-after by fallen mankind. First, the devil works patiently (for 30-40 years if necessary!) to repeatedly put the forbidden fruit "in our faces." He challenges the conscience over and over again until the voice of God is barely audible.

Then he springs the lie: "You will not die! You will be like God, *knowing good and evil*, and the evil is more fun! . . . There's 'NOTHING SACRED'."

Dear Christian man, woman, and child, your television set is a threat to your spiritual health and life. It "talks" to you every day, like the serpent (may have) talked to Eve. Like the serpent in Eden, your TV may be seen as a friend in the garden of your home. But it is also an agent of deceit, a primary tool of that great enemy who walks about the earth "seeking whom he may devour." Don't underestimate him! Turn him off and away when you hear him or see him enter the garden of your home. **"Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."**

● **'SHADOWS AND SUBSTANCE—AN INDUCTIVE STUDY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS'**—

This is a "commercial" for some reading and viewing that would be infinitely more valuable than any time spent in front of the television set for lesser fare.

With the encouragement of the synod's Board of Education as well as with the encouragement and support of others including his wife Sharon,

Pastor John Schierenbeck, Winter Haven, Fla., has produced an adult information manual and video by the above title. In 20 lessons (11 from the Old Testament and 9 from the New), each lasting about one half hour on video, Pastor Schierenbeck effectively shows how "shadows" in the Old Testament are fulfilled by Him who is their "substance," Jesus Christ. A title byline carries the Bible verse: "The substance is of Christ"—Colossians 2:17.

There have been and are many fine adult instruction manuals out there, such as Luther's Catechism as well as the well-known *What Does The Bible Say?* by Oswald Riess. In abridged and unabridged versions, Riess has probably been used most often over the years by conservative Lutheran pastors as they instruct prospective members in the chief Bible teachings.

What is unique about *Shadows And Substance* is that it is made clear from the beginning that "the Bible should be used as the primary textbook"—and it is so used! There is a well-prepared manual, yet every encouragement is given to the student(s) to carry out the stated aim that this is to be "an inductive study of the

SHADOWS AND SUBSTANCE



AN INDUCTIVE STUDY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

Old and New Testaments.” A preface to the manual explains: “Bible study should be inductive, that is, people should draw truths out of Scripture for themselves. One of the goals of this course is to encourage people to read the Bible for themselves and apply it to their own lives.”

In other words, this is no “quickie” course toward membership in the church. Nor is that what we would want. The student(s) are expected to “work” right along with the presenter. Those who diligently do this, using either the manual and/or the video, following along in their Bibles, and reading the suggested supplementary home Bible readings, will surely be blessed by the Spirit through the Word.

The 82-page manual (including study guides and questions for 20 lessons) can be ordered through the author, or through the CLC Bookhouse, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701. It is \$7.00 per copy, plus shipping.* The corresponding two-set video may be ordered from Pastor John Schierenbeck, 3015 Ave. K NW, Winter Haven, FL 33881. The video set is \$15.00 plus shipping.

The *Shadows And Substance* manual is well done (including graphics, tables, timelines) and is a real “buy” in

itself. Remembering that the Bible is the primary textbook, each pastor could well adapt the manual for his own presentation. As for the videos, the material is presented while the instructor is seated. Some may be disappointed that there isn’t more flare (a few graphics and tables appear). Schierenbeck, however, has a fine speaking voice and presents the lesson material with a non-dramatic, measured pastoral approach. The musical interludes are appealing. Throughout, the “Bible approach” is obvious and it is powerful.

Throughout his ministry this writer/pastor had often heard it said that one of the best adult instruction courses would be to use the Bible itself, beginning with the first chapters of Genesis, then studying the Gospel of Luke, and finally drawing on various portions of Paul’s epistles. There was always the good intention to give it a try, but we never did. *Shadows And Substance* is an excellent example of how the whole counsel of God can be effectively presented along the lines described.

(*Note: each pastor and teacher in the CLC will be receiving a free copy of the manual.) ●



CLC Teachers assembled at Berea, Inver Grove Heights, Minn. for their annual conference. See story p. 15.

The following material was originally prepared for a tract at the request of the Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference, October 1997. For reasons of space we divide it into two parts.

“THE MILLENNIUM”

—Let’s Enjoy it Now!

(Part 1)

Will we enter a golden age when the calendar year turns on the year 2,000? Is there something magical about the number with three zeroes? Should we look for an era during the present age—before the resurrection of the dead—when “saints and godly men will possess a worldly kingdom and annihilate all the goddess”**?

These are not idle questions. Worldly places of entertainment are already getting “fully booked” for the big New Year’s Eve celebration. People seem desperate for something better to hope for. The numbers game gets a lot of players.

Christians Too?

Yes. Some promote the idea, the fervent hope, that there will be a thousand year period—*before the ending of this age*—during which Jesus and His Church will rule the world in power, peace, and glory. In this golden era it is presumed that there would be no crosses for believers to take up in following the Lord.

A tempting prospect for the Church under the cross, to be sure. But it is not the picture Jesus drew about the course of things up to the day of His coming “in the clouds” (Mt. 24-25). It is still a pale, poor hope compared with **what the Scriptures do hold out for us in**

the age to come when the Christ will say: “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world” (Mt. 25:34).

The Bible View Of Our Glory

Consider what we are taught about **“the living hope to which we have been begotten again by God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”** The Apostle Peter terms it an *“inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time”* (1 Pet. 1:4f). Can you imagine anything in this present age that could compare with what awaits us when the earth will be renewed?

“We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:13). In the meanwhile, the Church under the cross will continue to wait for **the blessed hope**—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

But Doesn’t . . . ?

Those who await a millennial golden age make their case with a portion

of the Apocalypse (unveiling) given by Jesus as a vision to the Apostle John: "I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss, and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time" (Rev. 20:1-3).

This does sound like a specific time frame of 1,000 calendar years. But not if we reckon with the nature of **apocalyptic** literature. Strange to us today, this kind of writing used images (such as very weird beastly creatures) and symbolic numbers to convey messages. In Revelation 13, for example, an earthly agent of the devil is pictured as a beast with a number (666, short of the divine number 777).

Ten is often the number of perfec-

tion, the rounded whole. 1,000 (10x10x10) would then represent a very definite rounded completeness. Such code language could communicate effectively for people of spiritual understanding who knew their Scriptures. At the same time it would hide information from hostile people.

What, Then, Is The "Millennium"?

Careful biblical scholarship takes the message of the "The Thousand Years" to be a much needed word of great comfort to the persecuted Church. The period described is a perfectly rounded time with a beginning and an end under the controls of the God in whose hands "all our times do rest" (Ps. 31:15).

(to be concluded)

*From the AUGSBURG CONFES-
SION, Article XVII. 1530

—Pastor Rollin A. Reim



Pastor and members of Calvary Lutheran, Marquette, Michigan on the day of dedication of the stained glass windows they helped to construct (see story next page).

“Over 20 members of Calvary Lutheran Church, Marquette, Michigan worked together almost around the clock—in the weeks before Pastor David Reim left for Vernon, British Columbia—to complete a large stained glass project that had been in planning for almost a year. The excitement built as the windows slowly began to take shape until they were complete. The result is a beautiful reminder of the love of our God in all His works for us.” So wrote Pastor Reim. What follows is an abbreviated explanation of the symbolism involved in the windows.

The Love Of God Depicted in Stained Glass

The predominant feature of both windows is the large radiating cross. The cross where Jesus died on Calvary is the center of our faith and hope. The cross shows us the amazing extent of God’s love. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. It is certainly fitting that the cross of Calvary takes center place in our life, our church name, and now also in the stained glass windows.

Because Christ’s death on the cross has done so much for us, the crosses are pictured as beams of light radiating down to the earth with the light of life.

Our Triune God Saves Us

The window on the left reminds us that our God is the Triune God. The symbol at the very bottom of the window is a common symbol for the Trinity—our great Three-in-One. This whole window represents the Trinity and all He does for us.

The Son of God is pictured as “the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.” He is placed at the center of the cross because that is where He made His sacrifice for the sins of the world.

The empty tomb is a vivid reminder of Jesus’ glorious resurrection. It is the empty tomb that makes the cross truly

glorious for the believer. The Easter lilies are also a popular symbol of Christ’s resurrection. Their pure white color reminds us of the beauty of holiness that Jesus’ death and resurrection has earned for us.

The Holy Spirit is pictured as the dove of peace. He descends upon us through the Word and sacraments much like He descended upon Jesus at His baptism.

God the Father is not directly pictured in any one symbol, but He is seen in everything. He is the Creator of the beautiful earth we live in, pictured in the hills and flowers.

May we give all thanks and praise to our Triune God. It is by His grace alone that His love and mercy and glory radiate down upon us in such abundance.

Our Loving God Comes To Us

The window on the right depicts how our gracious God comes to us. He shows us His wisdom, power, and care in the grandeur and beauty of His creation pictured at the bottom of each window.

The Bible is pictured coming down out of heaven, just as God gave His Word from heaven by the inspiration

of the Holy Spirit. The rays of the cross shine upon the Bible, just as the redemption Jesus won for us on the cross is the central focus of the entire Bible. The Bible is pictured as being open to remind us that it is intended to be—and needs to be—read and heard, not kept closed on the shelf. When we see the Bible in the window, let us remember to use our Bibles so that we may be blessed.

Our Lord also comes to us through the sacraments. The Lord's Supper is pictured by the bread and the grapes and the chalice. It is placed in the center of the cross because Jesus gives us the very body and blood that He shed on the cross in payment for our sins.

The stream flowing through the hills can remind us of several things. It is a picture of the water of Baptism which washes us clean of all sins and makes us children of God by bringing us to faith. The Bible also uses a fresh

mountain stream as a picture of the Holy Spirit coming to us in the Word, and as the water of life that refreshes and nourishes the believer.

The tree by the stream could be viewed as the tree of life. Jesus promises all who overcome the threats and temptations of the world: "I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). The tree can also be a beautiful picture of each believer who is thriving by drinking the precious water of life (see Ps. 1:2-3).

The Alpha and the Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Jesus says: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Rev. 22:13).

May these windows be a continual reminder of the grace and love of our God, and may they lead us to give all glory to Him now and forever.



1997 CLC Teachers' Conference

Our CLC teachers converged on Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota for the annual Teachers' Conference at Berea Ev. Lutheran Church and School on October 15-17. The weather was wonderful and the hospitality of the Berea family was tremendous. The conference program covered a variety of educational topics and was well received by all of the participants and visitors.

Our conference chaplain, Craig Owings, opened each day with inspirational words for us from Scripture on our calling to teach. We must not let anything diminish our work to which

we have been called by the Lord Himself. Our work in our schools and congregations is infinitely important and has eternal consequences as we teach God's Word and make a difference in our students' lives.

On Wednesday Barry Hay presented the topic of "Memory Work in the Christian Day School." Beth Sydow covered the timely topic of "Teacher Time Savers." Mark Kranz prepared us for "Parent-Teacher Conferences" with his topic on how to conduct them.

The topic of "Creative Writing" was presented by the Mankato faculty. The Title 5's consisted of a "Software

Review" by Matthew Thurow. David Bernthal presented a tool for identifying teacher helpers from among our fellowship. "Indoor/Rainy Day Activities for Small Groups" was given by Ruth Eserhut.

David Lundin presented a compilation of CLC school report cards and a view toward better reporting of student progress. A presentation of "Christmas Services" was given by Alvin Sieg. The day concluded with a communion worship service led by Pastor David Schierenbeck with a sermon entitled "Your God-Given Student-Teaching Calling: 'Feed My Lambs'."

On Thursday Douglas Libby, in his paper, reminded us of the "Importance of the Proper Application of the Law and the Gospel in the Christian Classroom." A paper entitled "What's Needed so a Student Can Succeed?" was given by Carla Pelzl. Prof. Jeffrey Schierenbeck presented "What Is Required for Freshman to Succeed at ILHS?" The Weekly Reader Series *God's World* was reviewed by Kurt Koenig.

The teachers went on field trips of their choice: Mall of America, Science Museum of Minnesota, Fort Snelling, and the Minnesota Zoo. Jim Lau concluded the day with an Internet Workshop.

On Friday Candice Ohlmann presented "Art Activities for the School Year." *Help, My Child Isn't Learning*, a book by Dr. Grant Martin, was reviewed by Sara Pfeiffer. An idea exchange was held and conference business was conducted and completed.

We look forward with expectation to our next conference scheduled for

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Gebhardt
811 S. Union Road
Spokane, WA 99206

Messiah, Hales Corners, Wis. October 14-16, 1998.

—David Lundin,
Holy Trinity, W. Columbia, SC

Announcements

Late Acknowledgement

The author of the article "More Than Enough" (November 1997 *Lutheran Spokesman*) gratefully acknowledges the following as a helpful source for his article: "For Such a Time as This" (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House).

From The Editor

In our issue of May 1996 an article appeared entitled *Part II. Methods of Pietism*. The article contained some generalizations which could lead one to believe that the WELS as a synod officially endorses any or all of some errors of the theology of the following in connection with small group Bible study: Pastor Cho (Pentecostal), Lyman Coleman (Serendipity), Promise Keepers, etc. The article expressed a very subjective opinion and contained several inaccuracies.

We are not in fellowship with WELS due to substantive doctrinal differences. However, we regret if any were misled by these unfounded generalizations.