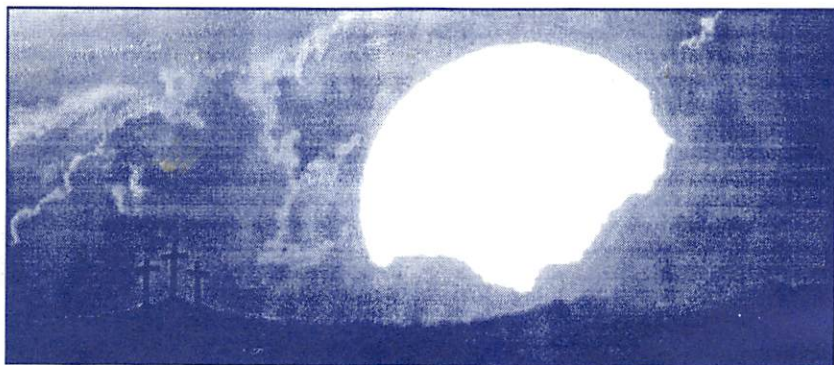


LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

JHallelujah!
Jesus Lives!
He is now the
LIVING ONE;
From the gloomy
house of death **Forth** the
Conqueror has gone,



Bright Forerunner to the skies
Of His people, yet to rise.

TLH 188 verse 1

I'm Dreaming Of A White . . . Easter?!

In Marquette, Michigan, which had record snowfall in 1997 of almost three hundred inches, Easter was indeed white last year, as snow lay on the ground that day. But whether you live in Marquette, Michigan, Phoenix Arizona, or Winter Haven, Florida, Easter will always be white for believers in Christ Jesus.

The Color Of Mourning

For those living in the North, white usually means the dead of winter — dead flowers, dead trees, and dead car batteries, as the weather turns cold and snow blankets the countryside. By April one's thoughts turn to spring, green grass, and birds chirping, as life returns to the landscape. And so it is fitting that Christ Jesus rose from the dead in the springtime, having paid the price for sin on the cross as He "died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3f).

Not surprisingly, winter notwithstanding, black is traditionally the color of death and mourning. Scripture speaks of those in their sins as walking in darkness, blind and dead. As we observe the Lord Jesus suffering and dying to pay for our sins on Good Friday, the cloths are black on the altar. Then a few days later Easter comes. Christ is arisen!

So the purple altar cloths of Lent, the black of Good Friday and sorrow over sin give way to white Easter lilies and white altar cloths, for white is the color of Easter, a color of rejoicing for the Christian. What a contrast against the black backdrop of the Passion Season! Unlike winter, where white means death to all manner of things, the white of Easter means life, both spiritual and eternal.

That's what keeps the believer going during the long Lenten season. As we sorrow over our sin and focus on the suffering of the Savior, we are continually looking ahead, dreaming of a

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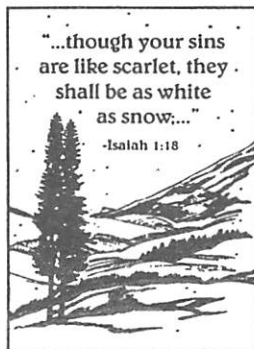
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white Easter, dreaming of the sweet message of the resurrection of the dead, of sin and Satan conquered and death overcome. Certainly our pastors proclaim this message to us also in the Lenten season, but the Gospel which is always refreshing seems more so on Easter morn.

...As White As Snow

And if snow happens to blanket the ground that day, all the more fitting. For what happened on Easter? Christ who humbled Himself and did not despise the shame of the cross, was exalted, victorious over sin, death, and the devil. When Christ was exalted at His transfiguration, Mark describes His apparel as “shining, exceedingly white, like snow” (Mk. 9:3). In John’s revelation of the triumphant Christ, the apostle beholds “One like the Son of Man . . . His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow” (Rev. 1:14).

Why was Christ exalted? Again, Scripture directs our attention to the snow. As it is written: “(Christ) was delivered up for our offenses and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). He was exalted because His payment for sin was accepted by God the Father. When Christ died and rose again the world was declared “not guilty” of sin, and the promise of the LORD God was fulfilled: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Is. 1:18). Like a blanket of snow Christ covers our sins, for it is written: “You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people, You have covered all their sin” (Ps. 85:2), so that we are counted among those of whom the psalmist writes: “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is



covered” (Ps. 32:1).

With sin taken away no more could the black of death and the grave terrorize man, for Christ’s bodily resurrection from the dead means the bodily resurrection unto life everlasting for all who trust in Him for salvation, as the Savior promises: “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” (Jn. 11:25).

So in the risen, *living* Christ forgiven sinners ask with the holy writer: “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:55ff).

Whether or not snow falls on Easter morning where you live, here’s wishing you a white Easter — white, because Christ rose from the dead; white, because you have been raised from spiritual death with Christ in Baptism; white, because all of your sins have been covered and you have been washed clean in the blood of Him who was dead and is now alive; white, because His life means your life and resurrection.

—Pastor Joel Fleischer

NO SKELETONS HERE!

A recent novel titled 'A *Skeleton in God's Closet*' revolves around the crucial question: "What if modern-day archeologists were to suddenly unearth the remains of Christ's body?" In other words, what if Jesus had been crucified, dead, and buried, and that was the end?

That prospect was the cause of the women's sadness as they trudged toward the garden grave in the predawn darkness. It was the reason for the disciples' fear as they tried to maintain a low profile in the hours following Good Friday.

What If . . . ?

What if . . . ? Common sense and human experience ask, "How could it be otherwise?" No one we know has come back from the dead. No ER on earth can revive a patient who has truly died. Even respected religious leaders seem to concede that Jesus could not really be alive, as they speak of Christ living on only through His followers.

What if . . . ? What if Jesus were no different than anyone else and were still dead? Paul gives a grim prognosis; "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). If Jesus' bones are lying dry and decayed in an ancient tomb, then we're dead too. Then any hope is crushed under the life-sapping burden of sin. How can we be hopeful when a guilty conscience and God's righteous anger against sin hang over our lives like a black cloud? Then all we could look forward to would be a life spent desperately grasping for the mirage of happiness followed by an eternity of torment.

What if . . . ? Easter tells us we



don't have to wonder. We know! The women were there. They saw the stone tossed aside and heard the electrifying news from the holy messenger: "He is not here. He is risen!" Heart-wrenching grief burst into glorious ecstasy. Peter and John saw the empty tomb. With their own eyes the disciples saw the resurrected Lord standing before them Easter evening. A week later even the doubts of Thomas were erased. Fear gave way to wondrous awe. St. Paul confirms the truth for all time: "Christ has indeed been raised from the dead!" (1 Cor. 15:20). There are no 'what ifs?' HE IS RISEN!

He Is Risen!

That certainty is my life and salvation. It tells me that my sin has been paid for in full and can no longer be counted against me. It gives me renewed hope, for it means that even on the worst of days when I can't seem to get along with anyone, when I hurt others by what I say and do, and offend God's holiness by living more like the

*i walk, carpet beneath my feet, comfortable shoes
 He walks, a dusty trail, worn sandals
 No burden i bear all is lent
 A heavy cross of sin digs into His pure flesh
 my sin*

*To my knees i ease, crimson velvet it cushions them
 His bare knees drop to the trail, dirty rocks dig into His flesh
 my hands press firmly against the splintering wood of the cross
 Words flow from the pastor's throat, sent by the Man over centuries
 Insults are hurled from foul mouths, spurned by satan
 Metallic sound rings out on the altar as silver hits silver
 Clanging metal on metal rings over Calvary as nails are driven home
 His body and blood touch my lips and sustain
 Sour wine with myrrh is lifted to His lips, they turn aside
 my head bowed, i pray and am forgiven, sins lifted from me
 His head looks up and cries, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?", sins are heaped
 upon Him and He is
 Condemned
 i arise and go from the altar of the Lord
 Christ has arisen and waits for me at His altar*



world than a child of God—even then I can unburden my soul by leaving all my sin in Jesus' grave, and rejoice in the new life of forgiveness guaranteed by Jesus' rising.

He is risen! That truth means I have a living Lord who is more than just a footnote in a history text. He defeated Satan and now directs our lives and determines the course of world history for the blessing of His people. When troubles pile up on the outside and stress builds within, I have the confidence that my Lord sees the situation, knows the answer, and will, if necessary, move mountains for my benefit.

He is risen! That unalterable fact is my comfort when I stand grieving at a

fresh graveside or when I contemplate my own inevitable death. Jesus, the Son of God, came to be my brother. He said: "I am the resurrection and the life." He Himself rose to life. That means I too will one day rise to eternal life with a perfect, glorified body.

If you ever wonder 'what if?', check it out for yourself. Look to the Word. Go with the women and the disciples. See for yourself. Believe! No skeletons here!

—Pastor Michael Eichstadt



Through Grace To Resurrection

By the time many of you read this, the writer will have changed addresses. He will have moved from Grace to Resurrection, from Fridley, Minnesota to Corpus Christi, Texas.

It is one of the advantages that the CLC enjoys to this point that its president still serves as an active pastor of a congregation. He is daily reminded of what the ministry is really all about. He remembers the trials and joys of the pastoral ministry because he daily experiences them. The ministry is not administrating. It is speaking to the hearts of people like himself, people in need of the daily instruction from the Word of God and the daily comfort of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

'From Grace to Resurrection.' Our God is the God of grace. Offended by our sin, the Father nevertheless showed to mankind love—undeserved love. He determined in His own heart to rescue man from the consequence of sin. In grace He promised the Savior from sin. And it is an expression of His grace that He preserved His promise, nourished it over time, and in time sent the Savior in whom we believe—by grace. We are what we are—children of God—by virtue of grace. We have what we have—faith unto salvation—by virtue of grace. “By grace are ye saved, through faith. . . .” Our Lord “has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before time began” (2 Tim. 1:9). Grace goes back a long way, doesn't it?

Our past was blessed with the reality of divine grace. Our present continues to be so blessed. For in His grace He keeps us in the faith by means of the Gospel so that we might live in daily hope of the resurrection.

It is to the resurrection that our hearts and minds are pointed in the Easter season. But in the correct order. Our Lord Jesus Christ, having paid the all-sufficient price for our sin through His death, rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures. He became the “first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20) and who will yet fall asleep before the end of time. Now we who believe praise the Father “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).

'From Grace to Resurrection.' Grace would be an empty thing if there were no resurrection. There would be no resurrection unto life everlasting if it were not for grace. Grace and resurrection are forever tied together in the life of the Christian. Grace is the underlying cause of the resurrection. The resurrection unto life is the ultimate fruit of grace.

It is this message rooted in Christ that is the touchstone of Grace in Fridley, or Resurrection in Corpus Christi, in St. Stephen's of the East Bay and Indian Landing in Rochester, New York, and in all churches in between. For wherever there are churches there are sinners in need of the proclamation of grace in Christ and hope of the res-

urrection. Venues change. The needs of pastor and hearers do not, and therefore the message dare not.

Wherever you attend one of our churches this Easter, you will hear the message without qualification or eva-

sion: "Christ the Lord is Risen Today." Thank God for His grace.

Now, the peace of God be with you all in the hope of the resurrection.

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer



'ONE LANE ROAD AHEAD'

If you've driven south out of Markesan on highway 44 lately, you may have noticed that the highway department has an important message for you at the front of the Markesan cemetery. As the photo shows, a big orange sign was left leaning against the stone entrance, reading 'ONE LANE ROAD AHEAD.'

Whether they intended to or not, the road workers have been doing a good job doubling as preachers. The headstones behind this sign remind us that we are all truly going down a path which arrives at the same place—the grave. It is a one lane road from which no one returns to this life.

Jesus talked about what lies at the end of this 'one lane road' when He said: "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved" (Jn. 10:9). The gate that Jesus speaks of is even

narrower than you may have thought. Only a few will enter the gate at the end of the road that leads to endless joy and pleasure with God in heaven. Since *you* are heading down the 'one lane road' toward *your* grave, how can you be sure what this "gate" is at the journey's end? Consider carefully, for your very life depends on the answer to this question!

A great many people are headed for a crash at the end of the road. They may think "there is much that is good in my life to balance out the bad." But the Lord is not looking for a good balance. He says: "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Mt. 5:48); and "the soul who sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4).

God does not tell us that we must try very hard to be as "good" as we can be, and that most people are going to



be “good enough” when Christ comes to judge the world on the Last Day. The Bible makes it clear that, try as we might, there is no one who will be counted “good enough” because of what they did in this life. Rather, it says: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Hoping to enter into heaven through the gate of your own goodness will only result in eternal condemnation, misery, and separation from God—an endless dead-end in hell.

According to Jesus: “Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Mt. 7:13-14). The real gate to life is truly “narrow,” but Jesus does not use this word in the sense of “constricting and constraining.” Instead, it is “narrow” in the sense of being *very specific*. What Jesus wants us to know is that there is one, and only one, gateway to heaven. “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” He says; “No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14:6).

In practical terms that means that there is only one way for you to enter through the right gate at the end of the road, and that is to give up on the hope of entering heaven because of what is good *in you*. Instead, let your heart rest on what *Jesus did for you*. It is His perfect goodness that covers your sins. It was His death on the cross that paid the high price for your free admission to heaven. Finally, it is His resurrection that proves that, for those whose hearts rest on Him, the graveyard is not a final resting place, but only the gateway to a new and glorious life!

Everyone without exception travels the ‘one lane road’ that leads to the grave. In His Word God shows you what the “narrow gate” is that lies at the end of that road. It is His Son, Jesus, who promises: “Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (Jn. 11:26).

—Pastor Bruce Naumann, Faith
Lutheran Church, Markesan, Wis.
(This article was originally written for
the pastor’s local paper—Ed.)



A Rust-Proof Confirmation Faith

There it was, what used to be my good shovel! Left outdoors underneath a snowbank all winter, the spring thaw revealed a now badly rusted spade. With a packet of heavy duty sandpaper and lots of elbow grease I knew I could remove the rust and save it for useful work. The shovel would never be the same again, though. The rust had forever deprived it of some of

its strength and sturdiness.

Rust eats away and makes a strong object into a weak one. It turns the beautiful into something ugly. If left unchecked, rust can totally destroy.

The world, our flesh, and Satan—like rust—can eat away at our faith. They can turn strong Christians into weak ones. They can turn beautiful spirit-filled lives into ugly, self-centered lives.

It's not hard to see the corrosive work of these enemies to our faith—we see it when our actions are motivated by guilt rather than by a thankful heart cleansed by Jesus' blood; when dependence on the Lord for solutions to life's problems is replaced by self-made solutions; when loving commitment to spouse and family are pushed aside for personal pursuits; when God's gifts to us of time, treasure, and talents are poured back only on to ourselves; when our language is tarnished by gossip and course jesting; when we find easy excuses to be away from God's house on Sunday morning; when we remain silent during opportunities to proclaim the cross and empty tomb.

At this time every year many of our young people give witness to their Christian faith through the rite of confirmation. Do you remember your confirmation day? Do you remember your confirmation faith? What does this have to do with our topic? Maybe we have a need to ask: what happened to that fresh, vibrant, glowing faith that was so in love with Christ and His Word? Has it gotten a bit rusty over the years? Has spiritual rust set in?

No Man-made Remedies

How is the problem fixed? How is the rust removed? There are no man-made remedies. The "I can be a better Christian if I try hard enough" mentality will do nothing to stop the corrosion. Our innate spiritual powers (which are non-existent) can stop "soul rust" about as well as scotch tape can keep a rusty muffler from falling off the car.

Human efforts to fix spiritual problems never work. God must do the fixing. God's mission, for example, to save

us from eternal damnation was just that, God's mission. It was He Who sent His Son to rescue us. It was He Who took the world's sin and placed it on Jesus so that He suffered and died for it instead of us. It was He Who raised His Son from death so that we could live forever in pure joy and glory! God did it all! Even the faith that believes all this wonderful truth comes from God.

Martin Luther was one who recognized how easily his own faith could get rusty. He saw a personal need to return again and again to the truths which he taught in his Catechism—to the saving truths of Christ. He writes: "I, too, am a theologian who has attained a fairly good practical knowledge and experience of Holy Scriptures. . . . But I do not so glory in this gift as not to join my children daily in prayerfully reciting the Catechism. . . . If I do not do this but am preoccupied with other business, I feel a definite loss because of the neglect. For God gave the Word that we should impress it on ourselves. . . . Without this practice our souls become rusty, as it were, and we lose ourselves."

With these words Luther calls us back to what the apostle Paul calls "the simplicity of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). With his catechism he bids us return to God's mighty Word, the one and only power which can fix our spiritual ailments. Luther understood that God's Word alone can rust-proof our faith.

We pray: "Dear God, forgive our sins. With Your Word renew in us a glowing and growing confirmation faith! Give us a sturdy spiritual life which You can put to good use! AMEN!"

—Pastor Michael Wilke

SMORGASBORD

• PROMISE KEEPERS UPDATE

Last month on these pages we ran Pastor Bruce Naumann's helpful and informative article on the Promise Keepers. The article pointed out that the movement is a "mixture of worthy goals and anti-biblical teaching" and, because of the latter, conscientious Christians will want to "steer clear" of it.

We are aware that warnings against the movement have gone out from other sources as well. Apparently such warnings are being heeded. The February 28, 1998 issue of **WORLD** magazine reported that the very life of the movement is in jeopardy: "*all (Promise Keepers) staff will be laid off as of March 31, and unpaid volunteers would try to keep the financially troubled ministry going . . .*" One executive summarized: "We're broke." A contributing factor, it seems, is the movement's new no-charge policy for those who participate in its stadium conferences, the number of which is being considerably reduced (to bail them out founder Bill McCartney is asking every church in America to give \$1000).

In an evil day we have, we believe, 'at our finger tips' the spiritual resources we need. Let us look to the Means of Grace—the "living and powerful" Word of God (cf. Heb. 4:12) and the Sacraments—then to our called pastors and teachers and the Christian fellowship we enjoy in our local congregations. Such gifts from God can provide the guidance and support necessary to accomplish such laudable PK goals as practicing ethi-

cal and sexual purity and building stronger marriages and families.

• NEW SERIES ON THE PARABLES

The *Spokesman* has had on-going Bible studies based on the Old Testament as well as on the New Testament Epistles. What's missing, we have felt for some time, are studies from the Gospels and the life of Christ. In this issue we begin a series in which selected staff will treat the parables taught by our Savior.

We would share a few thoughts on parables.

Many of us have taught, or been taught, that a parable is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." Such a definition, easily conveyed and remembered, can be properly understood. It has been said, however, that Jesus' parables often contain a lot of earthly meaning, and therefore a parable might be better defined as "a story about something from everyday life that Jesus uses to teach something about life with God." As if to emphasize the holy truth that the whole world belongs to God, the Lord often uses references to nature or to common events in life to draw out sacred, divine truths.

Don't make too much of the "story" part either, lest the impression be given that parables are like fairy stories taught to youngsters. Their inclusion in sacred Scripture means parables are *divinely-inspired* stories which have serious life-and-death spiritual lessons to teach.

Our Lord tells us why He often spoke in parables—and the reason may

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED ADOPTION?

The President of the CLC has recently approved our request to help both couples in the CLC as well as unmarried mothers or fathers in the CLC who are considering adoption for their child. Ross and Lynette Roehl would collect profiles of couples in the CLC who wish to adopt a child. We will keep these profiles on hand and if a CLC pastor has a member who wishes for a CLC couple to adopt his/her child we will send the profiles we have on hand to that pastor. His member then can read through the profiles and select a couple from the group. So far we have been able to get two CLC families in touch with CLC birth mothers. We had one request for profiles from a pastor and did not have any to share with his member.

We hope that any CLC couples who are considering adoption will send us a one to two page short history of themselves. We also would like a picture to include with the profile. You do not have to give your last name or your location. If you could send us five copies we would be able to share our files with more pastors at the same time.

If you have any questions about adoption or would like to know more about what we are hoping to do, please feel free to call or write us. There have been other CLC adoptive couples who have volunteered to answer questions or talk with others who, like us, have adopted children. Often those who have been through adoption can help prepare those who are hoping to adopt.

The most important approach to adoption is to remember prayer to Him who is in complete control of all families. It is the Lord who decides how He will build families. He only knows best how large your family should be. If you are a young lady considering adoption for your child or if you are a couple wishing to adopt, begin with the Lord. If you determine that He wants adoption for you, please contact us that we can keep our children in CLC homes where they will be raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Note: *The above was submitted by Ross and Lynette Roehl. Their address is 509 Ingram Drive, Eau Claire, WI 54701. Their phone is (715) 831-8306 —Ed.*

surprise: "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them (the multitudes). Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he

has will be taken from him. This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand . . ." (Mt. 13:11ff). In parables Jesus revealed sacred secrets to His disciples while

concealing the truth from those who already rejected Him. In other words, this teaching technique was a form of verbal judgment on the unbelieving.

At times we are told the specific reason which prompted Jesus to tell a parable (e.g. Lk. 19:11). Sometimes our Lord Himself explains one of His parables (e.g. Mt. 13:18ff, 13:37ff).

In every case the expounder of a parable will want to stay within the analogy (or common and generally accepted understanding) of Holy Scripture. Here too the rule applies: let scripture interpret scripture.

And another caution is in place: don't stretch the spiritual application(s) beyond the central or "key" lesson(s) intended. For example, what is the "key" in the parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)? Is it that a person is better off being poor? Of course not. There will be materially-rich people in heaven and poverty-stricken people in hell. The key point of this particular parable has to do with prioritizing God's Word in one's life.

There are, finally, three different groupings of these sacred stories. First, there are the various "kingdom" parables which Jesus taught during His early Galilean ministry (most of which are recorded in Matthew 13). Secondly, there are those which occur later in the Savior's ministry and are found only in Luke (cf. chapters 10 through 19). Thirdly, our Lord taught a special set of parables during Holy Week, and they are found in later chapters of Matthew (chs. 21-25).

"He who has ears, let him hear" (Mt. 13:9), said Jesus. May the Spirit of God bless our "hearing" of the Savior's parables.

• PROFESSOR JOHN LAU RETIRES

(Editorial note: At our request Pastor Gordon Radtke prepared this writing at the time of the retirement of his long-time colleague. It was sent to us last Spring. We are sorry for our delay of the article until this time.)

On the evening of May 23, 1997 Immanuel Lutheran College presented their Graduation/Commencement concert. At the close of the concert the audience was invited to the dining hall for a reception to mark the retirement of John Lau: a pastor, a professor, and college president.

The Lord prepared His servant John, a native of South Dakota, with a BA degree from Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis. He received his CRM degree (Candidate for the Holy Ministry) from the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wis.

John also received teaching experience at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn. He served as the pastor of congregations in Minneapolis, Minn., Osceola, Wis., and Onalaska, Wis.

During the "interim years" (the years between his leaving the Wisconsin Synod in order to faithfully follow his Lord's instruction and his Call to ILC), John served a congregation in Onalaska while working for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections in La Crosse, Wis. Later, he also served



Prof. John Lau



Among the celebrants at the 50th anniversary of Our Savior's Lutheran School, Jamestown N. Dak. last August. The school is not operating this year due to lack of a certified teacher. Pray that the Lord grant them one soon!

a new CLC congregation in Chicago while working as a claims and field representative for the Social Security Administration in Chicago.

In 1965 John Lau was called to serve ILC, Eau Claire. While in Eau Claire he received a Masters Degree in English from the University of Wisconsin. At ILC he was called to serve as the first Dean of Students and served as Dean for seven years, in addition to his teaching schedule in the high school, college, and seminary departments. Over the years his classes included English, German, Latin, Science, Religion, and History. He was the resident expert on the writings of William Shakespeare and John Milton.

In 1989 John Lau was called to be the fourth president of ILC (in addition to his teaching schedule). He was well prepared for this extra work for he had also acquired experience as the editor of the *Journal of Theology*, as CLC Archivist-Historian, as past member of the CLC Board of Education, and as the CLC Vice President.

John Lau was married to Dorothy Mueller on June 11, 1954. They have two children: Jonathan who lives in Eau Claire, and Kathryn who lives in

Texas. At the Graduation/Commencement service on May 24, the Regents of ILC presented John Lau with a CLC purse of gratitude, as well as with a plaque of appreciation for his faithful services.

We thank the Lord for having supplied us with such valuable gifts in the person of His called servant. We pray that the Lord will grant John and Dorothy a pleasant and memory-filled retirement, before their joyful day of Home-coming!

(Since this article was first written Prof. Lau has kept busy. Last September he & Dorothy accompanied CLC President Daniel Fleischer, Mrs. Barbara Fleischer, and Pastor Horst Gutsche on an exploratory trip to France and Germany. The last couple of months Lau has served as vacancy pastor in North Port and Coral Springs, Florida.—Ed.)

• NEW FIELD IN INDIA

(This recent report comes to us from Missionary David Koenig; see photograph elsewhere in this issue.)

The Bharath Ev. Lutheran Church has a new field of labor on the eastern coast of India. Pastor Bas holds month-

ly seminars for twenty-seven workers in twenty-seven stations in the Nellore area of Andhra Pradesh, India. These men are intent on affiliating with the BELC. The broad gamut of Scripture teaching will be presented so that there might be a true unity of the Spirit.

Pray for these men and their study

and work as our sister church reaches out to them and their people. "I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut; I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my Word and have not denied My Name" (Rev. 3:8).



Parables Of The Master

Luke 7:41-50

The Two Debtors

A parable has been defined as an instruction method in which scenes from nature or from human life are used to illustrate higher religious or religious-moral truths. Presenting those truths in vivid parable form makes them easier to understand and to remember.

The parable we consider first is found within the account of Jesus' dining at the home of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50). This man was not an enemy like most of the Pharisees. Yet, he did not see Jesus as the Messiah.

While they were dining, a woman publicly known as a sinner came into the room. She washed Jesus' feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, kissed them and anointed them with her fragrant oil.

Simon was disgusted that Jesus would permit this emotional attention from the woman. Either Jesus had to be unaware of what this woman was or He didn't care. In either case, it ruled Him out as a prophet in Simon's opinion.

Knowing Simon's thoughts, Jesus spoke the parable. "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing

with which to repay, he freely forgave them both."

Jesus asked Simon: "Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" Simon provided the correct answer: "I suppose the one he forgave the most." Immediately, Jesus applied the lesson. He pointed out the lack of love which Simon had displayed toward Him. There had been no foot washing, no kiss of greeting and no anointing with oil—all common courtesies to guests.

The woman had done all of these things. She did them in a way which revealed humility and gratitude—washing His feet with tears and wiping them with her hair, kissing His feet and anointing them with fragrant oil.

Jesus continued: "Therefore, I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much." Some would have us believe that Jesus was

teaching that the woman's sins were forgiven because of her love toward Jesus. That is absolutely false. [The 'for' does not express the cause—merely the logical connection between the thing proved (the forgiveness of sin) and the proof (the love and gratitude which were displayed.)) As Jesus told the woman at the end of this account: "Your faith has saved you." Her love was a fruit of faith.

The woman had come to faith in Jesus earlier. She had heard His words and been led to believe that He offered forgiveness for her many sins. When Jesus told her: "Your sins are forgiven," she already believed that. That is why she came uninvited and showed such humble gratitude toward Jesus. Jesus was confirming that belief. And that is why our pastors assure us of forgiveness so often.

The woman's many sins had been

an impassable barrier to her reaching heaven. But with forgiveness her eternal fate had been changed by Jesus. From this happy realization flowed her high emotion and deep gratitude. She loved her Savior much.

Simon felt no distress over his sins. As a good pupil of the Pharisees, he was not conscious of the extent or the seriousness of his sins. He saw no need for a Savior—no need for Jesus. Therefore, he had no real love for Jesus. Simon remained in his sins, refusing the forgiveness Jesus held out to him.

May the Lord spare us from being Simons. May God grant that we be found, like the woman, acknowledging our sins and expressing our humility and gratitude to Jesus for the forgiveness and eternal life which are ours through faith in Him.

—Pastor Keith Olmanson



LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

"That We Might Have Hope" (Rom. 15:4)

Deuteronomy Chapters One Through Thirty-four

Moses, Prophet Of God

The word prophet is most commonly used of someone who is thought to be able to foretell the future. For example, Nostradamus, a French astrologer of the sixteenth century, has been called a prophet because his book of obscure rhymes is thought to have predicted subsequent events.

But in the Bible a prophet is someone who acts as spokesman for someone

else. The true prophets of God were men to whom God spoke who in turn conveyed His word to others. False prophets were those who spoke in the name of false gods or who falsely claimed to speak in the name of the true God.

A True Prophet

Moses was the greatest of Old Testament prophets of God. The Bible

itself states that after his death there was never again a prophet like him, whom the LORD knew face to face (Deut. 34:10).

Moses was a true prophet in that he faithfully conveyed to Israel all that the LORD spoke to him, subtracting nothing and adding nothing of his own. We see this in the book of Deuteronomy which records the last words of Moses. Before his death Moses reviewed and explained to Israel God's holy law. He taught them that the essence of the law is not mere outward obedience but love: "To fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 10:12).

The ministry of Moses was largely a "ministry of death" and a "ministry of condemnation" (2 Cor. 3:7,9), for he was given the responsibility of communicating God's law, which always condemns man for failing to live up to its holy requirements.

Moses taught that the essence of obedience to the law is love, but this also condemns by revealing that not only evil deeds but also loveless thoughts, words, and motives are sin in the sight of God. This is not to take anything away from the importance of the ministry of Moses.

The clear revelation of God's law in all its uncompromising severity serves God's purpose in forcing us to acknowledge our sins and to despair of coming to God on the basis of our own merits. Without God's written law staring us in the face we could easily deceive ourselves into thinking that our life is not so bad, for we can always point to others who are worse than we are. Apart from a clear knowledge of God's law man can and does imagine that God is pleased

with his works. It is this spiritual pride and self-righteousness that leads people to despise Christ and the Gospel. Without the law, who needs a Savior?

The Seed Of The Woman

But the ministry of Moses was not entirely a ministry of death and condemnation. Moses also pointed his people to the Savior who would free man from death and the condemnation of the law. He recorded the first Gospel in which the Savior is spoken of as the Seed of the woman who would destroy the power of Satan (Genesis 3:15).

And in Deuteronomy Moses spoke of Christ as the Prophet whom God would raise up from among His people. He would be like Moses in that He would be a man who would speak to them in a human voice and not terrify them with thunder, lightning, and smoke as God had done when He appeared to Israel at Mount Sinai.

Like Moses Christ would faithfully communicate the Word of God. Yet His would be the far greater and more glorious revelation of God's incarnate Son. He would reveal not just God's holiness but especially God's love. He would proclaim it as He did when He said: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved" (Jn. 3:16-17). He would demonstrate God's love by laying down His life on the cross as a sacrifice to God for the world's sin.

The last chapter of Deuteronomy records the death of Moses and his unique burial by the hand of God in a

secret place (Deut. 34:5-6).

But this is not his last appearance in the Bible. He makes one last appearance in the New Testament, on the Mount of Transfiguration. There Moses and Elijah stand with Jesus talking with Him about His approaching passion, death, and resurrection. There especially we see that the ministry of Moses the prophet was

about Christ. He proclaimed and recorded the divine law to shine a light on human sin to humble human hearts, to prepare them for the Savior. And in his role as prophet he pictured Jesus, the greater Prophet who revealed God's love for us sinners.

—*Pastor John Klatt*



Questions And Answers About Fraternal Lutheran Insurance

Q: What are AAL and LB?

A: Aid Association for Lutherans and Lutheran Brotherhood are “fraternal benefit societies.” They sell insurance policies to their members on a non-profit basis. They do generate income, but instead of paying dividends to shareholders, they use the money for social and religious causes among Lutheran churches.

Q: Who can belong to AAL or LB?

A: Only someone who belongs to a Lutheran church, or is the spouse or child of a Lutheran, may belong. However, it does not matter which Lutheran church you belong to. These companies have many members among the (more conservative) Wisconsin Synod, the (liberal) Missouri Synod, and the (ultra-liberal) Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Q: What kind of support do AAL and LB provide?

A: AAL and LB regularly donate large sums of money directly to Lutheran synods, as well as to their colleges, seminaries, and elementary schools. They often provide “matching funds” for local congregational fundraising efforts. According to an AAL publication, the Wisconsin Synod received \$1.9 million in grants and matching funds from AAL in 1993. The Missouri Synod received \$7.1 million that year, and the ELCA received about \$7 million. More millions come from Lutheran Brotherhood.

Q: What's wrong with supporting the programs of various Lutheran churches?

A: There are, no doubt, many beneficial services that are made possible through the aid of fraternal insurance money. However, this money also supports some terrible things that we would never want to help along ourselves. For instance, there is a strong pro-abortion and pro-homosexual agenda in the ELCA which is aided by fraternal insurance money. Even worse than that is the false doctrine that

infects these heterodox church bodies. For instance, in ELCA seminaries it is taught that Jesus' virgin birth and His resurrection may well be myths. It should make us shudder to think of helping a professor to teach a future pastor that Jesus didn't truly rise from the dead!

Q: But isn't membership in AAL or LB just a business deal? How is this different from buying insurance with Allstate, for instance?

A: It is not necessary—nor is it possible—to investigate how every company spends its profits before we buy something from them. But AAL and LB are not just companies from which you buy a product. You cannot buy insurance from them unless you are a member. When you belong to this kind of fraternal society, you are not simply a customer of a company, you ARE the company, by reason of your fraternal membership and voting rights. Therefore, you are responsible for how the company's profits are spent, and that makes it much more than just a "business arrangement." Lutheran fraternal insurance calls itself your religious "brother" in many ways—in fact, that's what the word "fraternal" means.

Q: Are there Scripture passages to guide us on this subject?

A: Yes. Consider Romans 16:17: "Note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them." Avoiding false teachers means that we refuse to be partners with them in religious matters. Simply buying a product from a company does not make you a religious partner with them. However, membership in AAL or LB is different. Since it is a fraternal benefit society for Lutherans, your membership does make you a religious partner with the WELS, LC-MS, and ELCA.

2 John 1:10-11 says, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds." Surely we do not want our money and involvement to help along the "evil deeds" of promoting false doctrine and even immorality, as is happening in many "Lutheran" churches and schools.

Q: What's the "bottom line"?

A: The question can be summarized in this way: "Is it pleasing to our Lord to be a member of a fraternal society that, in addition to its other activities, supports and promotes false teachers?" The answer from Scripture is "no," and that is why membership in fraternal Lutheran benefit societies is not compatible with our Christian life and witness.

—Submitted by Pastor Bruce Naumann who first prepared this information for his congregation in Markesan, Wis.





New field at Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India. This photo, submitted by Missionary David Koenig, is of a Preachers' Seminar held in February 1998. (*More in SMORGASBORD*)

Announcements

Women's Fellowship Luncheon ***"Read All the Days of Your Life"***

based on Deuteronomy 17:19

*"And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life:
that he may learn to fear the LORD his God,
to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them."*

Wednesday, June 17, 1998

*Messiah Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall
2015 N. Hastings Way
Eau Claire, Wisconsin*

\$6.00/person

(Registration limited to 150 ladies)

Send registration fee and name (by June 1) to:

Lisa Noeldner
3627 Gold Ridge Road
Eau Claire, WI 54701

11:00 a.m. Registration & Viewing of Banner Display

11:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal

12:00 noon Roll Call & Lunch

1:00 p.m. Program

3:00 p.m. Adjournment

Imminent Change Of Address

As of April 26, the address of Rev. (President) Daniel Fleischer will be 201 Princess Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas 78410-1615. Phone (512) 241-5147.

Great Lakes Delegate Conference

- Place:** Luther Memorial Church, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Time: Monday, June 1, 1:00 CDT until Tuesday, June 2, at 12:30 (an afternoon session will be added if needed)
Agenda: 1998 Convention Prospectus
 A Bible Study

Please announce to the host pastor, John Johannes, with your indicated time of arrival and housing needs.

—Pastor John Ude, Sec'y

Acknowledgement: The thought-full poetry on p. 5 is the work of Caleb Schaller, a first year pre-theology student at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wis.



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

(3rd of a Series)

IF YOU WISH TO MAKE A GIFT TO

The CLC Foundation

What will it be used for?

The Convention recognizes the wisdom of gaining lasting benefit from larger gifts by building a Foundation endowment account from which investment earnings are distributed each year.

Instead of donors having to take responsibility for weighing relative CLC needs in gifting financial resources, the Convention has suggested a way to help with such decisions when cash and/or other assets are dedicated to the Foundation.

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in various forms. 1 Pet. 4:10

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graph TD
    Gifts[Gifts] --> FE[Foundation Endowment]
    Bequests[Bequests] --> FE
    FE --> IE[Investment Earnings]
    IE --> D[distributed by Foundation Board, after consultation with CLC President & Board Chairmen,]
    D --> CLC[CLC Fund or Convention-approved Purpose, Project or Program]
    FE --> C[Convention can use principal for]
    C --> CLC
            
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