

Lutheran Spokesman



- 6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*
- 7 *He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.*

I s a i a h 5 3

A SEASON FOR PASSION

As we enter the season of Lent, we remember it also as the Passion season. The original meaning for the word *passion*, and the first still given in my dictionary, is suffering or agony, with special reference to the suffering of our Lord Jesus.

And so it is that His suffering and His death on the cross for our sins lie at the heart of this Passion season. Many of us will be blessed with the opportunity to attend special midweek meditations at our churches across the nation, in which we will be granted the opportunity to focus more closely on one or another special aspect of the Lord's Passion. Our pastors will lead us in these devout meditations.

There is another meaning to the word *passion*, and in our usage a much more common meaning. This meaning indicates an intense interest or attraction for a subject or a cause.

We live in a time in which the Passion of our Lord is often taken for

granted, or misunderstood as being an unnecessary barbarism that brought no real benefit to the world. Such a conclusion couldn't be more wrong. Indeed, the events we observe in Lent took place because of an intense interest which Jesus shared with His Father in heaven, a passion for saving lost

lent

souls.

We see the evidence of this passion of our Savior in his association with "sinners." He was often criticized for eating with "sinners," and even going into the homes of "sinners." He didn't go to share their sinful pleasures, but to lead them away from sin to life in Him.

Jesus presented the purpose of His

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passion in these words: "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10).

A Passion For Our Salvation

It was in the pursuit of this passion in accord with the will of His heavenly Father that Jesus went forth to die, to offer Himself as the sacrifice for sin. It was to fulfill this passion for our salvation that Jesus willingly entered the Passion of His suffering and death.

For us Lent is a time when we should cultivate and make known the passion which we possess, as a blessing from the Holy Spirit, for the Passion of our Lord.

Some consider an intense interest

in the Lord's sufferings to be morbid and grim, but our interest is not focused on the gruesome details of our Lord's physical suffering.

The Spirit does not lead us to a fascination with the grisly details of the abuse which our sinless Savior endured at the hands of sinful men. The Spirit does lead us to the recognition that with His physical suffering a spiritual passion was transpiring that surpasses our understanding, for Jesus was condemned by God for our sin.

This Passion, along with the physical death of our Savior, which satisfied God as a full and just payment for sin, is the focus of our attention.

—Pastor Theodore Barthels



"Now therefore, says the Lord, turn to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm" (Joel 2:12-13).

"With All Your Heart"

" . . . Turn to me with all your heart." Our heart—that is where our problem really lies, isn't it?

"Out of the heart," Jesus says, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Mt. 15:19). We have all those things and more in our own hearts.

Even if they don't all come to light in our actions, as with Cain who murdered his brother or Judas who betrayed Jesus, the potential is always there because our hearts are still evil. Murder begins with anger and hatred;

adultery and fornication begin with lust and sinful desires; theft begins with coveting; false witness and slander begin with unloving and unforgiving thoughts towards others; and blasphemies begin with not fearing, loving, and trusting in God above all things.

Which of these are not in our heart? Even when we fail to see them or recognize them in our own heart, God sees them crystal clear. He sees far more than we ever could.

Yet, as filthy and corrupt as our hearts are, God still calls to us: "Turn to Me with all your heart. . . ." That is

God's gracious call to us this Lenten season.

Take an honest look at the corruption in our heart and turn to the Lord our God with genuine sorrow and repentance. Now take to heart the glorious word of promise contained here: "Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and he relents from doing harm."

God's Perfect Love

During Lent especially we see how God has turned to us with ALL His heart. He has loved us with a whole-hearted love. We see that perfect love when we behold our Savior's unswerving journey to Golgotha and His soul-wrenching suffering, knowing that everything He did He did for me.

We can be sure that, when we turn to Him with all our heart, He will not turn us away but will receive us. He will cleanse our hearts with the blood

of His Son Jesus. He will be gracious to us.

"So rend your heart, and not your garments . . ." Mere outward actions will not do. Going through the motions of extra services or fasting does not bring one closer to God. God does not want lip service. He wants your whole heart.

Where the heart is sincere, the actions will follow "with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." So rend your heart. Tear it open and lay it bare before God in contrition and repentance. Rend your heart in true sorrow over sin and turn to the Lord for grace. This Lent let God's Word penetrate into your heart. Let it take root and grow.

May His love poured out for you on the cross move you to true repentance and faith, so that He may make your heart clean and holy, wholly dedicated to His will. Turn to the Lord your God "with all your heart."

—Pastor David Reim



History Repeated For Our Comfort

Historians have little or no problem with the fact that a man named Jesus of Nazareth was crucified by the Romans in Jerusalem sometime around 30 A.D. History books will tell you that Jesus was stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded, bruised, and chastised. Even the Jewish historian Josephus records this fact and the events that surrounded the death.

But you will not find the reason for this death repeated in secular history books. In fact, we can only understand fully the fact of Jesus' death if we look

in THE definitive History Book on the subject of Christ's death—the Bible! The Bible is (as has been said by many before) His-Story—the story of the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ.

History also tells us much about ourselves. From secular historians we can observe that man has never treated his fellow man very well. I'm sure that you could ask people who know you and they would be happy to supply you with a history of your own shortcomings. History agrees with what the Bible tells us: man is sinful. "All we

like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one to his own way . . . ” (Is. 53:6).

And so the Scriptures have, after a manner of speaking, also been fulfilled in us. That is, the LORD judges us in His Word to be sinful and rebellious. And mankind has without fail—in every single one of us—proven God’s Word true. Daily we go astray. Daily we sin.

But the fact remains that, as Scripture states: “Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Rom. 5:12). It is on account of this grace of God that, instead of punishing man for sin, God our Father laid on His Son Jesus “the iniquity of us all.” Thus our sins were taken away, as it is written: “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn. 4:10).

The Scriptures Fulfilled!

This point bears stating again: we cannot consider Jesus’ death without considering why He died and what the results of that death were.

Notice the words of the prophet: “Surely **He** has borne **our** griefs and carried **our** sorrows . . . **He** was wounded for **our** transgressions, He was bruised for **our** iniquities; the chastisement for **our** peace was upon **Him**, and with **His** stripes we are healed . . . the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of **us all**.” There God revealed hundreds of years before the fact that His Son would be punished in our place and would bear our sins.

And the Scriptures have been fulfilled. Christ was punished. During Lent, how many times do we hear from Scripture that such-and-such was done



For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. ROMANS 5:19

“that the Scriptures might be fulfilled” or “for it is written...”? Christ Jesus came into the world and suffered and died because the LORD had promised that He would send the Savior from sin.

But how do we know that Jesus was this Promised One—for Jesus was not the only one who ever suffered or even the only one who ever died on a cross? How do we know that He was bruised for our iniquities? How do we know that there is healing in His suffering or peace for us in His punishment? How do we know that the forgiveness of our sins is a fact through Christ’s suffering and death?

We know because God has said so in His Word. Just as we look ahead of the prophecy recorded by Isaiah to find Jesus, so we look to the Word to find

Jesus revealed as the very Savior from sin.

For your comfort, here are the facts surrounding Christ's death: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the Word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

It was prophesied that the Savior would bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. And so He did, as it is written: "(Jesus) bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24).

It was prophesied that "the LORD (would lay) on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53:6). And so He did, as it is written: ". . . so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9:28).

It was prophesied that in Christ we would be healed and have peace with God. And so we do, through faith in Jesus Christ, as it is written: "For He Himself is our peace . . . for through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now therefore, you are

no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:14,18-20).

The facts show that "the blood of Jesus Christ, (God's) Son, cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7). A person can deny the facts, but that only means they're fooling themselves. Feelings don't change the facts. And because it is God who revealed all of these things in His Word—the LORD God who knows all things, whose Word is fact—we know and believe that in Christ's death we have life, for in His death we have the forgiveness of all our sins. In His death we have LIFE, for it is written: "(Christ) has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

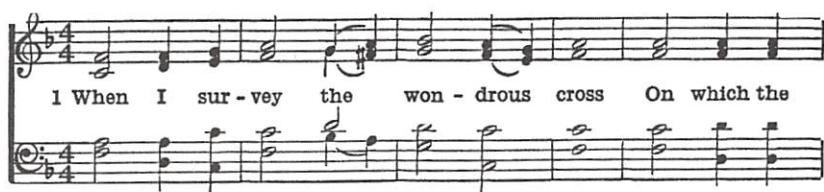
As we shall see on Easter Sunday, the facts show also that this same Jesus Christ who was ". . . delivered up for our offenses . . . was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

—Pastor Joel Fleischer



The Women's Fellowship Luncheon was held at Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, during last summer's convention. The speaker is Mrs. Adelgunde Schaller.

Appreciating Our Lutheran Hymns



When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

A Good Friday Hymn

#175 in The Lutheran Hymnal

"Give us something better, young man!"

That stern rebuke launched Isaac Watts, then only 18 years old, into the work of hymn-writing. He had voiced his displeasure with the psalm-singing in the English Reformed church of his day. It was not meant as such, but Watts accepted that rebuke he received from a church official as a challenge. He had a new hymn written by the next Sunday!

Within a matter of a few years, Watts had produced the 210 hymns which comprised his famous collection entitled "Hymns and Spiritual Songs." The collection was published in 1607.

It is in this collection that we find this month's hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Many hold this hymn to be the finest hymn in the English language.

As we during Lent remember the Passion of our Savior, Watts directs us to the cross where we see the height of God's love on full display.

As we "survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died," may the love we see not only prompt godly sorrow over what our sins caused

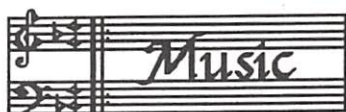


ISAAC WATTS

our Savior to endure, but also lead us to "count our richest gain but loss, and pour contempt on all our pride."

Despairing of our own righteousness, let us instead be thankful to the Lord for the holy sacrifice of His Son in our place! As Watts so beautifully penned: "Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a tribute far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all."

—Pastor Paul Krause



LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

Judges Chapters Thirteen Through Sixteen

Samson: Sun-like, but not Son-like

There are only a few individuals in the Scriptures who had their births foretold by heavenly messengers. John the Baptizer is usually thought of by most of us. Our own Lord Jesus' birth was announced to Mary by Gabriel.

It is in the Old Testament that we read of another individual whose birth was foretold: Samson. God had great plans in store for this man, and his life holds great lessons for us as well. May the Holy Spirit bless our look at Samson's life.

What portent the birth of Samson held! The Angel of the Lord announced to his mother his impending arrival. His father inquired of the Angel as to the child's work. Samson was to be a Nazirite to God from the womb.

Even the name Samson, meaning “sun-like,” given by his parents, seemed to foretell great things. Most important, however, is the fact that the Lord blessed him, and the Lord's spirit began to move on the young man. This seemed to be just what the people of Israel were waiting for—someone who could defeat the hated Philistines!

Samson had every opportunity to shine like the “Son.” He had the God-given tools and directives to imitate Moses or Joshua and allow the

Messiah, the Son of God, to shine forth in his life.

It wasn't long, however, before Samson began to show signs that his motives were anything but God-pleasing. He seemed more interested in allowing his own “Sun” to shine.

“I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. . . get her for me as a wife,” Samson told his parents. They pleaded with him to select a girl from among their own people, but Samson could not be dissuaded. He saw nothing wrong with yoking himself to an unbeliever.

This was only the beginning of Samson's troubles with the “weaker” sex, for Samson had a penchant for encouraging trouble with women. His first marriage to the Philistine woman cost her and her father their lives. He later paid a visit to a prostitute, which nearly cost him his life. He then entered into his dalliance with Delilah, which in fact did eventually lead to his destruction.

The Age-Old Struggle Continues

In this regard, how many of our Christian young people have also been

“ . . . (Samson was) a believer living in a sinful world, and he was deceived by the temptations of that world and his own sinful flesh. In other words, he was tempted just as we often are.”

deceived to follow the path of least resistance? The world holds out its enticements, and the age-old struggle ensues.

When it comes to “saving one’s self for marriage” or remaining faithful to one’s spouse, the world tells our Christian people, young and old alike, to “get with it.” “With such antiquated ideas, how can you have any fun?” “After all, the Bible is so old—you’ve got to get up to speed!” We surely know, as the Scriptures teach, that man’s natural heart is always up-to-date when it comes to sin.

“My son, keep your father’s command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you wake, they will

speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Prov. 6:20-23).

This section of Proverbs goes on to describe the dishonor and desolation which sexual sins bring on the bodies, lives, and souls of individuals.

We Christian parents, pastors, and teachers need to be there for our Christian youth—not just for when they fall. More importantly, we need to arm them with the Scriptures before the temptations even strike. We need to demonstrate with our own lives that the Scriptures are for more than just reading and learning; they are to be lived.

Samson was not an unbeliever. In fact, he was mightily used by the Lord to smite the heathen enemies of God’s people.

He was, however, a believer living in a sinful world, and he was deceived by the temptations of that world and his own sinful flesh. In other words, he was tempted just as we often are.

Let us ask the Holy Spirit to rule in our hearts so that the Son may shine through our lives. Let us learn the lesson which Samson learned too late: life dedicated to the LORD is a blessing and a reward of His grace.

—Teacher David W. Bernthal



Parables Of The Master

Luke 10:25-37

The Good Samaritan—A Persuasion Parable

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?” might be a good test question for instruction class—as the Christian pas-

tor leads a soul to the arms of Jesus—but the expert in Jewish legalities who asked it was more interested in chal-

lenging Jesus' theology than in searching for the way of salvation. It has not been revealed to us whether Jesus succeeded in making this lawyer wise unto salvation, so we deduce that the colloquy recorded by Luke (10:25-37) is written for *our* learning to touch *us* where *we* live and to bring to *us* the inheritance of eternal life.

We get the drift rather quickly that Jesus was working to rescue a soul from being stuck in earthly doldrums and to pilot him to safe harbor in the heavenlies. One step at a time, this man needed to be brought to the threshold of realizing that he would never get to heaven by anything less than a miracle of personal spiritual perfection (ready and waiting in the person of Jesus).

How could Jesus get that message across to a theology professor whose life was dedicated to the proposition that good deeds pay off, that he expected God's eternal reward for his skill at the "doing-good-deeds" program of his life?

Well, first get the fellow to recognize that the standards set by God as specified in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 are impossible of mortal attainment: a *one-hundred percent perfect* attitude toward God and toward everybody else in concert with a flawless performance 100% of the time, with no shortfall in any respect!!

Well, the fellow realized that there had to be a loophole somewhere, or he was sunk. Could it be that the term "neighbor" did not include people on the Northside, or foreigners, or irreligious people?

It is at this point that Jesus pulled the loophole shut with the short story usually entitled "The Parable of the Good Samaritan."

We know it well; in it we note His exposure of the hypocrisy of the "religiously right" citizens in contrast to the "religiously left" foreigner, who turned out to be the premier example of godly love and compassion. In addition, we relish the deft way Jesus redirected his—and our—attention away from "Who is neighbor *to me*?" to "When am *I* being a good neighbor?" The message becomes obvious: God expects me to be a good neighbor by my supplying self-sacrificing love for anyone in need of my help. As to whether anyone can in actuality DO SO, 100% of the time, with his every thought, word, and deed—you and I and every child of God know it is an axiom: NO WAY!

Have A Safe Voyage!

Permit a similar scenario. It's like being asked by a novice (who considers himself an expert in nautical affairs): "What will I have to do in order to successfully circumnavigate the globe in my cast-iron bathtub?" Judging from his preparations and the glint in his eye, we see that he intends to prove he can do it. Sober people already know that he in his tub will not survive even the launching—let alone sail over the high seas—so what can one say to such a ridiculous project but: "Well, go ahead, then, and see how far you get!"

That's how Jesus was proceeding with this "expert" in celestial navigation, who had to be confronted with the hard fact that the tub he had chosen for his voyage was never intended as a self-righting flotation device. Although the Law-tub is suited to be a sturdy home-use vessel reminding sinners that dirt must be washed off and flushed away, it was certainly not engineered to be a *Titanic* for the high seas. We are left to

wonder if the man caught on.

We catch on, probably because we are the beneficiaries of further great revelations from the counsel of God on this subject. For one thing, we gratefully understand the storm warning posted by Jesus in Mt. 5:20: "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." And we recognize with rejoicing the harbor lights shining in Romans ch. 3: "But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes

through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned (this is what sinks the Law-tub) and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." {NIV Bible}

Have a safe voyage on the HMS Redemption, with Jesus at the helm, the only vessel certified seaworthy by God himself, against which no Satanic storm may prevail, provisioned with His fresh waters of Life and the Bread of His Word, and with a berth registered in your name! All aboard and *bon voyage!*

—Prof. Em. Paul Koch



Second In A Series (from an essay by Pastor Thomas Schuetze)—

Psalm 121

"LORD, You are my almighty Guardian. In You will I put my trust."

A Psalm of Comfort

Psalm 121

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.

The key word in this psalm—it occurs six times—is *shamar* (= keep, watch, guard). The psalmist derives comfort from the Spirit-worked confidence that Jehovah is his Keeper. Jehovah isn't like the idol god Baal. He is never slumbering, never sleeping, never "off duty." He is aware of what is going on in the lives of His believers at all times. And, since He is the almighty Maker of heaven and earth, He is eminently qualified (powerful enough!) to defend them from danger and help them in times of trouble.

The people of Israel must have derived much comfort from this psalm

while on their way to Jerusalem. It assured them that the Lord would keep them safe from harm both as they traveled to Jerusalem and as they returned home. But the psalmist—by the terms “coming in” and “going out”—was thinking about more than just a journey to and from an earthly city. He had in mind especially the pilgrimage of a believer from earth to the New Jerusalem. He expresses his confidence that Jehovah will keep close watch over His people throughout their sojourn in this world till the day they reach their heavenly destination.

Christians of every period of

church history have found comfort in the assurance that this psalm brings. How blessed also we are to know that Jehovah is our almighty Guardian. For we also “walk in danger all the way.” There are many pitfalls, snares, and temptations along the way which would hinder us and keep us from reaching our destination. But our almighty Savior-God, who possesses all power in heaven and earth, promises to protect and defend us from these threatening perils. He will guide us through this world of sin “till we safely stand in our Fatherland.”



SMORGASBORD

● EXCERPT FROM A NIGERIAN JOURNAL

Even as wife Celeste kept a diary (many of our readers have enjoyed the book *A Peek Into My Nigerian Diary*), so did the missionary himself. Pastor Norbert Reim has sent us almost 100

pages of what he calls his Nigerian Journal from the years 1945-1948.

Now 50 years later the CLC is endeavoring to send missionary David Koenig to the same land. Much can be learned from the Reim Journal as to what we might pray for as co-partners



Nigerian CLC brethren at Mbukpo Oduobo. The photograph was taken by our 1997 Visitation Team.

in this continuing effort to spread the Gospel in Nigeria.

What follows is called an "Address Of Welcome To Pastors (N. H. Reim, R. C. Stade, W. F. Stahlke)" as it appears in Reim's Journal under the date February 10, 1946.

Dear Pastors,

We the people of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria welcome you to our midst. Not long ago the thoughts of coming here had been haunting your minds. You had been imagining what the place would look like. At last by God's grace you have arrived in Africa, the once Dark Continent, to help make the light of the Gospel shine in it. You have arrived in the worst part of it, "the White Man's Grave." Fear not, by God's grace it shall be your home.

You have come, Pastors, not to work the inexhaustible resources of this country; you have come not to conquer its kingdoms, like the people of your kinred (sic) race did in the early part of this century. But you have come to build up a kingdom, a kingdom that shall never end; you have come to fight the devil with all his attendants; fight on and you shall surely win the battle. It will be a bitter battle and in some places you will have to retreat. Yet if the arms you put on are not those of flesh, if you trust in Him whose call you obey so willingly, then the victory will be yours. Then a day shall come when you will hear the great Shepherd say, "Come, thou faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Father."

May the Lord make you enjoy your stay here in Nigeria, may His presence stay with you and be your guide, may He make His light shine in you.

We are, dear Pastors, the people of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria.

*(Signed) V. M. Udo, Secretary
E. U. Ekong (Headmaster).*

On the same page Pastor Reim attaches this footnote to the above:

Far from naked savages, these people. Perhaps we have much to learn from them concerning sincerity of Christianity and willingness to confess. The freshness of religious life among this people that 30 years ago had hardly heard of the Savior is an invigorating stimulus. It is hard to imagine that there are many here who wear their Christianity only as a respectable cloak. No, you can't help loving these people. I thank God again and again that He has granted me the privilege of teaching them—and learning from them. . . .

• COORDINATING COUNCIL (see box)

The Coordinating Council ("CC") generally meets in Eau Claire, Wis. twice a year—in the Spring and the Fall. Your editor audited the CC's meetings on October 21-22, 1998. It was both an uplifting and depressing experience.

Whoa there! "Depressing"?! What do you mean? Listen to a few words scratched down as part of my transcript of the meeting (these were comments made when the Board of Regents for ILC was on deck):

"We need drastic changes in our school's program somewhere" — "The enrollment is 10 fewer students than projected; that means \$50,000.00 less to work with; do we expect ILC or the CLC to pick that up?" — "Since 1992 the CBP line has held steady in spite of spiraling costs. What is the message in

CLC Constitution—

Bylaw 12: Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council shall consist of the officers of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, the President of Immanuel Lutheran College, the Chairman of the Board of Doctrine, and one of the called male servants of the Word and one layman (one of whom is the chairman) from the Board of Missions, Board of Education, Board of Regents, and Board of Trustees. The President of the Church of the Lutheran Confession shall call and preside at meetings of the Coordinating Council. He may call in as advisory members such persons as he deems necessary. The primary function of the Coordinating Council shall be to coordinate the work of the various boards of the Church of the Lutheran Confession and to propose an annual budget which shall be presented to the convention for action during convention years. The Coordinating Council will set the annual budget during non-convention years.

this for us?” — “I for one have been sitting here for 20 years and always hear it said that we need to get the information out. I don’t think that’s the problem” — “We could close down Northwest Hall, which is a big drain on the budget, but would have to build another building” — “Does the CBP come up in your congregation as a negative discussion? It shouldn’t” — “We could save \$3,500.00 by cancelling next

Spring’s CC!” — “We can explain the program, but we aren’t going to change the giving. ‘Fund-raising’ needs to come from the pastors. We can only help pastors and laymen explain the needs to our people.” . . .

So the CC went about doing its job, or, we might say, performing its “primary function” (cf. Constitution). Much of that job has to do with money—budget setting, adjusting this,



The CLC Coordinating Council at its meeting last October. Table front (counter-clockwise): Dr. Gayle Stelter (Bd of Ed), Rev. Vance Fossum (Bd of Re), Prof. John Pfeiffer (ILC Pres), Prof. Ross Roehl (Bd of Ed), Rev. Daniel Fleischer (CLC Pres), Prof. Em. John Lau (Bd of Doc), Prof. Ronald Roehl (Moderator), Phil Radichel (Bd of Trus), Rev. John Schierenbeck (Bd of Trus), Jack Mayhew (Bd of Mis), Rev. Elton Hallauer (CLC Vice-Pres), Tom Beekman (Bd of Re), Rev. Bruce Naumann (Bd of Mis); (back) Rev. James Sandeen (Bd of Trus) and Lowell Moen (CLC Treas).

increasing that, cutting here, amending there, all within guidelines set by the synodical body in Convention.

The word “depressing” was used in describing my CC experience. That may be too strong a word. Yet a four-hour nuts-and-bolts discussion about “money” and the “program”—be it the program at ILC, or of the Boards of Missions, Trustees, or Education—is enough to give anyone a headache. The chairman’s “let’s take a break” is a welcome word.

Nor would we leave a wrong impression. Discussions are hardly all negative. Audit any session and it becomes obvious the participants are business men—men happy to be about the Lord’s serious business. As they grapple with financial concerns, budgetary constraints, and wise stewardship of the offering-funds available, these men of God know that nothing can or should be used to build the kingdom, move hearts, or “raise funds” to sacrificial giving levels but the message of God’s inestimable riches toward sinners in Christ Jesus.

In fact, we might wish that all CLC members had been there last fall to hear the round-table 45-minute Gospel-based discussion on Christian stewardship. Were that the case, I suspect that, instead of spending so much time talking about cutting programs and other austerity measures, the Lord’s business men on the CC would have the happy chore of deciding—prayerfully and carefully as always—what to do with all the available money!

The next CC meeting will be this spring. It has been called for ten days after Easter, April 14 & 15, 1999. At that time the Lord’s business men will

be found—in good humor as well as serious discussion—around the table on the third floor of Ingram Hall on the ILC campus.

Let us all attend to the synodical reports that are sent out. And let us all support the Lord’s work and workers with our prayers and our money.

• **ILC PRESIDENT’S REPORT TO LAST OCTOBER’S COORDINATING COUNCIL** (*The ILC President as well as the chairmen of each of the synodical boards presents a written report to the Coordinating Council. They generally preface their reports on the current status with introductory comments based on Holy Scripture. These comments are meant to inspire. We print below what Professor John Pfeiffer, ILC President, wrote in the “Introduction” to his report to last October’s CC.*)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). Upon this foundation we have been building our Christian education. In families, Christian schools, and churches those who have the responsibility of teaching begin their work on the premise that this world and all that is in it is the creative work of God. Thus, we belong to Him and we are responsible to Him in all that we think, say, and do. Every aspect of a child’s education rests upon this truth. Everything that he learns can and must be traced back to the Creator. If not, the education is defective.

What is so amazing to us is the magnitude of love that this Creator has for His creatures. He did not create us on a whim or as an experiment. His love is so obvious in every aspect of our creation. Clearly, He made the uni-

verse to be a delightful thing for His creatures—a delight to the sight, to the hearing, to the touch, to the taste, to the smell, and to the cognitive abilities of the mind.

However, these expressions of His love pale in comparison to the love which He has displayed in His Son, Jesus Christ. Having despised His love, we invented lifestyles according to the sinful desires of our hearts. However, rather than casting us into the hellfire that we so rightfully deserved, our Creator determined to save us from our damning folly. This He accomplished through the sacrifice of His own dear Son. Through His suffering and death, our Lord Jesus paid the price for our sins and gave us life instead of death. The magnitude of God's love cannot be measured by any human mind or instrument.

If the doctrine of creation is the foundation for the building of a true education, then salvation is the cement that holds it all together. Without salvation, the significance of every creative act of God is lost. Of what value is it to learn that God made us if, in the end,

God is going to destroy us? Therefore, we present to our students a God who is not only the Creator, but also the Savior of the world.

Frequently, we feel a need to keep in step with those in secular education, so that our credits might be accepted by them. While there is good reason for this, we dare not become entrapped by it. The fact of the matter is that we are "light years" ahead of them in all aspects of education, because we are placing all subject matter in its true light (creation and salvation). God spare us from ever thinking that we are some inferior institution that must struggle to keep up with the world in the area of education.

As creatures of God who have been saved through the blood of His Son, we cannot but be filled with wonderment that He has chosen such as us to be His tools in the education of His children. May the Lord bless us richly with the faith, love, wisdom, knowledge, zeal, strength, and skill that we need to perform our task to His glory and to the eternal welfare of His children. ●



Seminary class in session last fall in Ingram Hall, ILC, Eau Claire. (r-l) David Schaller, David Povolny, Ben Grams, Matt Gurath, Steve Sydow. Dr. Martin Luther and Prof. Paul Schaller oversee.

CLC Exploratory Services

This is a list of "start-up" congregations who are being served by an off-site pastor. Some meet in homes, others in rented facilities. Also included are our two CLC exploratory missions in Gold Canyon, Ariz. and Grand Rapids/Cadillac, Mich. Visitors are warmly welcomed. Those who are considering a move, or are just traveling through the area are encouraged to contact these groups and worship with them.

LOCATION	PASTOR IN CHARGE	LAY PERSON TO CONTACT
Alaska , Juneau	David Naumann 907-225-2842	Russel Beal 907-790-6497
Arizona , Gold Canyon	Warren Fanning 602-983-6622	Gerald Gehling 602-983-1778 or 602-983-9052
California , Stockton	Michael Sprengeler 510-886-3252	
Colorado , Colorado Springs	James Naumann 719-336-5773	Chuck Seelye 719-685-5848
Florida , Orlando	John Schierenbeck 941-299-4084	Paul Kuehne 407-277-2183
Florida , Coral Springs (North Ft. Lauderdale)	Paul Larsen 941-423-1822 or 941-423-2728	Bob Doriot 305-429-0063
Michigan , Cadillac	Walter Schaller 616-791-7552	Bob Remus 616-832-2687
Michigan , Grand Rapids	Walter Schaller 616-791-7552	Harald Schillingier 616-453-6609
Minnesota , Kimball (St. Cloud area)	John Ude 612-784-8784	Reuben Streich 320-453-7562
Missouri , Kansas City	Todd Ohlmann 314-225-3458	Jim Priebe 816-781-4702
New Mexico , Albuquerque	Norbert Reim 602-974-8911	Robin Vogsland 505-892-6934
North Dakota , Fargo	Theodore Barthels 218-847-2080	Gary Pansch 701-277-1727
Ohio , Columbus/Cleveland	Mark Bernthal 517-792-9390	
Texas , Amarillo	James Naumann 719-336-5773	Local Contact 806-358-3717
Texas , Killeen	Thomas Schuetze 972-733-4535	Richard Ehret 817-526-7697
Texas , Weslaco (Rio Grande Valley)	Daniel Fleischer 512-241-5147	Buddy Hovda 956-565-2851
Washington , Withrow	Terrel Kesterson 509-327-4203	
Wisconsin , Onalaska (LaCrosse area)	Mark Gurath 715-833-8967	Kirby Pabst 608-781-0835
Wisconsin , Fairchild	Gordon Radtke 715-834-6280	
IN CANADA:		
Alberta , Onaway	John Cobb 403-325-2247	
Alberta , Calgary	Michael Wagnitz 403-640-0124	

Book Review

Dr. Dobson: Turning Hearts Toward Home: The Life and Principles of America's Family Advocate, by Rolf Zettersten, Word Publ., 1989.

(Reviewer: Prof. Em. Paul R. Koch, *Spokesman* assistant editor; this review first appeared in the Newsletter of Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wis.)

From time to time I scan Messiah's little library in the hallway, figuring I should pay attention to the slim paperbacks there. A couple of weeks ago I did so, and what to my wandering eye should appear but a dusty plastic binder containing three video tapes and an accompanying modest volume, both bearing the legendary name of Dr. Dobson. Those of you who know Dr. Dobson better than I will pardon this novice's approach. Faintly aware of others' evaluation of Dr. Dobson ("He's a really great Christian psychologist" . . . "Watch out for the Reformed slant on things"), I wanted to do my own discovering. What I did discover is that if you like biographies of decent, upright, ethical, conservative folks, loaded with morality and integrity, yet humble in self-effacing, self-sacrificing motivation, and dedicated to God, family, and country as few "Christians" in public life can ever aspire to be, . . . well, this is one you will not be able to put down for anything less compelling than the newspaper. In a word, Dobson is a paragon, a role model, a true gentleman, husband, father, and evangelist; the only reason I

can think of that will prevent his sainthood is that he's not Catholic.

Dobson's Character

There's more: Dobson's accomplishments are many and laudable, and our country would be a better place to raise families, train the next generation, and avoid many a public scandal, if more people of Dobson's character were in the front lines against abortion, ERA, and the pervasive humanistic moral decline of our country's policies and leadership. This can be said also with some appreciation for the man's dedication to "Christian" values, standards, policies, and practices. "Focus on the Family" is an arm of Dobson's "Christian" ministry to people who have similar goals.

Un-Biblical Slant On God's Business

Note that I have placed "Christian" into quotes because of the evidence of his un-Biblical slant on God's business. Based on this biography—and that is all I am covering in this book review—a much greater role is assigned to Dobson's power of prayer than to the guidance of Scripture in his life-decisions. To illustrate, with some regularity this biographer reports that

Jim received God's prayer-response in the form of an inaudible voice (speaking in full sentences, but nonetheless God's own voice) to give to Jim His direction and directive for the way out of Jim's life crises.

What Do We Have To Lose?

Let me here insert a cross-reference from an article entitled "What do I have to lose?" by Dr. J. M. Drickamer in which he exhorts each true Lutheran to ask himself: "What do I have to lose if I leave Biblical orthodoxy, confessional Lutheranism?" (Here's the part that pertains to the typical reformed absorption with prayer:) I would lose any and all proper understanding of prayer. The falsifiers would tell me that prayer is a means of grace, a means of seeking direct revelation, a means of doing miracles if only I do it the right way myself. . . ."

Secondly, in this account of Dobson's principles, Scripture and Jesus have become guides to morality rather than keys to salvation. Again, a quote from Drickamer is pertinent: "What do I have to lose? I would lose the distinction between Law and Gospel. The Law would be downgraded to a few outward rules that I could come pretty close to keeping. The Gospel would be transmogrified also into a set of rules as conditions which I would have to meet to be reasonably hopeful of salvation. . . ."

Further, the love Dobson has for people is more directed to their psyches than to their souls (after all, he is a clinical psychologist, not an ordained clergyman).

Dobson's Testimony

Nonetheless, I was thrilled to come

across a comment directed by Jim to his biographer: "Most importantly, please make it clear that we have nothing and we are nothing without Jesus Christ. He is our hope. He is our salvation. He is the reason for the joy that lies within us. Point not to Jim and Shirley Dobson, but to the Lord they are humbly attempting to serve as fellow pilgrims in this journey through life" (p. 78).

We would rejoice if this testimony were Jim's confession of Jesus as his God-given Redeemer from the sin that would otherwise damn his soul. Yet since the reader must depend on the integrity (the unified message) of the rest of this biography, the more likely meaning is something like this: "We revere Jesus as the Person who teaches us true morality; and we walk in His footsteps in service to Him in order to salvage humankind from its own destructiveness." That's what the rest of this volume tells me about the man, even as I grant that in this matter I am depending entirely on the perceptivity and accuracy of the biographer, a long-time colleague of Dr. Dobson.

Conclusion From Biography

Thus in due time I have arrived at the same conclusion our clergy have drawn about Dobson's ministry. We share a deep concern that the reader unskilled in distinguishing the marks of Reformed theology will swallow (without chewing) too much, for in/with/and/under the biographical data come the half-truths that a) prayer has the power of a means of grace; b) morality is the heart and soul of Christianity; c) Jesus is Savior in the sense that His lifestyle of helping others was God's hand upon humanity; and d) a Christian is a person whose

life is dedicated to serving others.

I will readily admit that I have not read much from Dobson's own pen, but I now know that if and when I DO, it will be with both eyes wide open, my Bible at hand, and a pastoral sounding-board available. I have gotten enough of a taste of Dobson from this biography, where Scripture as God's Word of life is overshadowed by the Bible as God's directives for living; where Jesus as Redeemer gets submerged under Jesus as teacher and helper; and where the vertical direction of Christian living is overbalanced by the horizontal. Dobson's heritage as a preacher's kid (Church of the Nazarene) was bound to flavor his Bible concepts, his ministry, his biographer, and most likely, his focus on the family.

Rating: not good enough to be recommended without strong reservations.

Announcements

Installation

In accord with our usage and order, Jay Hartmann, who was called by Peace Lutheran Church of Mission, S.Dak. and St. Paul's Lutheran Church of White River, S.Dak. to be their pastor, was installed on December 6, 1998. Assisting were Pastors George Dummann, Michael Schierenbeck, Steven Sippert, Timothy Wheaton, and Michael Wilke.

—Pastor Michael Roehl

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Spokane, WA 99206

SPOKESMAN-ON-TAPE

An audio tape of each month's *Lutheran Spokesman* is available from the Rev. Walter V. Schaller, 201 Woodcrest Drive NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504 (phone: 616-791-7552). The cost is \$10.00 for a full year of tapes. (We know of some who listen to these tapes rather than to the radio on the way to work—Ed.)

The Spokesman-On-Tape is free to the visually impaired.

Youth Conference Rescheduled

Our October issue carried an announcement of a CLC Youth Conference to be held in Colorado next June. However, one of the participating pastors has informed the *Spokesman* that the Conference has now been rescheduled for August 4-8, 2000. Please watch for more information as the time draws closer.



Catching the CC in action (see p. 13f). Clockwise around the table: Prof. Pfeiffer, Pastor Fossum, Pastor Naumann, Pastor Hallauer, Jack Mayhew, Pastor Schierenbeck