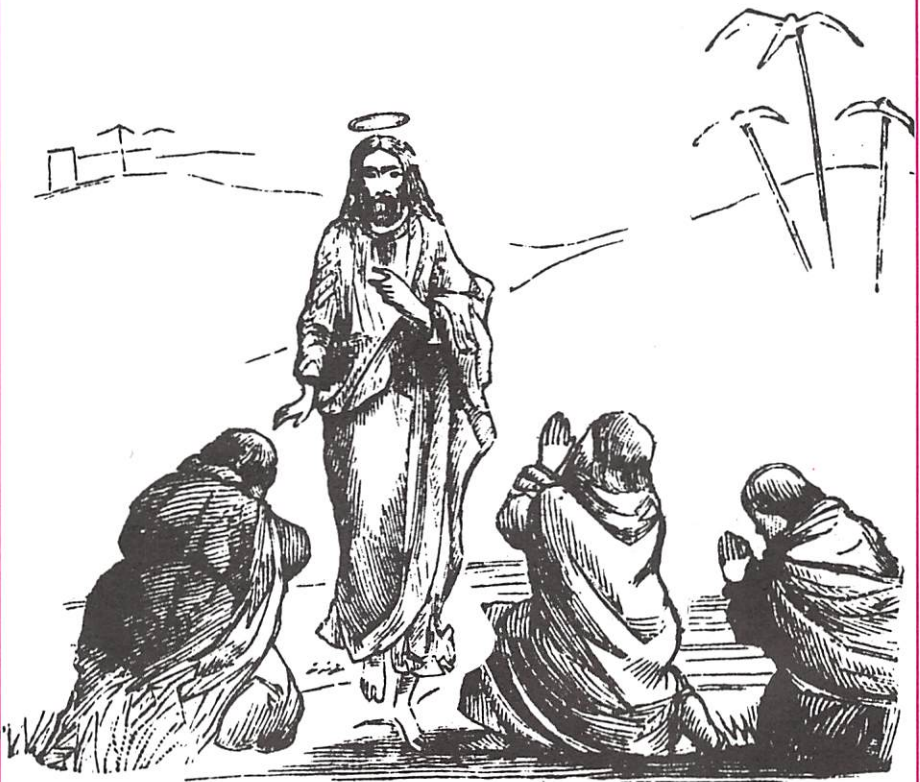


# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



“Arise, and do not be afraid.”

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

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MATTHEW 17:7

# TO KEEP US GOING— THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

(You may first wish to read Matthew 17:1-9)

**W**e have a little fellow at our house who daily does his impersonation of the Eveready Bunny. Four years old and just a shade over three feet tall, he keeps going and going and going. After a long day of trying to keep up with him, my wife collapses onto the couch, wishing she could bottle some of his “get-up-and-go.” How is one so tiny capable of such non-stop movement?

A wise seminary professor once said that one of the things he’ll appreciate most about heaven is never again being tired. Life in this sin-worn world can get awfully weary at times. There’s so much to do, and never enough time or energy to do it. But as we hike up the Mount of Transfiguration, we find power and incentive to keep us going.

Peter thinks the sights on top of the mountain are so wondrous that he proposes building three shelters, one each for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Peter wants to remain at that blessed location. What does he see that makes him want to stay on those near heavenly heights? Just that—a glimpse of heaven. Jesus, as it were, lets His glory out of His pocket for a moment. The Savior’s clothes gleam white as lightning, His face shines bright as the noonday sun. And there, beside Jesus, very much alive, are two prophets who had walked the earth many hundreds of years before Peter’s day.

To get an idea of Peter’s excitement, imagine if you were to see Martin Luther and the Apostle Paul right before your eyes, living, breathing, talking. Yes, Peter is given a foretaste of heaven: Jesus in His eternal glory along with visible proof that God’s

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children really will live forever. How thrilling and beautiful! It's enough to melt away all of Peter's spiritual and emotional fatigue.

### **A Glorious Task Remains**

But Jesus won't let Peter stay on the mountain. Soon it's time to leave and head back to the real world. It's time to get back to work—to put the nose to the grindstone. Jesus' mission to redeem the world is not yet complete. He has a rendezvous with death. There will be no rest until He first endures the shame and pain of the cross for all sinners. And after Christ's departure to His Father's right hand, Peter and the other disciples will also have much work to do. The sweet rest of full and free forgiveness in Christ needs to be declared and shared. Sinners everywhere need to hear the good news. A glorious task to be sure, but also hard and tiresome.

You and I long for the final rest of the saints, of which Peter got a mere taste. Soon we'll have it. But right now there's work to do. Congregations need continual feeding and nurturing from faithful pastors. Students need consistent and wholesome instruction in God's Word from dedicated Christian teachers and professors. Children need

constant training and discipline from godly parents. Believers, one and all, are called to speak and live the Gospel every day. If you're like me, you get worn out just thinking about all there is to do.

How can we keep going? Peter's mountain-top experience gives the answer. Jesus took Peter back to the real world. But the world on the mountain—of which Jesus allowed Peter a brief glimpse—is every bit as real as the one we're in right now. It won't be long before we see Jesus shining in His full glory. Soon we'll turn the corner and meet with Moses, Elijah, Paul, Martin, our departed Christian parents, spouse, children and friends. Jesus completed His mission. Our sins can no longer block the gate to paradise. Death cannot keep us from an eternal rest. By His resurrection Jesus has made death a servant to us. It serves us as the portal to an endless and awesome new life.

The realities atop the Mount of Transfiguration are ours to hold and treasure. We find them in the Bible and are renewed by them in the Sacraments. Every day we can turn to God's grace to get recharged for our earthly tasks. The Savior's conquering love keeps us going and going—unto life everlasting.

—Pastor Michael Wilke



**Chapel Talk (see endnote)—**

*"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 12:3).*

## **'JESUS IS THE LORD . . . '**

It's old news to you who saw it on the news last week, when a brawny cab driver reported how he outmaneuvered

a would-be armed robber in his cab. "When he stuck the gun to my head," he said, "I just told him: 'Jesus is the

Lord of this cab, and if you don't put that gun down, you're going to jail."

When the guy did not put the gun down, the cabbie repeated: "Jesus is the Lord here, so you're the one in trouble!" That went on until the cabbie wore down the crook, who reportedly finally agreed: "I know that Jesus is the lord." (I think the crook has since been arrested.)

Then the newsanchor cautioned the viewers: "That's not the way to cope with a guy who puts a gun in your face." In other words, "Kids, do NOT try that trick at home."

And that leaves me torn between being thrilled and being appalled.

I am thrilled to think that there are still people who feel so secure about their place in this planet under the Lordship of Jesus that they have no fear what men can do unto them. It summons up images of the early Christian martyrs who faced death, yet confessed: "Jesus is the Lord of my life, and into His hands I commend myself, my body and life." It reminds one of the courage of Luther and other reformers who—when not only their positions and social security were on the line, but their lives were in grave danger—were nonetheless able to stand up to the powerful Roman Catholic Papacy and confess: "Jesus is the Lord of the Church of redeemed souls, and to Him alone we yield in obedience."

If the afore-mentioned story was not a media event, but genuinely a work of God, that cabbie was simply living his conviction. Perhaps in the hearts of that cabbie the miracle had been worked: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

That's the thrilling part. We rejoice that our foreign missionaries in hostile

societies are doing that every day: relying on Jesus to get them through each day's dangers. They must hold onto that and say it, at least to themselves, time and again: "Jesus is the Lord of my life; I will not fear what men can do unto me." Perhaps today our missionaries in Nigeria and India are saying that very thing. And Jesus will get them through whatever they must bear for His sake. Praise the Lord!

Now what distresses me is that on TV it is so easy to exploit such a situation for TV ratings. Thus Satan can use the media to trivialize even such a good confession as: "Jesus is the Lord where I live and work."

Even more annoying was the newsanchor's condescending comment: "This is not something you should try at home," as though it were a superstitious trick. On the contrary. This is indeed that a Christian should be doing at home and at work!

When is it too dangerous to assert that 'Jesus is the Lord of my life'? If you were faced with what that cabbie faced, wouldn't you be saying it in your heart: "Lord Jesus, I do not know how I am going to handle this, so I commit myself, my body and life and all things to YOU to handle for me"?

And just maybe you couldn't keep from saying it out loud: "Jesus is the Lord of my life, and I've got to talk to you about where you stand today in God's sight." — That's too important to NOT do with a stranger or with an acquaintance.

And even with yourself. It is essential that you can say it and mean it: "Jesus is the Lord of my life."

The gun put to your head today will not be as obvious as the confrontation the cabbie faced. But the world has its

big guns trained on the Christian. Perhaps it is the Hubble telescope's awesome photos displayed in *TIME* magazine that will try to blow you away from believing that there IS a God in heaven who minds your destiny. Or maybe the artillery of the secular humanist mindset will fire upon your soul to get you to retreat from God your Father. Or the gun will be in your own hand if you are playing Russian roulette with your favorite fascinating sin. Or shallow moralism will shoot you down from the citadel of Biblical Christian theology held by your pastor and your church and still held by you.

In other words, the cabbie episode smacks of TV drama. While your and my confrontations with evil will be

less dramatic, they are fully as dangerous. You'll have to recognize your moment of crisis and gather your resources to say it and mean it: "Jesus is the Lord here in my heart and life; where I live and work I am in His care and under His guidance." Amen.

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*Note: in perusing Spokesman files, we came upon this ILC chapel devotion of Prof. em. Paul Koch.*

*It becomes clear that the devotion was delivered to the students before the rash of school shootings in the nation; and in particular before the Columbine disaster where apparently at least one of the victims, upon being questioned by a gunman, openly confessed faith in Jesus Christ.*

*Had the school shootings preceded this message, parts of it may have been stated a bit differently. Yet the poignancy of the content would hardly have changed. — Editor*



## Studies In Ephesians

### Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of Christ (See 3:8)

#### Chapter 3:1-14

## WE'VE GOT A SECRET

Secret societies were already popular in the Apostle's time. Today there are still numerous lodge-like organizations that claim they have certain great truths or wisdom that can only be had by being initiated into the club. Some initiates put a terrible curse upon themselves if they should ever reveal those secrets. Many Christians find that they cannot in good conscience make such a blind promise "never to reveal and

always conceal" some yet unknown secret.

What if the secret is something subversive, conspiratorial, or dangerous? Could you stay mum about it? What if the secret is a great truth that could be helpful to the world at large? Could you stay mum about it and still love your neighbor as yourself?

It's a cruddy business, this secrecy thing. Even if it is only some neighbor-

hood children in a tree-house club. Some see it as a tool for excluding unwanted people. Agree?

### Our Secret

Aren't you surprised that Paul would make so much of our secret? He calls it a mystery. Twice. *"This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus"* (3:6).

It was long known that believing Gentiles would one day share hope in Christ (Isaiah 11:10). The secret was that they would have *equal footing* with the believing Jews.\* Who would ever have expected that?! Human thinking would certainly give greater privilege to the blood-line descendants of Abraham!

The other 'secret' is nothing less than **Christ**—His *"unsearchable riches,"* and what God *"accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,"* namely, that *"in him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence"* (3:8,12).

This even more glorious, saving truth is a secret, a mystery. Even though we have known it so long. Even though children can gain this wisdom from the Scriptures. It is a secret because *"no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"* (Isaiah 64:4 and 1 Corinthians

2:9).

Just think of it a moment. **We've got a secret** that everyone needs to know about. This mystery *"for ages past was kept hidden in God . . . His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be known"* even to *"the rulers and authorities (think angels) in the heavenly realms"* (3:9-10). These things are such that *"even angels long to look into"* them (1 Peter 1:12).

### What a Privilege! What a Trust!

Even though the work made him a suffering prisoner, Paul considered his mission of preaching the mystery a **grace given to him**.

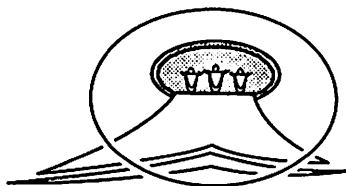
What if we had come to know the secret of a cancer-cure? Wouldn't we have a burning desire to 'tell it on the mountain,' even though a drug company might wish to keep it tight under a patent?

We have actually been entrusted with the secret of life eternal! It must be told, for no one will ever find that life from other sources than the Word.

We've got the most significant secret of all time. The Apostle would surely approve a pledge **never to conceal and forever reveal** this great mystery!

—Pastor Rollin A. Reim

\*See the Ephesians study in the November 1999 issue.



# LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

*First Samuel, Chapters Twenty-One To Thirty-One*

## DAVID AND SAUL— HOW DIFFERENT WERE THEY?

Both were chosen by God to lead Israel. Both started out as humble servants of their God. Both were wicked sinners, guilty of hatred, anger, pride, and jealousy. Both of them deserved to go to hell. Yet one of them is described as being “a man after God’s own heart.” In this study we will examine David and Saul and learn from the examples of each.

### David’s Sin

When we think of ‘David and sin’ the account that usually comes to mind is that of David’s adultery with Bathsheba, and his murder of Uriah to cover it up.

Scripture, however, provides numerous other examples of David’s sins. In First Samuel chapter 21 we read of how David lied to Ahimelech the priest about his reason for being there, and his reason for needing a sword. Later in that same chapter he pretended to be insane to protect himself from the Philistines of Gath. In chapter 25 David in his anger makes plans to annihilate Nabal and his men for not providing for David’s men. In chapter 27 we learn of David’s despair in believing Saul would one day kill him. Instead of turning to God in his

time of doubt, he looked within. He fled to the Philistines for protection, and lived there for sixteen months. In order to convince the Philistines of his support for them, he attacked and destroyed neutral neighboring towns, leading the Philistines to believe he was attacking the Israelites. His attacks were so devastating that “he did not leave a man or woman alive” (1 Sam. 27:11).

As one can see, there is no shortage of evidence that David was a sinner. In what way, then, can he be described as one “after God’s own heart”?

### David’s Repentance

In your own life perhaps you can recall a time when God used somebody to give you timely advice or encouragement. David was blessed with just such people.

Remember Nabal, the one who refused David’s men provisions? He had a faithful wife named Abigail. In order to stem disaster, Abigail met David as he was on his way to slaughter her husband. She begged to speak to him, and she apologized for her husband’s foolish behavior. She offered David gifts, and advised him not to seek vengeance on her husband. She



prevented David from executing his wrath.

David heeded her advice. "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me" (1 Sam. 25:32). David was open to correction from the Lord, even when it came from a woman he had never met before. After her husband died, Abigail became David's wife.

We also learn something about David from the advice he did not take. Two times he had opportunity to kill Saul, and his friends advised him to do so. On both occasions David chose not to kill Saul because Saul was the anointed of God. David realized that it was God who had placed Saul in the position of authority as king, and it would be wrong for him, a servant of the king and God, to take his life. David was even conscience-stricken for cutting off the edge of Saul's robe.

We see in these incidents a desire in David to obey God's Word, a desire that is only evident in those with a heart of faith—a "man after God's own heart."

### Saul's Sin

What do we learn about Saul in these same chapters?

Throughout this section Saul is desperately clinging to his kingdom, and is seeking vengeance on David. This is the same David who had gained a victory over Goliath, comforted Saul with his music, became best friends with Saul's son Jonathan, and married Saul's daughter Michal.

Why was David his enemy? Saul was jealous of David's popularity and he knew that David was anointed to replace him. Instead of being happy for him, he hated him. Saul was also angry

at God for being rejected as king, even though it was because of his own disobedience that this had happened.

Twice Saul regretted pursuing David and seeking his life, but his heart hadn't changed. Instead of seeking forgiveness and guidance from God, he went to the witch of Endor for guidance. He learned that he and his sons would die the next day, and the Philistines would conquer Israel.

Did this lead him to repentance? No, only to despair. The following day Saul was injured in battle, and told his armor-bearer to kill him so the enemy wouldn't abuse him. When the armor-bearer refused, Saul took his own life. Even in the face of death Saul offered no repentance or plea for pardon. He died as foolishly as he had lived.

David and Saul—how different were they? They were both sinners, but David repented of his sin and through faith received forgiveness. His life was one of "daily contrition and repentance." Saul, although regretting some of his actions, rejected the forgiveness available to him. He died in his sin. How different were they? They were and are worlds apart.

May God in His grace grant us sinners the faith of David.

"But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, And from those who persecute me. . . . Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord." (Psalm 31:14-15,24—a psalm of David)

—Prof. Joseph Lau





## Appreciating Our Lutheran Hymns

1 Je - sus, grant that balm and heal-ing In Thy ho - ly wounds I find,  
2 Should some lust or sharp temp-ta-tion Prove too strong for flesh and blood,  
3 If the world my heart en - tic - es On the broad and eas - y road  
4 Ev - 'ry wound that pains or grieves me, By Thy stripes, Lord, is made whole;

### Jesus, Grant that Balm and Healing

A Lenten Hymn

#144 in The Lutheran Hymnal

About the writer of this month's hymn *The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal* says: "He was indeed well grounded in the school of affliction."

The sole survivor of five children, Johann Heermann lived through a childhood illness during which his mother vowed she would have him trained for the ministry if he recovered. Later on, he also suffered from eye and throat ailments. As a Lutheran pastor he fully felt the distresses of the Thirty Years' War: his town was plundered four times and devastated by fire and pestilence; several times he lost all his movables; once he was kept away from home for seventeen weeks; he was nearly sabered twice—to mention just a few of the hardships he faced.

Knowing Heermann's background gives much deeper meaning to his words: "*Jesus, grant that balm and healing In Thy holy wounds I find, Ev'ry hour that I am feeling Pains of body and of mind.*"

It was through those very pains of body and mind that the Lord shaped this man into a great blessing for His

Church. Heermann wrote 400 hymns and ranks among the best hymnwriters of the seventeenth century. Some regard him as second only to the gifted Paul Gerhardt.

His greatness lay in the fact that no matter what he faced, Heermann relied on God for his strength: "*Ev'ry wound that pains or grieves me, By Thy stripes, Lord, is made whole; . . . For Thy all-atoning Passion has procured my soul's salvation.*"

These words ring so true with us who are fellow Christians with that great hymnwriter. In the face of strife and pain, persecution and peril, sickness and even death, there is nowhere else we would turn than to our Savior. And what better place to view our Savior than in His Passion, His suffering and death in our place?

May we sing with Heermann, asking Jesus to be with us in whatever temptations the devil, the world, and our flesh may throw at us; so that in the end God may turn it all to His glory and our eternal good!

—Pastor Paul Krause



## **Biblical Perspectives On The End Times**

*Fifth in a Series—*

### THE RAPTURE

The living will be “caught up” or “raptured” on the last Day when our Lord comes. So the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians and so most believers have understood these words to this day. But in March of 1830 a certain Margaret McDonald claimed that she had seen in a vision a “new rapture.”

#### **The New Rapture**

This is believed by many to be the next great event in the history of mankind. At any moment the Lord will come FOR His Church in contrast to His later coming WITH His Church. All believers will be “caught up” or “raptured.” All unbelievers will be left behind. Believing pilots will be snatched from their cockpits, believing motorists from their vehicles. A husband or wife or entire family will mysteriously disappear. Believers will suddenly and secretly be snatched from Christian congregations, leaving only the hypocrites behind.

#### **Alleged Bible Basis**

The key passage cited is I Thessalonians 4:16-17: “The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together

with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” This is believed to be “the blessed hope” of which Paul wrote in Titus 2:13: “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” In the great resurrection chapter in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul is believed to be speaking of this same rapture: “Behold I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (15:51-52). So also our Lord allegedly spoke of this same event in His Olivet Address when He said that at the coming of the Son of Man “two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left” (Mt. 24:40-41). It is also affirmed that when our Lord spoke of His going to prepare a place for us and coming again to receive us (John 14:3), He was speaking of the secret “rapture.”

#### **Second Coming A Multi-Faceted Event**

When our Lord comes in glory, there shall be the resurrection of the dead and the rapture of the living

believers, the destruction of the present heaven and earth and the creation of a new heaven and earth, the final judgment with the eternal separation of the believers and unbelievers, and the final triumph of the Kingdom and destruction of all anti-Kingdom kingdoms of this world.

### **Second Coming A Series of Events**

The “rapturists” believe that when the Lord comes again, He will snatch all believers from off this earth to meet Him in the air. All unbelievers and hypocrites shall be left on this earth. Then follows a seven-year period during which the Antichrist will be revealed. He will give the Jews permission to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem, but after three and a half years he will break his promise and institute a three-and-a-half-year reign of terror known as the “great tribulation.” That will be followed by the coming of the Lord WITH His saints to

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**“The final judgment is The Great Coming Event, not the rapture. The rapture simply tells us how believers living on the earth on the last Great Day will get to the judgment seat. . . .”**

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destroy His enemies in the Battle of Armageddon and to set up the Millennial Kingdom. At the end of the millennium there will be another revolt against the Lord, yet another victory of the Lord over His enemies, and the institution of the Eternal Kingdom of Glory.

Warning! Don't take the above

series of events as THE doctrine of the “rapturists.” There is little agreement among them. How can there be, since much of the above is fiction!?! If you read any of the flood of literature produced by the “rapturists” or listen to them on TV or radio, be prepared to hear of multiple comings, multiple resurrections, and multiple judgments.

### **The Apostolic Creed**

What has the Church confessed down through the centuries? That our Lord after His resurrection ascended into heaven and is now sitting on the right hand of God the Father who has put His Son in charge of the history of mankind. At some day—unknown to man—the Lord will come again “to judge the quick (or living) and the dead.” Of all the facets of that multifaceted event of our Lord's coming, the Christian Church emphasizes one—the coming of our Lord for judgment, for that event will determine the eternal weal or woe of all.

The traditional view, as expressed in the Apostolic Creed, focuses the attention of the child of God on The Day. That will be The Day of final judgment. That will therefore be The Day of final separation—eternal salvation for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and damnation for unbelievers who reject Jesus as their Savior. Whenever the Lord has come in times past, He has always come with salvation for His people and destruction for His enemies. Thus survival for Noah in the ark and death for the world in the flood; escape for the Children of Israel through the sea, and death in that same sea for Pharaoh and his elite mobile corps; and destruction for Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Nation that reject-

ed their promised Savior in AD 70 till the end of time and salvation for the Israel of God from AD 70 till the end of time. Wherever Christ comes, there are both a fall and a rising (Luke 1:34).

## The Rapture

Those who teach and believe that the rapture is The Great Coming Event direct people to look for the golden age of the millennium. The rapture is the escape mechanism for believers. They will be with the Lord, while those on earth suffer through the great tribulation. After seven years of bliss with the Lord, the believers will return WITH the Lord to establish the millennial kingdom. Jesus will establish Jerusalem as His capitol. The Jews will occupy all the positions of authority. But wait! The Fundamentalists teach that the Jews will be in charge. But the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, and other groups claim that they will be in charge of everything during the millennium.

The final judgment is The Great Coming Event, not the rapture. The rapture simply tells us how believers living on the earth on the last Great Day will get to the judgment seat. They will be snatched from this earth which is doomed to destruction. They will meet the Lord in the air and accompany Him to the great White Throne of Judgment. That will be the great event witnessed by every person born on this earth: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). The cry "Prepare to meet your God" is a call to prepare yourself for the Final Day of Judgment.

How are we to prepare for that decisive Day? Listen to the apostle Paul: "Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28).

## Second Look

. . . at the key Thessalonian passage. Paul wrote that "the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God." In the Corinthian passage Paul wrote: "The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet will sound forth through the universe. Everyone, including the stone deaf, will hear. Yet the rapturists speak of a secret, silent rapture of the saints. How can this be reconciled with the words of Paul quoted above?

The Greek word for MEET has a consistent, established meaning. Those who go out to MEET someone change the direction of their going and accompany those whom they have met. Thus the five wise virgins met the bridegroom and accompanied him to the wedding. So also the brethren came from Rome to the Appii Forum and Three Inns to meet Paul. They then turned around and accompanied Paul to Rome. So the raptured will meet the Lord in the air and accompany Him to the Great White Throne for judgment. The Lord will not reverse His course and take the raptured to some habitation in heaven for a period of seven years while the great tribulation rages here on earth.

On the last Day the raptured will meet the Lord in the air. "And thus we



shall always be with the Lord"—not for seven years, then for a millennium, and finally for eternity, but eternally—beginning the Day the Lord comes. The living will have no advantage over believers who have been dead for centuries. The dead will rise first, the living will be raptured, and all this in a moment!

### Conclusion

A second look at the key

—Pastor Em. Paul F. Nolting



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

## Psalm 131

*“LORD, teach me to be content.”*

### A Psalm of Instruction

#### Psalm 130

LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me.

Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.

O Israel, hope in the LORD, from this time forth and forever.

In this three-verse psalm penned by King David, the virtue of Christian contentment is extolled. The illustration of a weaned child—lying quietly on its mother’s lap, no longer clamoring for the breast, content with the fact that it has its mother—is used to portray the child of God satisfied in the Lord.

The child of God has every reason to be content because he knows that God promises to give him everything he needs—everything he needs for his

Thessalonian passage reveals that this chief proof passage of the rapturists condemns their interpretation of the passage. There will be no rapture of believers followed by a seven-year period of tribulation which is to be followed by a millennium during which our Lord will rule on earth. The rapturists have devised a fiction, a distortion of the words of St. Paul.

earthly life; everything he needs for spiritual life; everything he needs for eternal life in the hereafter (Cf. Rom. 8:32, 1 Cor. 3:21-22, 2 Cor. 6:10b).

Why did the pilgrims traveling up to Jerusalem need this reminder? The prophets of the Lord had promised great things upon their return to Canaan from Babylon—the restoration of their land and nation and temple. When these promises did not come to fruition immediately, they were tempted to become discontented and discouraged. As the returned exiles sang this song on the way to Zion, they would have been reminded and encouraged—through the pious example of their forefather David who wrote this psalm—to wait patiently for the fulfillment of God’s promises.

Sometimes we too are tempted to become discontented and dissatisfied with the Lord’s timetable in His dealings with us. When He delays to

answer our prayer and we can't understand why; when we're called upon to endure a difficult trial and we can't see the good in it; when things aren't going in our life the way we would like them to—then let us listen to the advice

which this psalm offers: commend the matter into the hands of the Lord who knows what is best for His people, and *be content*.

*“O Israel, hope in the Lord, from this time forth and forever.”*



**FROM NIGERIA:**  
Nov 1, 1999:  
Pastors Essien (left) and Edwin (2nd from left) discussing new church at Badagry with six men who make up the nucleus at foundation-laying ceremony.



Nov 1, 1999: At the same ceremony in Badagry, Martin Essien (white trousers, patron of the project) with daughter and wife Tina to his left.

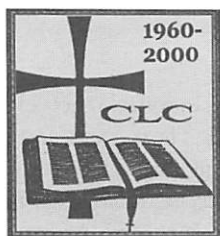
Oct. 27, 1999:  
Students and faculty, 1999 school year, at the Lutheran Bible Institute.



October 17, 1999:  
Pastor Patrick Udo, daughter Nsikan (center), Udo's wife and two children.







## *Historical Markings*

# Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?

“... The gift of God’s grace caused us to separate from the church body with which we were formerly affiliated. God made salvation precious to us. He had created a deep love in our hearts for Jesus who came to us through His holy Word. This love responded with obedience to His Word. It was and is evidence of God’s grace among us that we have a deep affection for the Word.

“It was the holy Word of God which was violated when the synods from which we originally came, continued in a fellowship which God forbade. God made it clear to us that every deviation from the Word is dangerous. He said: ‘A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,’ and again that every departure ‘will eat as doth a canker.’

“That the doctrine which was violated is a non-fundamental one is not the issue in fellowship. That the teaching because of which we separated may be referred to as a peripheral teaching does not alter God’s exhortation and admonition to withdraw. The fact is that the deviation is the beginning of an attack upon the glory of the work and person of Jesus whose Word is ignored. It is the beginning of the devil’s modification and eventual destruction of the essential doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. Every departure from God’s Word disrupts and disturbs the purpose for which God gave Scripture to us, namely, to ‘make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.’ We did not want to be partakers of the evil deed of departing from God’s clear Word, and we did not want to be joined with such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ by ignoring and disregarding his ‘avoid’ and ‘withdraw.’

“Let others say what they wish as to the reasons why we withdrew. Let them say that it was because we couldn’t get what we wanted. Let them say that it was matter of personality clashes. Let them say that we were bitter. But let none of us ever conduct ourselves in such a way that the opponents can have a right to such claims. The six pastors who met in pastoral conference in Spokane in the fall of 1957 cautioned one another against bitterness, and it is worth repeating. ‘Bitterness and lovelessness are unbecoming to everyone who is a recipient of God’s grace in Christ. Our conduct and behavior ought to be such at all times that others may know that the love of Christ and love for His Word dwell in us. Let the gift of grace shine; let Christ be glorified in our lives; let the evidence of our love be clear to all.’”

—from the 1970 essay ‘TEN YEARS OF GRACE’ (Pastor M. J. Witt)

# SMORGASBORD

## • DATELINE—JANUARY

**1968** (In December 1999 Missionary David Koenig submitted to us the following thoughts)

In a CLC Mission Newsletter of January 1968 there was the following: *“MORE ON INDONESIA—One man responded by saying that rather than bewail the fact that we don’t have men and money to go there and work, we reexamine our system of priorities and be ready to send men into such a promising mission field. He considers this a better stewardship of our limited funds and men. He says: ‘I know from experience that there are foreign fields where one man can accomplish what ten can do here in the States. Such fields are becoming rare. But it is possible that Indonesia, because of the peculiar circumstances of its recent history, is such a field just at this time. Later it may not be. But why should we feel that we could not send a man into such a field white with heavy harvest because we do not have enough men to pick up the gleanings in the very unproductive mission field that the U.S. has become?’ There is much worth considering here!”*

Sukarno and his pro-communist government were overthrown. Now the man who replaced him is no longer in power in that island nation. Suharto has been replaced in the recent past. Kingdoms rise and wane, but the Church of Jesus constant will remain. The church will continue, even though opportunities may pass—opportunities to preach the Word while doors are open.

May it not be said of us that we passed by the opportunity unheeding.

For instance, in Indonesia not every place was a Bali. There were and are places like violent East Timor. Yet in between there may be areas where the Gospel is in absence and where the Gospel can be taken. There is many a hindrance to going such as deprivations, a drastically different culture, lack of common amenities we are used to, and so on. But when you get right down to it, the greatest hindrance is within us.

“There is much worth considering . . .” from that article of over thirty years ago, and when we look around today.

## • ‘WHOSE CHURCH IS IT?’

Over the last quarter of the last century much was said and written about the concept of ‘church growth’ and/or how the church of Jesus Christ should (want to) go about reaching out with its message.

Not long ago the following good words appeared in the worship service bulletin of one of our CLC churches. Since the words were a ‘quote,’ we sought to trace the original source. This tracing led to the discovery that the words were first written in 1976 by Pastor Carl Thurow (whose obituary appeared in our November 1999 issue). At the time Pastor Thurow was serving St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Austin, Minnesota.

What follows is as fine—that is, as far as we are concerned, solidly Lutheran—a summary as we have read on the subject. We say this realizing that, while the words indict much of what is being carried on outside our circles as far as ‘gospel’ outreach is

concerned, there is a message aimed in our own direction.

Under the title question 'Whose Church Is It?' this is what Pastor Thurow wrote:

*Church members, with few exceptions, want to see their church grow. In fact, this can become their chief concern—to figure out ways of making the church grow or to fix the blame for its lack of growth. Even the more inactive members often share this concern to a marked degree. One can't help wonder sometimes, though, whether this great zeal for growth is properly motivated. Whose church are we trying to build—ours or Christ's? Does the church exist to fulfill the purposes of Christ or to flatter the ego of its members?*

*Satan can capitalize on misdirected zeal. If he succeeds in confusing our*

*purpose, we wind up building a Tower of Babel, marvelous to behold, but useless in fulfilling the purpose of Christ. If zeal for the church as an institution were properly channeled, it would translate itself into interest in the Word of Christ and concern for the salvation of souls. Members would never miss church if they could help it, and Bible classes would not be so sparsely attended as they often are. Members would then also approach the unchurched with a view to sharing the Good News rather than to expanding the membership.*

*A high body count, along with a healthy balance in the treasury, can be looked upon as a hallmark of success. As the goal of the church, however, it can be disastrous. When the Gospel degenerates into a sales pitch to build*

## PICTURING THE PAST



The synod's Constitutional Convention was held August 9-12, 1960 at Trinity, Watertown, S. Dak. and recessed to Grace, Sleepy Eye, Minn. (1961). Sign reads: CLC CONVENTION, JANUARY 24, 25, 26 - IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US? Pastor Paul F. Nolting was elected synod secretary and served until 1996.

## "CLC WOMEN'S RETREAT"

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday - March 31, April 1 & 2  
at  
Marvin M. Schwan Retreat and Conference Center  
Trego, Wis.



Sponsored by  
Immanuel Lutheran Church,  
Mankato, Minn.



**Theme: (based on Ecclesiastes 3:1)**

*Life is full of transitions and we can learn to deal with them when we remember that our Lord says "to everything there is a season and a time to every purpose . . ."*

Registrations are being received until March 1, 2000 for this retreat. Forms and other information may be received by contacting your pastor, or by e-mailing to Pastor Paul D. Nolting at: PDNolting@prodigy.net

*up the membership and when the real goal of the church, cloaked in the sheep's clothing of religion, is self admiration, whose church is it?*

### • HAVE YOU ATTENDED A 'RETREAT' LATELY?

Doubtless each of our CLC congregations has its 'retreats'—youth groups, ladies' meetings, men's meetings, Bible classes, discussion groups. Such are 'retreats' in that they take us away from the humdrum of daily routine and bring us into interaction with fellow Christians. Such are good, necessary, and spiritually uplifting gatherings—as far as they go.

A few of our churches, we know, have family-camp get-aways over a weekend or more. We have heard of marriage seminars in our CLC—couples from one or more congregations getting together, with Christian counselors leading the way.

Lately it seems efforts are being made to have district-wide or synod-



Speakers for the October Seminar at Immanuel, Mankato: (l-r) Tina Stelter, Pastors P. D. Nolting & W. Eichstadt, Mikki Aymond, Jane Murch, Sara Nolting

wide seminars or retreats.

In October 1999 Immanuel, Mankato hosted a combination Christian Men's Conference and The Christian Woman Today Seminar. Men as well as ladies were invited to come and spend a day in fellowship around the Word. After meeting together for the opening devotion, lay-men and lay-women discussed a variety of scripturally-based topics in their respective groupings. As one who attended the Men's Conference, yours truly gained from discussions on how to be a

continued on p. 20

## 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 CLC exploratory missions in 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	Bertram Naumann 602-775-2145	
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	Bob Doriot 305-429-0063
Michigan, Cadillac	Walter Schaller 231-779-1934	Bob Remus 231-832-2687
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	
Tennessee, Nashville area (2nd & 4th Saturdays)	David P. Baker 636-629-2688	Wayne Everhart 270-618-4387
Texas, Amarillo	James Naumann 719-336-5773	Local Contact 806-358-3717
Texas, Killeen	Thomas Schuetze 972-733-4535	Eric Rachut 254-853-2867
Texas, Weslaco (Rio Grande Valley)	Daniel Fleischer 361-241-5147	Buddy Hovda 956-565-2851
Washington, Withrow	Terrel Kesterson 509-327-4203	
Wisconsin, Appleton	David Naumann 920-922-3318	
Wisconsin, Onalaska (LaCrosse area)	Paul Gurgel 715-831-0702	Kirby Pabst 608-781-0835
Wisconsin, Fairchild	Gordon Radtke 715-834-6280	
Wisconsin, Wausau	Mark Gullerud 715-838-9569	

Compliments of:

GETSEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
E. 11315 BROADWAY  
SPOKANE, WA. 99206

strong(er) 1) husband, 2) father, 3) leader in the church.

The Women's Fellowship has met a number of years now during synod convention, and recently announced its plans for this June. The CLC Youth Conference August 4-8, 2000 (details mentioned on these pages last month) promises five days of scripture study, informal fellowship and fun for our youth.

As a pastor we have witnessed—among our members who have attended one or another of these get-aways—the spiritual refreshment evident when attendees return home.

And so we say, if you haven't attended a 'retreat' lately, do so. You'll be glad you did.



## Announcements

### Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council will meet in Eau Claire on March 1,2, 2000. Individual boards meet on February 28,29. The meeting which is ordinarily held after Easter was advanced because of the late date of Easter and the need to get materials for convention to the delegate conferences in good time.

—D. Fleischer, President

### Call Committee On Graduates

The call committee on graduates is planning to meet March 1, 2000. The call (without a name) and the accompanying letter for pastors or teachers should be in my hands before that date. The call for teachers may be delayed to a later date. However, in order not to be overlooked if a congregation is calling a teacher through the committee, have teacher calls in before March 12.

—D. Fleischer, President

### Colloquy

A colloquy of Rev. Martin Koestler of Preston, Minnesota is planned for February 28.

Please have any pertinent remarks concerning this application in my hands by February 20.

—D. Fleischer, President

### Convention Report

Information on anniversaries (congregation or individual) and dedications are solicited for the president's convention report. If you have celebrated an anniversary of the congregation or of service in the ministry and have not informed the president, please do so now.

—D. Fleischer, President

### Changes of Address

David & Kim Bernthal (teachergage)  
6764 Paw Paw Ave.  
Coloma, MI 49038  
(616) 468-4440

Roland A. Gurgel (Vacancy Pastor)  
6768 Paw Paw Ave.  
Coloma, MI 49038  
(616) 468-4368