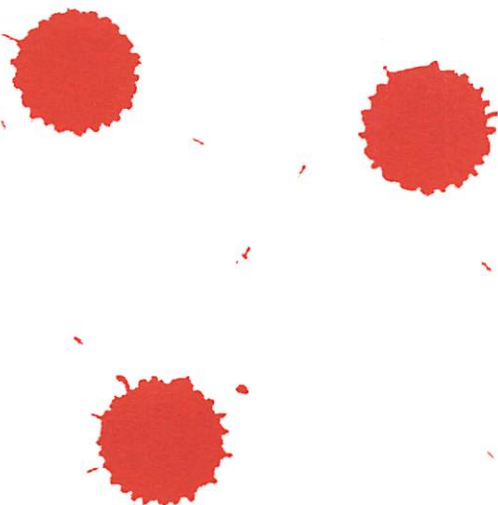


Lutheran Spokesman



*“In Christ
we have redemption
through His blood,
the forgiveness of sins.”*

EPHESIANS 1:7

“Bless the LORD, O my soul . . . Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.” — Psalm 103:1, 3

Medicine For The Soul

In the pioneer days of our country when peddlers traveled from town to town with their wares, some sold a cure-all elixir. This was a tonic which, it was claimed, cured whatever ailed you (they didn't have the 'truth in advertising' law back then!).

This bit of Americana crossed my mind as I was thinking about a recent television ad selling a pill which claimed to make the sad and distressed person feel happy.

To be sure, we are living in an age where physical health has greatly benefited from modern-day medicines. However, haven't there been times when the medical community has crossed over the line by trying to provide a cure for a spiritual soul-problem with man-made medicine?

King David tells of suffering from a

dreadful spiritual disease that robbed him of happiness of living and had a detrimental effect upon his entire being. The disease is called 'sin'—sin which is unrepented of and therefore unfor-given.

David relates how sorely distressed he was because of this: “When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer” (Ps. 32:3-4). — The medical doctors both then and now do not have a cure for this ailment.

The Great Physician

While man does not possess a cure-all for whatever ails us, yet the LORD God is able to heal all our diseases of both body and soul. Jesus, our Savior-

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God, is known by His followers as being the Great Physician.

In the Old Testament the Son of God tells of His being sent into this world “to heal the brokenhearted . . . to comfort all who mourn . . . to give them . . . the oil of joy for mourning” (Is. 61:1-3).

In order that Jesus might supply us with perfect healing (even His saving health, Ps. 67:2), it was necessary for Him to be infected with the accumulative sin-disease of us all, to be tormented by its ill effects, and to suffer the eternally deadly consequences of it.

The prophet Isaiah expressed this vicarious work of Jesus with these words: “Surely He has borne our griefs (lit. our sicknesses) and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Is. 53:4-5).

When Jesus was on the cross suffering great pain and agony of body, soul, and mind, He refused to drink the bitter sedative offered to Him. Instead He willingly and lovingly drank the bitter cup of suffering to the very last drop—so that our souls might be healed and our spirits uplifted with true happiness.

David, the penitent sinner, tells of the wonderful happiness he experienced through the Savior’s healing of his soul: “Blessed (lit. happy) is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed (happy) is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit” (Ps. 32:1-2).

When your spirit is saddened, and your heart is weighed down with the spiritual disease of the guilt of sin, don’t look for happiness in a pill. Rather look in faith to the Great Physician who says: “Be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you” (Mt. 9:2).

—Pastor Mark Gullerud



“Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong. Then he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:39-43)

Paradise For The Penitent!

When the three men were fastened with nails to their crosses and lifted up to die a slow and painful death, both malefactors joined in the mockery directed toward Jesus.

However, the more the malefactor

on the right observed Jesus, the more he was affected by what he saw. He beheld how Jesus did not complain, express dissatisfaction, or protest.

Jesus’ innocence became apparent as this malefactor heard Jesus demon-

strate a loving concern for His executioners, praying to the Father to make forgiveness their precious possession. The Holy Spirit brought life to this man's soul when it was on the verge of death.

With amazement we consider what the grace of God does in a short period of time in the soul of an unlikely prospect. The malefactor is so moved that he rebukes the other who continues to throw shameful remarks toward Jesus. Then he speaks the words that critically need to be spoken—that is, his confession of sins. He doesn't make excuses for his conduct. He doesn't blame anyone else. He freely admits that he deserves exactly what he is getting.

Beautiful words continue to flow from this mouth that shortly before had been used to mock the Lord. He correctly and reverently declares the innocence of Jesus. He understands that he is being crucified with a Man who knew no sin. There must be a high purpose to Jesus' being on the cross!

The Word Fulfilled

Finally, the malefactor speaks directly to Jesus. From what he had learned from the Scriptures as a child, and from what he knew of Jesus from that morning, he is certain that this same Jesus will appear again in glory. Nothing can prevent this from happening, not even the crucifixion. He is confident that the Word of God will be fulfilled in Jesus.

Nearly everyone was hoping for the Christ to establish a glorious, earthly kingdom. The penitent malefactor isn't interested in that at all. He is hastening toward that Day when the glory of the Lord will appear and gather all



believers into His heavenly kingdom. His prayer is for Jesus to remember him on that Day. He casts himself upon the mercy of the Lord. He places his soul in Jesus' hands. As a miserable sinner, it is his only hope. But it is a hope generated within his heart by the Spirit.

Jesus answers the man's prayer in a way which exceeded the man's hopes! That day of glory to which the malefactor is looking forward is not far off. For him, that day is "today!" as he is about to leave this world and take that permanent step into eternity.

What awaits him later in the day is something that no sinner deserves: an entrance into Paradise. In the moment of his repentance and Jesus' promise, every sin, every speck of guilt attached to that malefactor, is instantly and totally wiped out. With these simple yet powerful words, Jesus changes the status of the man from malefactor to saint. All this, of course, is accomplished on the basis of what Jesus has already begun to do—suffer and pay the debt for the sins of that malefactor and every one of us malefactors.

Our Savior gave the penitent malefactor the assurance of entering heaven. And through His Word of grace and sacraments, He offers the same thing to us. As we read: "For so an entrance will be supplied to you *abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11).

What a joy it is to know that Jesus makes "home" and "Paradise" mean the same thing for us!

—Pastor Delwyn Maas

“Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.” (Luke 23:26)

His Yoke Is Easy, His Burden Light

In the early centuries after Christ, there was a sect that denied the true humanity of Jesus. They did not accept what the four gospels say of Jesus, that He had a human body and that He suffered and died. They taught that Jesus only appeared to have a body and only seemed to suffer and die. To account for the crucifixion, some of them went so far as to claim that Simon of Cyrene—the man who was compelled to carry the cross of Jesus—had been crucified in place of Jesus.

This is not only wrong, but the exact reverse of the truth. Simon of Cyrene was not crucified in the place of Jesus. Jesus was crucified—suffered and died—in the place of Simon and all sinners. He carried the full weight of the sin of mankind.

Isaiah wrote of the suffering Messiah: “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” (Is. 53:6). The apostle Paul likewise taught that when Jesus suffered on the cross, God the Father made Him “to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

When we hear the account of Jesus’ crucifixion, we know that the entire weight of our guilt has been taken off our shoulders. For the sake of Jesus we have been declared not guilty and our faith in Him is accounted as



righteousness.

Bearing His Cross

And yet Jesus says: “Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple” (Lk. 14:27). Simon of Cyrene, walking behind Jesus, carrying the cross, is the picture of Christian discipleship. There is a burden, there is a weight, to discipleship, as Jesus also taught when He said: “Take my yoke upon you” (Mt. 11:29).

We accept the burden of the cross when we publicly confess our faith in Jesus as our Savior, saying that we are not ashamed to be known as disciples of Christ, the crucified. We take up our cross when we follow Christ and willingly expose ourselves to the contempt of the world, the same contempt that the enemies of Christ showed for Him when they rejected Him as their Savior

and nailed Him to the cross. For the world considers us fools for following a man who was crucified, for humbling ourselves before Him and confessing our sins, for giving money for the spread of His gospel, for believing in the resurrection to eternal life.

The cross sounds like a heavy burden, for no one wants to be an object of contempt. For many Christians the cross has meant severe persecution, loss of property, and even death.

But Jesus calls even this a light

burden and an easy yoke. The cross that we bear as Jesus' disciples is light, because He carried the heavy burden of our sins and of God's wrath. That burden has been carried away forever.

Our role is like that of Simon of Cyrene—carrying a cross that feels heavy and rough but does not crush us. And we carry it only for a short distance. Soon we will lay it down forever, and join our Savior in the perfect joy and glory that He has won for us.

—Pastor John Klatt



Parables Of The Master

Luke 15:1-10

The Lost Sheep And Lost Coin

The lost (but found) sheep and the lost (but found) coin teach us to value God's attitude.

As the scene of the text (vv. 1-3) opens, a motley group of non-churchgoers "*drew near to Jesus to hear Him.*" Right from the beginning we note that nothing characterizes the essence of true religion more than this: get as close as you can to Jesus to absorb what He has to give, for He is the channel of God's love to lost mankind.

Outside that circle stood the regular church-goers, who got their feathers ruffled. What irritated them? For one thing, it was the attitude of Jesus, who did not seem embarrassed that He attracted such rabble to His Bible class. Even more aggravating was their perception that Jesus, a junior

rabbi from Nazareth, did not deserve His popularity.

Jesus could have defended His self-image; He could have condemned the grumpy bystanders, but He was not interested in such maneuvers, for He was enjoying this golden opportunity to salvage souls from Satan's junkyard.

But now (v. 3) there intruded the need for a second Bible class—to give to those self-righteous folks an insight into God's attitude and to open their hearts to understand His mission among us. How about a duet of down-to-earth stories with human interest to illustrate the drama of God's loving search-and-rescue mission?

Both parables share a simple story line: in each a *single* verse presents a loss, the loss regained, and the

owner/finder rejoicing. No need for filler such as the obstacles that had to be overcome in searching for the lost sheep/coin or the investment of time and energy spent. But then it takes *three* verses to portray the outcome and to savor the heavenly truth! The shepherd, thrilled, shoulders his easy burden with no complaint; he is overcome with delight that a tragedy has been averted. He is so open-hearted about the rescue that he treats friends and neighbors to a celebration—which none apparently considers too extravagant. What a wonderful attitude!

“*Likewise*” (v. 7) presents the point of the parable—the heavenly truth behind the mundane. The reason Jesus was comfortable while consorting with “the low-life” was that He sought to seek and to save that which was lost. Jesus was gladly doing for souls what a shepherd (pastor) does for his sheep. [We note that this parable is not geared to teach us anything about “*the ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*” Jesus gave them their due at other confrontations—as in Matthew 23.]

The home-maker (vv. 8-10) could have a similar problem. If a coin gets misplaced, no distraction can divert her from the search&recovery mission—even though no life hangs in the balance. Jesus presented the same emotional overload and the same sharing of her success.

So much for story time.

“*Likewise*” (v. 10) points to the heavenly reality behind the illustration. God turns the house upside down for the lost soul and doesn’t quit until He finds it; then it’s celebration time in heaven as He calls in the holy angels to share His good feeling. What a won-

derful attitude!!

It is no mystery to us that God searches for and finds and rescues and recovers and brings home the sinner who repents. [We note that repentance is a key concept here.] We also know that Satan intends to prevent the sinner from recognizing his danger; the sinner doesn’t realize that God’s ambulance run is a search&rescue mission for *him*.

So when Satan hands us those shabby excuses (“I’m not a pastor . . . It’s none of my business . . . live and let live,” etc.) for our not joining God’s search&rescue mission, we ought to picture in our minds the scene *in hell*: there shall be more joy in hell over one sinner who does *not* repent, than over ninety-nine who are still OK with God. There is joy in the presence of the angels of Satan over one sinner who does *not* get rescued and carried home by Jesus.

We have the feeling that Jesus enjoyed His Bible classes; He was thrilled to show God’s loving concern for the lost souls.

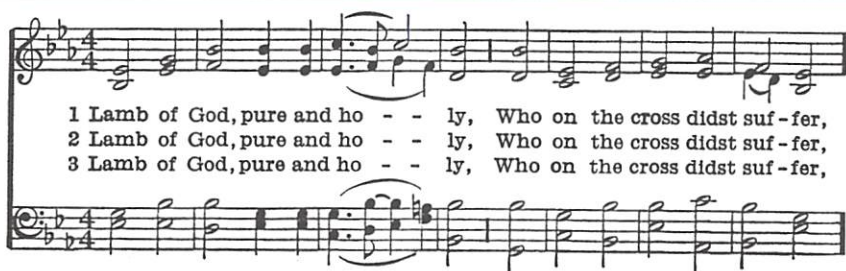
May we be partakers of the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, so that even as we appreciate Jesus for ourselves, we share the saving goodness of God with other lost souls, so that the contemplation of His goodness brings them to repent and be saved (Rom. 2:4).

Lord, have mercy.

—Prof. Em. Paul Koch



Appreciating Our Lutheran Hymns



1 Lamb of God, pure and ho - - ly, Who on the cross didst suf - fer,
2 Lamb of God, pure and ho - - ly, Who on the cross didst suf - fer,
3 Lamb of God, pure and ho - - ly, Who on the cross didst suf - fer,

Lamb of God, Pure and Holy

A Lenten Hymn

#146 in The Lutheran Hymnal

Our Lord warns against the use of vain repetitions in prayer, saying that such practices are typical of the heathen. We have an example of this kind of prayer in the Bible, when the prophets of Baal cried to their god from morning until noon, saying: “O Baal, hear us!” (1 Kgs. 18:26). They imagined that they would be heard for their many words.

We ought to take this warning to heart and be careful not to let our prayers become vain repetitions—for example, saying the Lord’s Prayer or singing the liturgy thoughtlessly.

But Jesus did not say that we should never use repetition in our prayers and worship—only that we should not use *vain* repetitions. And repetition is a feature of certain parts of our liturgy and of some of our hymns. For example, there are hymns in which each stanza ends with a refrain. There are examples of this in the Bible. In Psalm 136 each of the twenty-six verses ends with the refrain: “For His mercy endures forever.” Also in the liturgy the triple *Hallelujah*, the *Kyrie* (“Lord, have mercy”), and the triple

amen after the benediction are most certainly not vain, but meaningful repetitions.

Our hymn is another example of meaningful repetition in worship. It is a setting of John the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus in John 1:29: “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

In the hymn we confess three times that Jesus is the sacrificial Lamb of God who suffered on the cross, patient and lowly, bearing our sins. We say that without Him we would be lost. We sing these things three times—not just because they are worth repeating, but also because we sing them in worship of the true God who has made Himself known to us as three-in-one.

Though the prayer is addressed to Jesus, it is offered believing in the Holy Trinity—the God who showed His great love for us in the salvation that He has given us in Christ.

—Pastor John Klatt



Psalm 132

“LORD, establish Your gracious rule in my heart.”

A Prayer Psalm

(Please read this longer psalm in your Bible.)

This is the longest of the Songs of Ascents. It is thought to have been composed by Solomon at the time of the temple dedication. (Some believe it was written by David at the time when the ark of the covenant was removed from the house of Abinadab and brought to Jerusalem.) As to subject matter: “It is concerned almost entirely with the temple, which it sets before the faithful from the first conception of it in the mind of David to its final glory when visited by the Redeemer. Vv. 1-5 are concerned with the birth of the idea in David’s mind; vv. 6-10 with its realization under Solomon; while vv. 11-18 point to the time when David’s true Son would be set upon David’s throne, and the Lord himself would suddenly come to his temple, and make the glory of the second house greater than that of the first had ever been.” (*Pulpit Commentary, Psalms, Vol. III, p. 258*)

This psalm is well-suited to be a

Song of Ascents. As the pilgrims sang it on their way up to the earthly city of Zion (from which David had ruled over an *earthly* kingdom and where a temple made with human hands was situated), they would have been reminded of Jehovah’s promise to raise up from David’s family line a King who would establish a *spiritual* kingdom . . . a King who would defeat their enemies and make it possible for them to dwell in a house “not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1).

As they looked forward in joy-filled faith to the fulfillment of the promise, so we may look back and rejoice. The promised ancestor, great David’s greater Son, came in the fullness of time. He conquered our spiritual foes through His redemptive work so that we may be His own for time and eternity.

Truly, a King most wonderful! Let us serve and worship Him!



The multipurpose facility at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, was site for a “Christian Men’s Conference,” October 2, 1999. Some 35 men attended.

TRUE CHRISTIANS OR AVERAGE POLITICIANS?

We are in the midst of the presidential primaries. There is a whole lot of boasting going on. How can one be a politician without boasting of his own qualifications? By contrast, how can we be Christians without boasting of the qualifications of our Savior, Jesus Christ? Those who are chosen by God to be saved through faith in Christ know themselves to be sinners. They make their boast only in the redeeming merits of Jesus Christ.

The mature Christian knows that he has already been *elected* unto eternal salvation by the God of grace. Therefore he does not desire to boast of himself in order to be elected by others to some earthly position. If he runs for political office, he runs to serve, not to be served; and he will run on his message, not his merits.

Neither does the true Christian proclaim his message the way the politician does. The politician, who seeks his election by the people, will often massage his message to suit the whims of the people. The Christian, on the other hand, will not tamper with the Word of Christ in order to tickle the ears of his hearers. God's Word "*is truth*" (Jn. 17:17). It cannot be improved. It must be proclaimed as it is written, because it comes from the holy and unchanging God Himself. Unlike the politician, the humble Christian would not dare to juggle the truth until it turns up as something else—a lie or half-truth that is more agreeable to his hearers.

Christians who confess the truths of God's Word are an endangered species. Not only are they rarely found, but they are increasingly threatened by the perception in our society that the greatest "hate" crime is to proclaim Christ as *the Way, the Truth, and the Life* for all mankind.

The truth is not a toy. The real Christian does not want to trivialize the truths of God's Word by making them equal with human opinions. And yet, we are continually reminded that Jews, Hindus, Moslems and others are "*offended*" by the claim that the Christian faith is the *only* way to God. The pressure is on us to define Christian faith and "spirituality" so loosely that every human opinion and belief system may find a place within the Church or acceptance with God, regardless of the testimony of the Holy Scriptures.

So it is that Nancy Eiesland, a sociology professor and co-editor of the book, *Contemporary American Religion* (AltaMira Press, 1997), insists that Christians now have to ask themselves what it means "to be a Christian in a context where Christians are regularly in conversation with people who proclaim very different truths" (quoted in the *Atlanta-Constitution—Atlanta, Georgia, Saturday, Jan. 1, 2000*). Our answer: What it "means to be a Christian" will always be determined solely by the truth proclaimed in the Gospel of Christ, not by the proclamations of human religions. To be a

true Christian will always mean to confess *the Truth* revealed in Christ's Word, opposing and rejecting every so-called "different truth."

Because *the Truth* is unchanging, being a true Christian in our day requires nothing more nor less than it did in the days of the New Testament Church 2,000 years ago. For the Christ who commanded those first disciples to be the "salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" has not yet told us to be the sugar of the earth or the shade of the world. We are still to "rejoice and be exceedingly glad" as we follow the example of the persecuted prophets before us (cf. Mt. 5:11-16).

To this extent we agree with those who argue that religion and politics should not be mixed: *Let no true Christian permit others to confuse him with the average politician.* Too many precious souls are at stake, perhaps even our own! "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). God, help us to confess the truth of salvation as we believe! For the Scripture also says: "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame" (Rom. 10:11).

(From a January 23, 2000 church bulletin, Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, West Columbia, S.C. Vance Fossum is pastor.)



SMORGASBORD

• HISTORICAL VIGNETTES

This synod anniversary year we are running monthly "Historical Markings"—quotes from essays recounting the CLC's origins.

The good suggestion has come to 'give it a lighter side' too. So an invitation has gone out on the synod e-mail posts. The invitation—which is intended for layfolk as well as clergy—is to submit informal musings or reminiscences which come to mind as evidence of the Lord's grace and blessing in the early years of the CLC.

Dear reader, does something come to your mind in this regard? If so, please pass it along. Keep it short, please, up to 400 words max.

For thought starters:

- 1) What event(s) or piece(s) of our synod's early history come to mind?
- 2) Why does it come to mind?

- 3) How do you see that event or piece of history as especially meaningful for this young church body?
- 4) What blessing(s) do you see God had (has) in store for the CLC through this event or piece of history?

We look forward to your writings, and also sharing them with our readers. See masthead for the editor's mailing address (snail or e-).

See the first such vignette in this issue.

• **'HATE SPEECH'?** (In a recent pastoral letter CLC President Daniel Fleischer, Corpus Christi, Tex., included the following observation and words of encouragement to his fellow pastors. On the same subject, see Pastor Fossum's article "True Christians Or Average Politicians?" in this issue.)

In our newspaper last week there was an article captioned: '*Evangelism borders hate speech.*' Possibly others of you saw the same article in your

newspaper. The article says: *“There is no question that the First Amendment protects the free-speech of non-Christians and others who are offended by intolerant, narrow-minded Christians who proclaim that Jesus is the only savior [sic] for all humankind.”* In reference to John 3:36 it is said: *“It would be hard to imagine anyone making a more inflammatory statement than the one attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of John.”*

Of course, this kind of opposition to the Gospel is not new, but the boldness with which it is attacked is increasingly bolder, it seems. In the face of such attitudes we understand the necessity of being faithful and forthright in our preaching. In spite of such opposition, may we all have the spirit of Christ, “Who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth.” Against veiled threats in our ‘inclusive’ society (a contradiction for sure as pertains to

gospel free speech), we need to guard against a bunker mentality that withdraws for fear of reprisal. We serve our Lord Jesus and not the whims of society. As we preach, the Spirit of God still sees to it that the Word bears fruit. It is one of the great joys of the ministry to see how the Word which we preach succeeds in overcoming in many hearts the intense darkness that inhabits the world.

God help us to be faithful preachers that through us many hearts are comforted with the same comfort that is ours in Jesus Christ, the only Savior of mankind.

• RE: ‘A HISTORY OF THE CLC’-1978

When we gave the background for various essays recording the history of the CLC (cf. January 2000 issue), we indicated an uncertainty about the origin of this work. Since Prof. C. M. Gullerud, the essayist, refers to “you

PICTURING THE PAST



At the CLC’s Constitutional Convention recessed to Sleepy Eye, Minnesota (January 24-26, 1961), the first elected praesidium was: Rev. C. M. Gullerud, Moderator; Rev. M. J. Witt, Vice President; Rev. Paul Albrecht, President; Rev. Paul F. Nolting Secretary.

teachers” in his opening comments, we contacted the secretary of the CLC Teachers Conference (Karla Olmanson), and asked if she might check back over the minutes to shed some light. With her help, we report the following.

The October 1975 minutes state that “C. M. Gullerud presented a comprehensive history of the CLC.” While there is no indication that the presentation was an assignment of the conference, “it was suggested that the essay be duplicated and placed in the archives of the CLC as well as in the historical collection being compiled at ILC.” It also appears as though this lengthy essay was a work in progress (at least the reading of it), for the minutes continue: “A suggestion was made that this historical study be continued at our next conference....”

In turn, the November 1976 Teachers’ Conference minutes make this comment: “Professor C. M. Gullerud continued the paper he had begun last year entitled ‘History of the CLC.’ After outlining how Gullerud’s essay was divided into four parts, the minutes go on: “A motion was made and seconded that we ask the CLC Bookhouse Board to consider publication of Professor Gullerud’s paper. When the authorization by the president of the synod was suggested before the paper be printed and sent out, the motion was withdrawn in favor of a

second motion to adopt the paper and send a copy to President Albrecht to consider publication of it. The motion passed.”

The copy of the Gullerud essay we have on file (typewritten, mimeographed, appearing to be an “original”) is subtitled: Prof. C. M. Gullerud, 1978. So what is said in the Teachers’ Conference minutes that year? No reference at all is made to the Gullerud work (in 1978 or apparently in any future minutes). The 1978 minutes refer, however, to yet another essay on the subject: “Professor Michael Buck presented an essay on the history of the CLC.” A motion carried to accept the essay with thanks.

If nothing else, evidence is ample that—at least among the synod’s parochial teaching corps—it was felt time and effort should be taken to record for posterity what was involved in the formation of this new church body. Good for the teachers, for if any current generation is to convey to the rising one more than a superficial answer to the question “what mean these stones?” (cf. Joshua 4:21), the historical facts need to be on record.

Whatever else might be noted or yet discovered about the origin and ‘official’ disposition of the Gullerud essay, it remains the most thorough rehearsal of the birth and early history of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.



CLC TEACHERS CONFERENCE-1999

‘Jesus Christ Is the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever’ was the theme of the 1999 CLC Teachers

Conference which was hosted by Immanuel Lutheran Church of Mankato, Minnesota from October 13-

15. Fifty-four teachers from twelve different states enjoyed the opportunity for fellowship and spiritual growth.

Each day the conference was opened with a devotion by Matthew Thurow (Spokane, Wash.). Using the conference theme, he showed that Christ was the Master Teacher *yesterday* as He patiently instructed His disciples and then prepared them to teach in His place. Jesus is still the Master Teacher *today* as He works through His called workers. They are like Christ's substitutes with the Master Teacher at their sides. They have the promise: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20). Finally, Jesus will be the Master Teacher *forever* as His Word is passed down from one generation to another (Ephesians 4:11-12).

The papers which were presented to the conference covered a variety of topics, but they all had two things in common—stressing the power of prayer in the teaching ministry and the necessity of using God's Word in everything we do.

Philip Strike (Phoenix, Ariz.) offered many practical ideas for "Getting Students to Turn in Work that Is on Time, Complete, and Done Well." He also encouraged the teachers to pray for their students and to lead them to make the best use of the gifts that God has given them.

Barb Gurgel (Eau Claire, Wis.) presented many helpful suggestions on "How We Can Help the Lonely Child and the One that Just Doesn't Fit In." "Training these fearful, shy children to see themselves as brothers and sisters of Christ is a task we take on as Christian educators."

Thomas Skinner (Markesan, Wis.)

spoke on the use of "Rewards in the Classroom," reminding the teachers that "if we keep the soul the goal of our education, then any motivation that we use will have Christ at the center."

Two Title Five papers were presented. Laila Fleischer (Mankato, Minn.) covered the topic of "Teaching Nutrition and Hygiene to Grades 5-8" with an interesting presentation and helpful handouts. Donna Klammer (Mankato, Minn.) involved all the teachers in a hands-on physical education lesson on bowling.

The teachers were privileged to have several pastors speak to the conference. Pastor Wayne Eichstadt (Mankato, Minn.) presented "A Study of Proverbs and Applications for Living Today." With this overview of the entire book of Proverbs, the teachers were encouraged to make use of this beautiful and practical book of wisdom in their private lives and in their classrooms. Pastor Elton Hallauer (Morris, Minn.) showed the conference "What Constitutes Teacher Misconduct" from a spiritual point of view, as he reviewed the nature of the divine call and also from the world's viewpoint as seen in Minnesota state policies.

Pastor Paul D. Nolting (Mankato, Minn.) reviewed the book *Teaching Law and Gospel* by William E. Fischer. He highly recommended the book for all the teachers as a guide for dealing with children in the Christian classroom. Pastor L. Dale Redlin (Mankato, Minn.—retired) reviewed *Christ Light*, the new WELS Sunday School material. He found that "the material appears to be well done and in general, quite user-friendly."

One of the highlights of the confer-

ence was the Wednesday evening service conducted by Pastor Paul Fleischer (Sleepy Eye, Minn.). The teachers were encouraged with the words from Acts 2:37-40 that "The Promise Is For Us and Our Children." Special music was provided by the organist, Barry Hay (Markesan, Wis.), and by two choirs directed by Lane Fischer (Mankato, Minn.) The conference choir sang "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken," and the Immanuel High School and Grade School Choir sang "Christ Is With Me." The offering was designated to go toward the cost of reprinting Prof. Michael Sydow's Catechism.

R & R was provided for the teachers in the form of a field trip on Thursday afternoon to an historic site 14 miles north of Mankato called

Traverse des Sioux. An important Indian treaty was signed at this fording place in 1851. On Thursday evening many of the teachers enjoyed playing volleyball.

The conference re-elected Karl Olmanson as president and elected Sara Pfeiffer as the new secretary. The 2000 Teachers Conference will be held in Saginaw, Mich. from October 11-13. In 2001 the conference will be in Phoenix, Ariz. from October 17-20.

As always the teachers left the conference feeling refreshed, spiritually edified, and encouraged to return to their calling with renewed zeal to do the work of the Lord.

—Submitted by Sharon Schierenbeck, Winter Haven, Flo.

(We regret that we have no pictures, since those taken are no longer available. — Ed.)



Fortieth Anniverlary Historical Vignettel

vignette (vin-yet'), n. 1. short literary essay; sketch
vignettist (vin-yet'ist), n. a maker of vignettes, painter,
photographer, or writer

Vignette # 1— Dateline: Eau Claire, Wisconsin

PROFESSOR CLIFFORD KUEHNE, VIGNETTIST

It is well known that the CLC became involved in the mission effort in Nigeria largely through the intervention of Mr. Oscar Erpenstein, who with his wife was a charter member of St. Stephen Lutheran Church in the west-bay area south of San Francisco. It may

not be quite as well known how the Erpensteins initially came into contact with our CLC. Here is the story.

The story began with my being called to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church at Hecla, South Dakota in November of 1961. Because the only

other Lutheran church in that town was a congregation of the American Lutheran Church, I began subscribing to the ALC periodical, the "Lutheran Standard," to acquaint myself with doctrinal trends in that church body.

The December 4, 1962 issue of the "Lutheran Standard" contained an article that defended the theory of evolution. Among other things, the writer said: "The principle of evolution is now as well established as atomic theory; it is as well documented and verified as any scientific principle known." While I knew that the ALC had been going downhill in matters of scriptural doctrine, I was nevertheless shocked at this bold statement. So I began reading the letters to the editor in subsequent issues to see how members of the ALC would respond.

In the February 12, 1963 issue I noticed the following letter to the editor:

Re the letters on evolution (Jan. 15): many questions are answered in The New Geology and The Phantom of Organic Evolution by G. M. Price, and The Flood by Rehwinkel. Also I shall be most happy to correspond with anyone on this subject, as I have studied it for over 45 years.

*O. M. Erpenstein
Millbrae, Calif.*

The comments of this person, and also his offer to correspond with others on the question of creation vs. evolution, attracted my interest; and I responded immediately. The post office in Millbrae was actually able to locate the Erpenstein home even without a street address. (There were no zip codes in those days.)

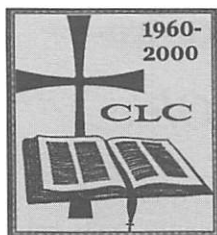
Mr. Erpenstein replied with a letter

dated February 16, in which he expressed his frustration with the liberalism of the ALC and his desire to learn more about the CLC, which I had alluded to in my letter. This led to my response of March 11, which included several publications of our church body, including the *CLC Directory*. He sent me another letter on March 24, in which he said that he desired to visit a CLC service—but regretted that it would be a bit hard for him and his wife to make it from Millbrae to the CLC church in Phoenix on a Sunday morning! (The *Directory* did not yet list the exploratory work being done by the CLC in Los Angeles.)

In my reply of April 2, I brought to Mr. Erpenstein's attention the name of Dr. Rodney Neubert, a member of the CLC who was then living with his family in the San Francisco area. (I had come to know Rodney as a fellow student at Immanuel Lutheran School in Mankato during the 1940s.) I also informed Dr. Neubert about the Erpensteins. From what I understand, the two families soon communicated with each other. And not long after that Pastor Winfred Schaller of Los Angeles conducted a worship service in the Erpenstein home. This was the beginning of the CLC's involvement in the San Francisco area.

In a letter to me dated September 15, 1965, Mr. Erpenstein commented about the remarkable way in which God had brought him and his wife into contact with the CLC. While they both have now been called home by the Lord, the Christian friendship that we shared together is something that I will cherish for the rest of my life!

From the Editor: See note in Announcements section.



Historical Markings

Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?

“ . . . In order to understand the reason for the formation of such a church body as the CLC and in order to be taking into account the Lord’s leading in the gathering of these confessional Christians, it will be necessary as well as salutary to study the story behind the story of the formal organization of the church body. This was not the culmination of a mass movement with the emotional overtones which often characterize people who join as followers of a cause which they often neither understand nor fully comprehend. It was a coming together of people and congregations that had come to their own individual convictions based on Scripture which moved them by God’s grace to take a stand which ultimately had led to a severance of former affiliations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. While some say that it was a wrong and separatistic spirit that caused the break; while others say that it was caused by men who had not been able to satisfy their ambitious spirits in their former church fellowship, witness is hereby borne to the fact that deviation from doctrine was the issue—specifically the doctrine of Church Fellowship. Indeed in the midst of the church bodies from which we separated, arguments were raised and official statements were made in defense of carrying on at least a measure of church fellowship with a body which had shown itself to be causing divisions and offenses contrary to God’s Word. It was recognized that such a stand would be in violation of and in disobedience to such passages of God’s Word as Romans 16:17,18. When it was recognized that the error was not just an incidental lapse but the firm stand of the bodies to which they belonged, then people and congregations here and there realized that this was a leaven which would work untold harm as time moved on. To them it was not just a matter of timing or of personal judgment but a matter of obedience to God’s Word to give their final admonition not by staying and being contaminated with the error but by severing fellowship in accordance with such passages as Romans 16:17,18 and II John 10:11.”

—from the 1978 essay ‘A HISTORY OF THE CLC’ (Prof. C. M. Gullerud)

TRAVELING VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (TVBS)—

Sharing the Gospel in Ohio

Pastor Mark Bernthal, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Saginaw, Mich. sent along the story below pertaining to the TVBS held in Bedford (suburb of Cleveland), Ohio last August 9-11 (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Mon. & Tues., 9:00 a.m. to noon, Wed.) — Editor

In mid-July Pastor Paul and Eileen Tiefel helped a group of students from TVBS hand out some 2,500 brochures. The students were Mark Tiefel, Deana and Dean Johannes, Dan Mielke, and Zach Franson. This same group went on to Rochester, N.Y. and handed out brochures there also.

The teaching team in August consisted of myself (gr. 6-8), Elizabeth Schrader (gr. 4-5), Sarah Noeldner (gr. 1-3), and Heather Oster (Pre-sch. & K). Paul Tiefel III was our recess coordinator, and all teachers helped with arts and crafts. One of our members from Gethsemane, Mrs. Brianne Lamblin, came along and helped with arts and crafts. Mrs. & Mrs. Paul

Tiefel, Sr., from Columbus, Ohio, helped in picking up students and setting out snacks, as well as with overall supervisory work. Mark Tiefel, from the Cleveland area, and Mr. & Mrs. Paul Tiefel, Sr. helped to get over 3,500 brochures as inserts in a local newspaper. They also found the building in which the sessions were held. The TVBS in Eau Claire, Wis. printed the brochures.

Daily sessions were held in the Ellenwood Recreation Center (a former grade school). We had a total of eighteen students—seventeen of them non-members, and all seventeen were African-Americans. Classes were well attended every day. We used the (CLC-produced) VBS series “All Power in Heaven and Earth.” Follow-up has been by letter from myself as pastor to every family. Lay-members Mr. & Mrs. Paul Tiefel, Sr. have made per-



Pastor Bernthal (right) with students and staff in the Bedford, Ohio Bible School last August.



It's craft-time in the Bedford Bible School.

Smiles prompted by the ideal weather—and the good news about Jesus!



sonal visits to those who were interested.

The visits have shown a real interest and desire for more outreach with the Gospel. We thank the Lord for this opportunity to bring the Gospel to these children in Cleveland and pray He opens the door to do more work in this area.

{From the Editor: According to further information recently received from Pastor Paul Tiefel, Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wis: "The pur-

pose of this program is to assist congregations which would otherwise be unable to conduct a VBS (due to size or age of members). The TVBS uses volunteers of post-confirmation through college-age and forms teams either to distribute flyers and help in other ways to prepare for VBS, or to conduct a week of VBS by teaching."

If you would like to be a part of the TVBS, your pastor could provide further information.}

The Power of Jesus:

- * to protect
- * to provide
- * to heal
- * over death
- * over evil spirits



Announcements

Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference
February 22-24, 2000
St. Stephen Lutheran Church
Hayward, Calif.

Agenda:

1. Encouragement for Discouraged Pastors — Pastor Rollin A. Reim
2. May We Agree in Principle, but Disagree in Application? — Pastor Bertram Naumann
3. How Can We Develop 'The Work of Evangelism' (2 Tim. 4:5)? — Pastor Robert List
4. Isagogics (essayist's choice) — Pastor Delwyn Maas
5. An exegetical Word Study regarding Baptism, Immersion — Pastor Terrel Kesterson
6. Continued Study of the Formula of Concord (Part II. Of Free Will) — Pastor John Cobb
7. Book Review: *What is Christianity and Other Essays* by Pieper — Pastor Warren Fanning
8. Book Review: *Structure of Lutheranism* by Elert — Pastor Horst Gutsche
9. Old Testament Exegesis (essayist's choice) — Pastor Paul Naumann
10. New Testament Exegesis (essayist's choice) — Pastor David Reim

Chaplain: Pastor Michael Sprengeler

Speaker: Pastor Paul Krause

—*Pastor Michael Sprengeler, Secretary*

Change In Service Schedule

Beginning March 5, Messiah Lutheran of Hales Corners, Wis. is going to two services, 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., with Sunday School and Bible Class at 9:15 a.m.

—*Pastor Michael Eichstadt*

Ladies Fellowship Luncheon June 21, 2000

The Ladies Fellowship Luncheon will be held at Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire. The theme of the event is "Teaching Children To Witness." You are invited to send suggestions and input to Evelyn Carlile, 2404 Tony Ct., Apt. 3,

Eau Claire WI 54701. Or e-mail to: ESCar1999@aol.com.

Installations

In accord with our usage and order, Heather Carstensen, who was called by Messiah Lutheran congregation of Hales Corners, Wis. to be teacher of grades 1-4 in its school, was installed on January 16, 2000.

—*Pastor Michael Eichstadt*

In accord with our usage and order, Timothy Holland, who was called by Rock of Ages Lutheran congregation of Jenison, Mich. to be its pastor, was installed on February 6, 2000.

—*Pastor Michael Eichstadt*

From the Editor

Endnote to Vignette #1—Subsequent to submitting the article as it appears on pp. 15-16, Prof. Kuehne passed along this additional information: "Oscar's faithful wife, Marie Erpenstein, died on November 16, 1992, after a lengthy illness. Oscar died on June 7, 1975."