

Lutheran Spokesman



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Reformation Devotion

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:36-41

And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!" And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kidron and executed them there. The Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain."

We are going to step back into the times of the prophet Elijah, as he commanded wicked King Ahab to call the entire nation of Israel to a convention on the slopes of Mt. Carmel. There Elijah would face them in the name of the true God and call the people of God back from Baal to the true and living God. It was one of the grandest sights this world has ever known: where one man stood alone against a whole kingdom; one prophet of the true God against 850 priests of Baal. There Elijah confessed his faith and led men

back to God. That was what we call a *Reformation*.

God has caused and brought about more than one Reformation in times past and may do so again. Whenever that happens, the same thing takes place. Let us use God's revealed explanation of one Reformation, and by comparing it with Luther's Reformation we shall come to see that all true Reformations are alike: first, in the task they must perform; and secondly, in the blessing that follows their success.

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First, what is a real Reformation for? Often men lose sight of the real purpose. A true Reformation is not brought about simply by fighting against false gods or false doctrines or their followers. At Carmel we note at once that Elijah's dealings are not with Ahab or with Jezebel or with Baal or with Baal's priests. They are all there, of course, but Elijah is not there for their sake. Elijah is not there just to finish an argument with the wicked king and queen or to convert them from their evil ways; he has a far higher, greater goal in sight.

This may be recognized in his prayer. "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O Lord, that this people may know that You are the Lord God--and that You have turned their hearts back to You again" (1 Kgs. 18:36-37). The mighty champion of the true God and the true religion had but a single purpose and a single call. His eyes were fixed upon the great multitude of poor, deceived people--that congregation of Israel

which had been so shamefully misled. Elijah knew that many of them had oppressed consciences; they knew very well that Ahab's god was a false one, yet they followed their king, for they had no one else to lead them.

It was for the people of God, straying like sheep without a shepherd, that Elijah had arranged this great demonstration. For their sake he asked God to perform a miracle, to send fire from heaven, so that lost souls might see the truth and their hearts be turned back. Elijah was engaged in a mighty move to work the salvation of souls, their rescue from great error. It was therefore no religious quarrel in which the prophet engaged. He did not fight the priests of Baal just for the love of fighting--but for the truth, that it might hold the upper hand, that error might be exposed and souls might be saved thereby.

That very same spirit is behind every true Reformation, as it was also in the days of Luther. To begin with, Luther thought not even of quarreling over religion with anyone. But Luther found himself face-to-face with the very conditions that had brought forth



Luther Memorial, Eisleben, Germany; translation: "God's Word is Luther's teaching; therefore this teaching will always be." (Photo by 2001 Tour group.)

Elijah. Luther's heart was moved and wrung with deepest pity when he discovered that Christian people were being so shamefully deceived. With restless, sin-burdened hearts they did as they were told, and in the ignorance of the real gospel of salvation by faith alone they were being driven into the arms of Satan.

To save these souls, Luther stood alone and proclaimed the Truth. That was all he did. That this caused great uproar was not Luther's fault; the old, evil Foe will not submit lightly when his prize is torn from his hands. Yet Luther simply worked to save.

There are those who say that we need a Reformation today. We hope they know what they are talking about. We agree that we need a Reformation, but that does not mean going out and preaching a gospel which suits everyone. It means to save people who have been misled from the Truth; it means to put the true Church back in front of the true altar. There is altogether too much preaching which instead of reforming is trying to make it easier for error to live. We need Reformation; our Lutheran Christians need to be called back from this idle, slipshod way into which they have drifted, where any kind of preaching is good enough, so long as nobody's feelings are hurt, preaching which tries to find something good in the teaching of those who hold to false doctrine. Reforming the Church is not trying to bring together all Lutherans, but to bring true Lutherans back to a sharp, clear stand on every doctrine and truth which Luther so gloriously set forth.

All true Reformations are alike. Let us remember that, lest we be led into thinking that the modern movement to

unite all churches is a Reformation. That is just the opposite of what Elijah and Luther accomplished, who saved men by separating them from the hand of the old, evil foe.

Elijah's great day was a complete success; the people recognized the truth so splendidly revealed. The people had turned, and what a change! Upon the drought God rains (v.41), for the people have turned! The land is made fruitful and green, for the people have turned!

So it was in the days of Luther also; the world seemed to blossom out into springtime; the dark ages were ended. The Pope was still there, but for the believers' sake the joy in heaven shed its warmth upon the Earth. Why not in our day, our unhappy day? We must bring men to turn back with their hearts to Luther's doctrine pure. That will bring rain.

(From a sermon by E. Schaller for Reformation Festival, 1944; submitted by staff-member Paul R. Koch)



Luther pulpit, Wittenberg

Truth and Consequences

Our Lord Jesus had no TV to watch the old program *Truth or Consequences*. But He did know all about truth and its consequences. St. John recorded His words: "If you abide in my Word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" (Jn. 8:32). Knowing Jesus as the Son of God--and His Word as truth--sets us free from the curse of sin and the power of Satan and death, and free to inherit eternal life.

Obviously, knowing Christ's truth has good consequences. Conversely, that which is not true results in bad consequences.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century was rooted in various attempts to clean up the church. Some of the bad consequences targeted were nepotism, simony, fornication, and more--all practiced by some clergy of the church, including bishops and popes.

But going after bad consequences is like trying to heal symptoms. The cause of the illness yet remains. Martin Luther and others changed the course of reforming efforts by attacking the bad ideas or false doctrines behind the bad consequences.

Hence the fix for gross immorality among the clergy was not more sincere vows and efforts to maintain celibacy. The real problem was the false idea--forbidding the clergy to marry. St. Paul clearly said this was a doctrine "of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Alas, the Church of Rome is still plagued with the bad consequences of this bad idea.

Another bad idea that Luther rejected was that the Bible is not the only source of and norm for Christian faith and life. It had been taught by the church that the Bible is not sufficient, is unclear, and that God's Word includes human traditions and the pronouncements of councils and popes. The bad consequences could be seen: clergy lording it over the laity, a two-tiered system of Christianity, and general corruption.

But the connection between the bad consequences and the false idea was

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not readily drawn by most. Luther drew it. If the Bible is unclear, then the average person shouldn't read it and couldn't understand it. If the Bible is also insufficient, then the church must interpret it and even supplement it.

Luther rejected both the false idea and its consequences. The Holy Spirit taught him that Holy Scripture is clear—a "lamp" and a "light," giving understanding to the simple. The Spirit taught Luther that the Scripture is sufficient and profitable for doctrine . . . for instruction in righteousness; that it contains all the sinner needs to know about

God and His salvation--making one wise through faith in Christ Jesus. Also rediscovered was the true doctrine of the kingly priesthood of all believers.

Truth has good consequences, even as a lie has bad ones.

The most important question then (and now) is "How is the sinner saved?" The Church of Rome then (and now) answered, "by grace and works." Instead of teaching that God graciously imputes Christ's righteousness to the sinner by faith, it was (and is) taught that sinners become righteous (saints) by the gradual transformation of their character and behavior.

The consequences of this false idea were (and are) both astounding and devastating. The benefits of Christ's atoning death are down-played and judged incomplete; the sinner becomes uncertain of his salvation; hope is pinned on human good works--and on

an imaginary place called purgatory.

Again--Luther connected the dots and aimed his reforming efforts at the false teaching! The clear, inspired Word of God taught him that "By grace you have been saved through faith . . ." (Eph. 2:8). Divine forgiveness and salvation are God's free gift, based on the completed, redemptive work of Christ, and received by faith in Him. Hence, the sinner can neither boast of his works nor should he be uncertain of his God-worked salvation.

Ideas have consequences. False ideas cover up the pure and saving Word of God and can lead to spiritual malaise and even death. But when a person abides in God's Word, then he knows the truth--and the truth liberates from bad consequences.

"Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word."

—Pastor David Fuerstenau



Changing For The Better (!)

"Change" might not be one of the words that would come to mind when we hear the name Martin Luther. Words like "strong" and "firm" and "solid" sound more fitting.

This is especially true when we think of Luther standing before that Diet at the city of Worms. There in no uncertain terms he refused to change his mind and take back all the things that he had written on matters relating to abuses in the Roman Catholic Church. His words were clear and unmistakable: "Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me! Amen."

But while Luther was unchangeable

in the stand he took on the Scriptures, no one was more familiar with change than he was. The very word we use to refer to his work—*reformation*—means "to change something for the better."

It is often said of us who bear Luther's name--and perhaps with more than a few grains of truth--that we tend to resist change; that we "stick with the old" and shun what is new and different just because that is what it is--new and different.

Does change have a place in our churches?

We are surrounded by churches



where change has become the norm. Services are held and attended for their entertainment value--with something always new and exciting and different. Change is seen as a good and necessary part of church work in our nation. Learning to be tolerant of what other faith groups do and teach is expected; incorporating other traditions and practices into one's own is encouraged. Those who take a stand on particular teachings--not to mention on the entirety of Scripture, as Luther did--are becoming the exception, not the rule.

But what about us? What about our congregations? What is our attitude toward change? I believe we can learn much by looking at what Luther did. He did not change for the sake of change. But if something was being taught or practiced which was unscriptural, or if something could be

improved on, he worked to change it.

Look, for example, at some of the things Luther faced in his day--things like serving bread without the wine to communicants; praising celibacy as being a much more holy and desirable state than marriage; printing the Bible only in Latin rather than in the language of the people; not having the laity participate in a worship service.

In such areas, and so many more, Luther went about evangelically instructing the people in the Scriptures. Thereby he slowly reformed the church of his day, changing it for the better.

Luther was no slave to change; he made change serve the furthering of the gospel. Change was made to give the Word of God its proper place.

In our day we have many new things at our fingertips, available at the click of a mouse--liturgies, hymns, prayers, Bible translations, to name a few.

We ask our Lord to help us learn to keep change in its place. Let's follow Luther's lead--never changing the Word of God itself, but using reform and change where it may be suitable and beneficial as we carry on our gospel ministry among ourselves and in the world at large.

—Pastor Paul Krause



A Reformation Message from our CLC President—

The Continuing Miracle Of The Gospel

On Hallowed Eve, the evening before All Saints Day, in 1517, a Catholic monk and priest named

Martin Luther nailed ninety-five sentences on the church door in the German city of Wittenberg. God used



this event to restore His saving gospel to the church and to the world. The Reformation was an event which has profoundly affected the world and the church to the present day.

The heart of the Reformation can be found in the little word "alone." The three great principles of the Reformation are *SOLA GRATIA, SOLA FIDE, SOLA SCRIPTURA*--BY GRACE ALONE, BY FAITH ALONE, BY SCRIPTURE ALONE. These three Reformation principles are reflected in that simple verse of the children's hymn "Jesus loves me, This I know, for the Bible tells me so." "Jesus loves me"--Grace Alone, "This I Know"--Faith Alone, and "For the Bible Tells Me So"--Scripture Alone.

There had been reformers leading up to Luther. Many individuals had exposed the immoral lives of the priests and bishops, the accumulation of wealth among the clergy, and misuse of political power in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. These reforms failed because they, without fail, attacked the symptoms of the problems without getting to the root cause of the spiritual problem. They attacked the immorality of the church, but they did not expose the loss of the gospel. The devil would love to have us concentrate our efforts on cosmetic reform and find outward solutions to our spiritual problems.

We must never forget that the

Reformation flowed out of one man's need and desire to find personal peace with his God. Luther became a monk and priest in the Catholic Church in a genuine effort to appease God and earn God's love and forgiveness. Luther gave up everything. He punished his body; he did extra works of satisfaction--all in an attempt to find a righteousness that God could and would accept. But the harder he tried, the further behind he found himself.

Luther did not set out to restore the Word of God in its truth and purity. Luther did not seek to reform the organized church. Luther sought assurance of a righteousness that would be acceptable to a holy and just God. He found what he needed in the gospel message of the free forgiveness of sins. Luther discovered by the power of the Holy Spirit that a just man lives by

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faith alone. As a lost and condemned sinner, he was led to believe that a person is saved by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Son of God.

Based on his personal faith-struggle, Luther got to the heart of the matter. He proclaimed the gospel (good news) of free forgiveness through Jesus' suffering and death. The gospel proved to be the power (dynamite) of God unto salvation for everyone who believes, for in the gospel is revealed

the righteousness of God from faith to faith. The gospel could not be silenced. Hungry souls, who had been fed a steady diet of law and works, were now fed with the living bread and living water of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The gospel is like the hub of a wheel. You can have all the spokes--the teachings of Scripture--but if there is no hub, the wheel cannot retain its shape and strength. As so often happens in the history of God's people, in the years after Luther the church had the outward forms of correct doctrine but was missing the power of the gospel itself. This is why the organized church and individuals are in constant need of reformation.

The Church of the Lutheran Confession was born not simply out of a desire to remain an orthodox (true-teaching) church. It was born out of a love for the gospel and the desire to proclaim that gospel to real sinners. The emphasis continually needs to be on the proclamation of the gospel to sinners who have been convicted of

their sins by a lawful preaching of the Law in all its convicting intensity. The preaching of the gospel permits no compromise of any of the teachings of God's holy Word. The gospel needs to be the hub of personal and church life. Everything flows out of gospel, which alone is able to change the hearts of men and provide what they need--peace with God through Jesus Christ.

On a personal level, like Luther, we need to seek peace with God. Only in Jesus Christ will we find real forgiveness and life. As forgiven sinners, we will be led to tell others about Jesus and His love. We have been given a great treasure in the gospel as members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. We admit--as we were reminded at our Convention--that we have this treasure in "pots of clay." This only serves to emphasize the miracle of the gospel and the grace of God. Let us celebrate the continuing miracle of the gospel this October 31.

—Pastor John Schierenbeck



CONVENTION ESSAY EXCERPT -- #1

[**Editor's note:** The theme of our Synod Convention last June was "*Jesus Christ — Our Cornerstone.*" Three essays were presented on aspects of this theme. While we hope our pastors and delegates have been sharing these essays with their congregations, it is our intention to print a few snippets from these essays here. The first essay (by Pastor Peter Reim, Prince of Peace, Loveland, Colorado, writing as though giving testimony before Emperor Charles V at Reformation time) was "*Jesus Christ — The Cornerstone of Our Faith.*" This particular excerpt treats the scriptural doctrine of justification.]

'The True Doctrine of Justification'

Just as a "cornerstone" offers a concrete metaphor for Christ, Christ Himself is the embodiment of the true

doctrine of justification. It is this atoning work of Christ, counted as righteousness before God on our behalf, that

is the cause and assurance of our justification before God, and thus, of our hope of salvation. We are justified by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, just as Peter teaches, when He quotes from Isaiah: "Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame'" (1 Pet. 2:6).

It is this article of justification through faith that we hold most dear, wherein we find that God graciously offers forgiveness and salvation, freely for the sake of Christ's completed work, to all who believe His word. "This doctrine is the head and the cornerstone. It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour . . . this is the heel of the Seed that opposes the old serpent and crushes its head" (*What Luther Says*, #2195).

Some will claim that a man is justified by his works; others, by the works God does in him. In the light of the clear scriptural teaching, both these views must be rejected. Only the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us for Christ's sake, avails before God. When Scripture speaks of Abraham, it states that his faith--acceptance and reliance on God's word of promise--"was accounted to him for righteousness." Paul then continues: "Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4:32-33).

Christ our Savior is indeed many things to the believer--a Helper, an Example, a Refuge, a Friend. He dwells in us, and we in Him as the

branch is in the Vine, but without a proper understanding of justification, He can be nothing to us at all. "The article of justification is the master and prince, the lord, the ruler, and the judge over all kinds of doctrines; it preserves and governs all church doctrine and raises up our conscience before God" (*WLS*, #2192).

The doctrine of justification, as we hold it, can easily be shown from Scripture. Some would say that justification refers to one becoming or being made righteous. But that is not how the holy writers speak. To justify means to 'declare righteous', or to 'acquit'. It is a forensic concept, as when a judge renders a verdict. "If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked . . ." (Deut. 25:1). One who justifies renders a favorable verdict, even when it favors those who are actually guilty: "He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD" (Prov. 17:15). Paul sees justification as God's non-guilty verdict ringing with finality, against which no accuser can further contend: "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies" (Rom. 8:33).

That this method of justifying the sinner for Christ's sake, apart from all works, is an act of God and not a process within the individual is brought out so forcefully that we wonder that anyone could read Paul and not join the apostle in saying: "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ . . . that I may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness . . . but that righteousness which is from God by faith" (Php. 3:8-9).●

Studies In Philippians

**“Rejoice in the Lord always.
Again I will say, rejoice!” (4:4)**

Chapter 2: 19-30

EPAPHRODITUS AND CHRISTIAN LOVE

Nearly two thousand years ago a certain writer made the following observation about the Christians of his day: "Behold," he said, "how they love one another!" In a dog-eat-dog world, where pride and selfishness reigned supreme, these Christian people were so different! They really and truly loved each other!

Our section from Philippians gives us a glimpse into the loving hearts of some of those early New Testament believers. It tells of a co-worker of Paul by the name of Epaphroditus.

Epaphroditus had been seriously ill. It looked like he would die. Paul had been concerned. He called Epaphroditus his "brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier." As they worked side by side in the service of Jesus, the Spirit created a deep bond of affection between the two.

But Paul wasn't the only one. Epaphroditus' Christian friends in Philippi had also been saddened to hear of his illness. Epaphroditus was their trusted messenger--their special gift sent to Rome to help Paul. They cherished him and longed to have him back by their side in Philippi.

Even Epaphroditus was distressed. He was distressed about the

Philippians' distress over him. He felt bad that they felt bad. What joy filled all concerned when our merciful God spared the life of Epaphroditus, enabling him to return to his dear friends in Philippi!

Now, why did the Holy Spirit cause this section about Epaphroditus to be recorded in our Bibles? The section has no real doctrinal significance. It contains no important information about our salvation. Why does the Spirit share with us the tender and personal feelings that Paul, the Philippians, and Epaphroditus had for each other? Certainly there is a message here for us.

Some Self-examination

Doesn't our Heavenly Father want you and me to ask if we love our fellow believers so tenderly and so strongly as did Paul and his friends? For example, do we truly strive to bear patiently with the weaknesses of our fellow saints? Do we conduct our church meetings with a humble willingness to listen to all sides? Are we careful to listen to our brothers before automatically labeling them as liberal or legalistic? Do we first speak privately to our fellow church member about his sin, or do we right away run to the pastor with all the

gruesome details? Do we pray for our pastor, or do we only criticize him in front of our children? Do we pastors show our people that we truly do care about them, or do we only complain about them to our wives?

Would a writer of today look at you and me and say, "Those Christians truly do love one another"?

Why did the Spirit cause these words from the second chapter of Philippians to be written? Is it not, first of all, to show us that we have sinned? Is it not to show us that we have not followed this shining portrait of Christian love which the Spirit has set before our eyes?

When we understand how often we have failed to love our fellow Christians, we are reminded of how desperately we need LOVE--we need the healing and saving love of God that we find in the cross of our dear Savior. In Jesus' cross we have God's love as a

free gift! We have love that has made up for all our lovelessness. None of our hateful words or thoughtless deeds can condemn us because Christ paid for them all with His sufferings and death!

Our unloving ways can't outdo or undo the great love God demonstrated to the world at Calvary!

This section from Philippians was also written as an example for us. God is pleased when we treat our believing brothers and sisters with Christ-like love. But here again we need God's love in Christ. Having true love for others is impossible unless God's love is also present within our hearts.

May the Spirit, through the gospel, cause us to love our fellow Christians deeply and fervently--as did Paul, as did Epaphroditus, as did the Philippians. "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

—Pastor Michael Wilke



THREE BASIC BIBLE TEACHINGS

The Christian religion is based on three teachings from Scripture: God's law, His gospel, and our renewed spiritual life--condemnation, justification, and sanctification. These three teachings are presented in the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer.

God did not give us ten suggestions or requests. He gave ten commands. They are like strict orders from your doctor: "Do this. Stop doing that. Eat this nourishing food and do not drink any of that. Obey my orders, and you will enjoy good health. Disobey, and

you will harm yourself."

In a similar manner, the Triune God gives these strict orders to every human: "Respectfully obey, love, and trust Me more than anything in the world. Do not misuse My name. Study and follow My Bible teachings. Respectfully obey your earthly authorities. Do not destroy human life. Do not destroy holy marriage or commit fornication. Do not steal. Do not tell lies. Do not desire what I have forbidden you to have. Obey these commands and enjoy a good life. Disobey, and you will experience grief."

It makes good sense to obey God's Ten Commandments. But our rebellious natures object, "Those commandments keep us from having any fun. God is not going to tell us what to do."

This rebellion against God started long ago when Adam and Eve disobeyed the Lord and became friends with the evil angel called Satan. As a result, all of Adam's descendants begin their earthly lives as slaves under Satan's control. Our God-given bodies are saturated with sin, and our God-given minds, emotions, and spirits are permeated with a devil-spirit called "The Old Adam."

This Old Adam in us never improves. Therefore every human, along with Satan, deserves eternal banishment from peaceful existence with God. He says, "Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity" (Luke 13:27). Nor can we rescue ourselves. No amount of "do-gooder" works can cleanse our sinfulness. Even the apostle Paul cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:23)

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Fortunately, the Bible teaches more than God's law. It also teaches that the Triune God mercifully rescued our human race from its sinful predicament. The Apostles' Creed presents this good news.

Its First Article teaches that our gracious, heavenly Father created everything out of nothing, during six days, by His all-powerful Word. In Him all of us creatures live, move, and enjoy our existence.

Our Father-God so deeply loved the rebellious human race that He sacrificed His only beloved Son as full payment for all our sins.

The Second Article teaches how God the Son paid for our sins. He became a sinless God-man when He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and was born from the Virgin Mary. This God-man was named "Jesus," which means "Savior." For the next thirty-three-and-a-half years, Jesus from Nazareth perfectly obeyed God's Ten Commandments. Our heavenly Father was well-pleased with Him.

Then, in order to rescue us, the Lord placed all our iniquities on Christ. God's sacrifice Lamb suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried in our stead. This sacrifice restored our peace with God.

After completing His rescue work, our Redeemer victoriously descended into hell, rose from the grave with a glorious body, and visibly ascended into heaven. Now our God-man Savior fully uses His power to direct and control everything in heaven and on earth for the benefit of us, His spiritual brothers and sisters.

On a certain day known only to God, Christ will visibly return to Earth, raise the dead, and separate all who believe in Him from those who do not. Rejectors of the Savior will be eternally lost. Those trusting in Jesus alone for remission of sins will enjoy heaven



forever.

The Third Article teaches that ability to trust Christ alone for remission of sins is a gift from God the Holy Spirit. Through His powerful gospel, He enables poor sinners to believe in the Savior, and through that same powerful gospel He keeps their Christian faith alive.

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Everyone who relies on Jesus alone for salvation becomes a new spiritual person. This new spiritual creature in us gratefully strives to run the way of God's commandments, though the Christian's "Old Adam" continues to war against God and His Ten Commandments.

Ability to lead God-reflecting lives (instead of devil-reflecting lives) comes only from the Lord. In the Lord's Prayer Jesus taught His followers to ask for this ability.

In this prayer Christians ask their heavenly Father for ability to respect everything the Bible teaches about Him, that He establish His kingdom in us and cause His beneficial will to be

done by us just as it is done in heaven.

We further ask that our Father give us, day after day, everything we need to exist here on earth, along with a grateful spirit for all that He provides, including unpleasant experiences that He knows are needful.

Because Jesus paid for our sin, we pray God to forgive our huge debt of trespasses we are committing against Him and our fellow humans. We ask that His forgiveness of our sins move us to sincerely forgive and promptly do good to all who trespass against us.

Finally, we ask that our heavenly Father lead us away from situations that tempt us to disobey His blessing-providing Ten Commandments, and that He deliver us from all the evil by taking us to heaven.

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In this way the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer present the three basic teachings of Christianity.

—Submitted by
Pastor Em. Robert Mackensen



SMORGASBORD

• ADULT INSTRUCTION COURSE/ BIBLE CLASS MANUALS

1) 'SHADOWS AND SUBSTANCE-- AN INDUCTIVE STUDY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS'

It was back a few years (cf. our issue of January 1998) that we reviewed on these pages Pastor John Schierenbeck's adult information manual and video. At the time the 82-page manual had 20 Lessons.

We have now been provided a copy of a newly revised version of the manu-

al. The revised version has grown to 100 pages. There had been 11 lessons from the Old Testament and 9 from the New in the first edition; now there are 12 lessons in each section for a total of 24. The chapter added to the Old Testament half expands the lesson on the Divided Kingdom; the three chapters added to the New Testament include one which expands on the life and ministry of Jesus; another which expands the story of the spread of the Word in the book of Acts; a final additional chapter treats the

life of Martin Luther.

Two helpful improvements have been added as well to the manual. The instructor's book has been correlated with Prof. Mike Sydow's *MARTIN LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM*, with catechism references added to each chapter. Also, a list of memory verses for each chapter has been added as an appendix to the book.

Pastors in particular may want to know that in the preface of the revised edition Pastor Schierenbeck suggests broader purposes for the manual. He writes: "This material has been put into a form designed for use in Adult Instruction Classes. It may also be used as a private individual study of the Bible. It could also easily be adapted for use in Sunday Bible Classes, Confirmation Classes, and Young Adult studies. A video tape presentation of the materials is also available through the author. The aim is to encourage you to read the Bible."

The author (recently elected as CLC President) concludes: "The key feature of this study is the emphasis on the personal reading of the material from the Bible before it is presented in class. The second feature is the inclusion of worksheets which are designed to be done at home by the student looking up Bible passages and answering the questions."

What we said in our original review of *"SHADOWS AND SUBSTANCE"* holds true today: "... This is no 'quickie' course toward membership in the church. Nor is that what we would want. The student(s) are expected to work right along with the presenter. Those who diligently do this, using either the manual and/or the video, following along in their Bibles, and reading the suggested supplementary home

SHADOWS AND SUBSTANCE

"The substance is of Christ" Colossians 2:17



Bible readings, will surely be blessed by the Spirit through the Word."

Order the materials from the author at JnSchbeck@aol.com, Pastor John Schierenbeck, 3015 Ave. K NW, Winter Haven, FL 33881. Or through the CLC Bookhouse at CLCbookhouse@ilc.edu, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701. Cost is \$8.00 per book, plus shipping.

2) 'LEARN FROM ME'

This adult instruction course--the title is based on Christ's invitation in Matthew 11:29--has not recently been mentioned on these pages. Pastor Bertram Naumann, retired and living in Puyallup, Wash., had prepared these materials during his active ministry. The material was also used, we recall, in the mission fields for a time.

A recent e-mail note to CLC clergy states that Pastor Naumann and his son Pastor Paul Naumann, Tacoma, Wash. have collaborated to streamline the course and to get it up on the CLC web page [[CLClutheran.org/Our Online Library/Learn From Me](http://CLClutheran.org/OurOnlineLibrary/LearnFromMe)]. An acknowledgement page is available and gives info one might use. To our pastors,

Pastor Naumann notes: "Permit me also to suggest that this review of Christian doctrine might fill the bill as you search for suitable fall Bible Class material. . . . While warning against many of Satan's snares, may this material also serve the greater purpose of helping you in leading many souls to saving faith in Jesus Christ."

The author is happy to provide this educational material practically free of charge. He explains: "I would consider, by request, putting the whole works on a CD for the cost of packaging and postage. At the bottom of the site, a zipped version of the whole course can be downloaded much faster. . . . For those who do not have Internet access I offer, as a retirement project, to copy these materials at cost for paper plus postage."

Retired Professor John Lau (who reviewed this course for the Board of Doctrine) made a number of helpful suggestions which were adopted in the latest revision. Prof. Lau has commented: "It is really good news that *Learn From Me* is once more available in its new and revised form. It is excellent material--as good as or better than most material of its kind. I hope that as many as possible of the CLC pastors and teachers will make good use of it."

E-mail to bertnalice@earthlink.net, or mail to the author at 9320 58th Ct. E, Puyallup, WA 98371; phone (253) 864-7983.

• CLCI VBS LETTER

The letter copied below, placed in our hands by a Board of Missions member, is from Pastor Jyothi Benjamin of the CLCI in India. It is addressed to the children of the CLC "who are truly making a difference with the gospel by

supporting the teaching of Christ in India!"

LETTER FOR THE CLC SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN:

Mark 10:14,16 "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them."

June 15, 2002

SOUTH INDIA

Dearly beloved Sunday-School children of the CLC-USA,

This is Pastor Jyothi Benjamin from India. Greetings to you all in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are thankful to you for your wonderful offerings for the purpose of the Indian CLC-VBS. The offerings, which you have been sending to our CLCI VBS purpose shows your wonderful Christian brotherly love toward our Indian CLC children. You know, greetings, gifts, prayers and letters from children like you would help our CLCI brethren to grow more in Christian faith and also to understand you all in good way. Even though we are separated by thousands of miles apart, we are brothers and sisters in our Lord Christ.

Many people think that VBS for children is a small thing to conduct. But we can see how our God of grace is interested even in small things. As you all know, VBS is one of the ways in which we can direct many children toward Christ. From 1993 onwards, we have been conducting this General VBS program with the wonderful support from the helping hands like you.

Singing songs, learning English hymns and proverbs, coloring of pictures, plays and dramas, acting, music--with all these the CLCI children have

been enjoying very much through these annual VBS programs. Quite a few Hindu children also have been participating in our CLCI VBS programs. Many have been laying their faith in our Lord Jesus. Through songs and scripture and a good word in season and with personal attention, and with your kind help, every year we have been trying to bring thousands of Indian children to Jesus. Through these children programs many elders also have been influencing and been inspiring to rest on the One who is "Mighty to save." Through these wonderful annual VBS programs, the Lord's Name has been glorifying here in this Indian land. At the end of the every annual VBS program, hundreds of our CLCI children come out in procession in the streets

with joyful singing to witness for the Lord. We have a few stops for preaching the Word and it is an inspiring time and people of all classes heard the message of salvation. Mean while we distribute hundreds of New Testaments of Telugu, English and in Hindi languages. All glory, laud and honor to Him alone!

We thank the respected CLC-USA partners who pray and support for this heart rending and soul touching VBS and giving financial support to this CLCI VBS. Please do not forget to uphold this CLCI VBS ministry by your prayers. The Lord shall be mindful of you and bless you.

We love you all in Jesus, Your Indian brother in Christ,

Pastor Jyothi Benjamin



Pastor Albert Sippert

January 17, 1908 - August 9, 2002

Albert Alfred Sippert was born in Bowdle, S.Dak. on January 17, 1908 to Gottlieb and Sophia. On May 31, 1908 Albert received rebirth into the family of God through Baptism's "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

To prepare His servant for the work of His kingdom, the Lord made use of institutions of Christian education. Albert graduated from high school at Dr. Martin Luther College of New Ulm, Minn. in 1927. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree at Northwestern College of Watertown, Wis. in 1931; he graduated from the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Thiensville, Wis. in 1934.

During twenty-five years in the



active parish ministry, Albert served congregations in Estelline and Dempster, S.Dak.; Carrington, N.Dak.; rural Kaukauna, Wis.; Pueblo, Colo.; Clear Lake and Hidewood Township, S.Dak. Following semi-retirement from the pastoral ministry in 1959, Albert served as a vacancy pastor in Austin, Minn. and as a supply pastor in Los Angeles, Calif.

In the years following his active

ministry, Albert pursued writing. He especially dedicated time and energy to the study of God's Creation. This study resulted in the publication of *From Eternity to Eternity*--a book which testifies to the wisdom and glory of God's creation while refuting false theories concerning the world's origins.

The Lord called His servant home on August 9, 2002. A service of triumph in Christ was held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minn. on August 14. The Word of God used as a basis for meditation and comfort was Exodus 20:11 and Hebrews 4:9-10, from which the listeners were led to consider: "The Eternal Sabbath of God's People is Glorious Rest." Interment was at Pilgrim's Rest Cemetery in Mankato.

Albert is survived by his wife, Evelyn; their four children—Paul Sippert and his wife, Beverly; Ruth Sibbet and her husband Steve; Nancy Bissett and her husband, Bill; and Carol Jackson. He is also survived by his eight grandchildren and sixteen great-grandchildren.

Words which Pastor Sippert wrote in a sermon based upon Psalm 23 serve

as a fitting epitaph upon the life of a servant in the gospel ministry, as well as being comforting words for all who still labor upon the earth:

"Though earthly death is the king of terrors to the unbelievers, it is not that to the Christian . . . What we call death is for the Christian only the entrance into a new and glorious life above. It is only a change for the better, a laying aside of mortality to put on immortality, a laying aside of imperfection to put on perfection, a laying aside of unrighteousness to put on righteousness, a laying aside of misery to put on Bliss Supernal . . . and after our Good Shepherd has led us safely through this life, we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever, where joys, pleasures, and bliss shall never cease . . . For all eternity we can enjoy the house of the Lord, the paradise of heaven, the Father's house with its many mansions."

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever!" (Ps. 23:6).

—Submitted by
Pastor Wayne Eichstadt



WE DECLARE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE ELCC (2002 Convention Resolution)*

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

"With all lowliness and gentleness"

It is a humbling experience to stand back and see God at work through His Word. With the 2002 Convention declaration of fellowship with the Eglise Luthérienne de Confession du Congo (Confessional Lutheran Church of the



Pastor Muzakusa (center, head of the ELCC) is flanked by Felix & Denis, preachers at the two Kinshasa congregations

Congo), we of the CLC are now co-workers with those of the ELCC under the Great Shepherd's guidance to spread the fragrance of salvation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

While the twenty-seven pastors serving 1,063 souls in the ELCC were not Lutheran in background, they--like us--in lowliness and meekness are studying the Word and in particular the catechism to know and confirm the faith delivered to the saints.

"With longsuffering, bearing with one another in love"

Pastor Muzakusa, the head of the ELCC, is lovingly leading his people out of Reformed errors to the truth as we have humbly known it for so long. He certainly requires our prayers as he works toward examinations for all pastors.

Since his church was founded on October 13, 1998 as the ELCC, the

work has been expanding: 1999--394 souls in ten congregations; 2001--589 in eighteen congregations; January 2002--980 in twenty-six congregations; May 2002--1063 in twenty-eight congregations.

"Endeavoring to keep . . ."

The eagerness for unity with a true-teaching church was evident in correspondence that began in 1998 from Pastor Muzakusa to the chairman of the Board of Missions, Pastor Bruce Naumann, and it continued with the missionary.

So far we have assisted this effort for unity with Bibles, catechisms, and other literature in English, French, Swahili, and Lingala. With the declaration of fellowship, this effort's increase needs our increased offerings to the Mission Development Fund (MDF).

Our unity with the ELCC is the Word--and their eagerness to continue in the Word and to spread it. This was confirmed in face-to-face meetings held in Kinshasa in May of both 2001 and 2002.

"Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"

Congo is a country torn by war, with rebel factions fighting each other as well as the central government in Kinshasa. It is also a country that has been dominated in religion by Roman



One of the Kinshasa congregations

Catholicism with its syncretism of native religion.

Into this treacherous situation comes our prayers for a "unity . . . peace" among our new brethren of the ELCC.

Our part also involves us in assisting the training of prospective as well as present pastors.

Pray for our Board of Missions and its subcommittees as we undertake this new work in lowliness and meekness under the guiding hand of Him who is the Head of the Church.

—*Missionary David Koenig reporting*

** At the June 2002 Synod Convention fellowship was declared with two overseas church bodies, the LCEA and the ELCC. A report on the LCEA appeared in last month's issue.*

Announcements

Installations

In accord with our usage and order, Michael Wilke, who was called by Gethsemane Lutheran Church of Saginaw, Michigan, to be its pastor, was installed on August 18, 2002. Assisting in the installation were Pastors Walter Schaller and Matthew Gurath.

—*Professor Michael Sydow*

Notice

Pastor John H. Johannes has retired from the public ministry.

Pastor Jay Hartmann has resigned from the public ministry for personal reasons.

—*Pastor John Schierenbeck*

President of the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Minnesota Pastoral Conference

Place: St. Paul's, Austin, Minn.

Dates: October 8-9, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Agenda:

- * New Testament Exegesis, 2 Thessalonians 2:13ff — Pastor David Schierenbeck
- * Old Testament Exegesis, Isaiah 40:9-14 — Pastor Norman Greve
- * Word Study of AIWN and the translations — Pastor Rick Grams
- * Study of 1 Corinthians 6:1-10 in our litigious society — Pastor Wayne Eichstadt
- * Historical Study of Luther's Life (essayist's choice) — Pastor Paul D. Nolting
- * Analysis of merger between AAL/LB and

effects on their spiritual policies — Pastor Theodore Barthels

—*Pastor Rick Grams, Secretary*

AREA REFORMATION SERVICE

Immanuel Lutheran Church of Mankato, Minnesota is hosting an area Reformation service on Sunday, November 3, at 4:00 p.m. This festival service will include adult and children choirs and be followed by a fellowship meal. All who are in the area on that day are invited to come and worship the Lord!

CLC Teachers Conference

Place: Faith Lutheran School, Markesan, Wisconsin
When: October 9-10, 2002

Agenda:

- * Professionalism in our Schools — Prof. Joseph Lau
- * Textbook Review, "The Shurley Method" (Language Arts) — Markesan Faculty
- * Teaching Patriotism Across the Curriculum — Sara Pfeiffer & Rachel Snell
- * Teaching Catechism in a Multi-grade Classroom — Kurt Koenig
- * Book Review: *Teaching with Love and Logic* by Jim Fay — Lane Fischer
- * Spiritual Edification: "When Doubts Arise — Burn Out or Bail Out?" — Douglas Libby

Conference Devotions — Seth Schaller

Communion Service Speaker — Pastor Keith Olmanson