

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

BUT WHEN JESUS SAW IT,
HE WAS GREATLY DISPLEASED AND SAID TO THEM,
"LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME,
AND DO NOT FORBID THEM; FOR OF SUCH
IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

MARK 10:14

*Ye parents, hear what Jesus taught
When little ones to Him were brought:
Forbid them not, but heed My plea
And suffer them to come to Me.
Obey your Lord and let His truth
Be taught your children in their youth
That they in church and school may dwell
And learn their Savior's praise to tell.
For if you love them as you ought,
To Christ your children will be brought.
If thus you place them in His care,
You and your household well shall fare.*

T.L.H 630

"When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10).

GENERATIONS

The above Bible passage is one that gives pause, causing one to ask himself: "Did that say what I think it said?"

Reading it again, you will find that it is a truly sad statement both about the generation that followed Joshua's death as well as about their parents. It's a frightening statement.

The passage prompts questions such as, "How did it happen that that generation did not know the LORD or what He had done?" "What did their parents teach them?" "Did the children listen?"

Now lets fast-forward to today. What about the generation to come? What about those little ones who can't look us straight in the eye? What are we teaching them? Can it be said firmly that our first goal is to teach them to know the LORD, or is our focus instead on preparing them first for this world?

If we don't teach our children, if we don't help them to know the LORD, who will?

When our first child was born, I remember being struck by the enormity of it all. I was struck by the fact that I was no longer merely responsible for myself—I was now responsible to God for another human being, and a tiny, helpless one at that!

Praise the LORD that He not only gives children but also that He graciously supplies parents with the tools to carry out this important task.

A Daunting Task

Christian Education may also seem a daunting task. Where do we begin?

When speaking of Christian education in the circles of conservative Lutheranism, many think of parochial grade schools, high schools, and colleges. However, Christian education begins at home when we bring our children to sit at Jesus' feet.

After all, if WE don't bring our children to Jesus, who will?

Our gracious Father has also established an extensive support network. Parents don't have to go it alone. Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, and Confirmation classes show that Christian education is valued by the congregation. In some cases, God has blessed congregations with Christian Day Schools. The purpose is NOT to take responsibility from parents, but rather to help parents teach their children to know the LORD.

I have occasionally heard it expressed that children who attend our Christian schools are at a disadvantage



compared to those who attend public school. In many cases the perceived disadvantage is related to sports or social interaction. I've even heard it suggested that students who attend Christian day schools aren't prepared for life as well as those who attend public schools.

Does a Christian education really prepare for life? Yes, and for more!

A Christian education is a Christ-centered education. The value of daily training in the Word of God cannot be overstated.

A Christian education teaches real values and morals according to the perfect standard of God's Word. Christian education recognizes that the gospel of Christ empowers students to know and

live for Christ.

A Christian education often favors students in a student-to-teacher ratio.

A Christian education prepares for life both in this world and in the world to come. It's not criticism but a fact: public schools train children for life in **THIS WORLD**, while Christian parents and Christian Day Schools endeavor to train children both for life in this world and, more importantly, for **ETERNAL LIFE** in the world to come.

God be praised for His Word, the basis for all Christian education!

May God grant us His grace that we prepare the generation to come, educating our children for Christ.

—*Pastor Andrew Schaller*



Back to School

This time of year, everything is "Back to School!" There are the back-to-school sales, back-to-school shopping with Mom, back-to-school haircuts; there are even back-to-school articles in the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

Martin Luther once said that "Well prayed is half studied." If this is true for studying for a test, it is most certainly true for a student who faces nine months of studying. Whatever your station—parent, teacher, or student—your list of things to pray for will surely include, among other things, the following.

Those returning as students will ask that the Lord not only bless their studies, but also that He bless their relationships with their fellow students and

with their teachers, that the environment would be conducive to learning. Those returning as teachers will pray for wisdom and patience as they feed the lambs of the Good Shepherd. In public schools the teachers may not be allowed to speak of that Shepherd, but they might pray that their teaching would be consistent with that of Scripture. Parents will pray that the children would apply themselves to their studies, as well as praying for the safety of the students both at school and traveling to and from.

Reading, writing, and arithmetic can prepare a person for life, but there is one thing that no secular education can teach, no matter how studious a student may be.

The School of the Holy Spirit

That, of course, is the way to eternal life, for this lesson is taught only in the school of the Holy Spirit, whose book of instruction is the Holy Scriptures, for what is taught in that book is taught "not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches" (1 Cor. 2:13).

Luther tells us that secular education is good, but it can never "thoroughly tell us what sin and righteousness are in the eyes of God, how we can get rid of sins, become pious and just before God, and pass from death into life. Wisdom divine and an art supreme are required for this, and one does not find them in the books of any jurist or worldly wise person, but in the Bible alone, which is the Holy Spirit's book" (St. Louis edition, 9, 1790).

As we return to school, we need to return also to the school of the Holy Spirit.

We trust that summer vacation did not lead to a vacation from God's Word; and the beginning of the school year brings with it additional opportunities to study that Word. Sunday



Schools, Confirmation Classes, Bible Classes, etc., (which have been on summer hiatus) begin again with the coming of Labor Day—which, when you think of it, is fitting, for the study of God's Word is the end of labor and is the beginning of a true Vacation!

Whether going back to school, sending our children back to school, or teaching our children, we all need to go back to school daily with the Word of God. That Word teaches the end of the Law as a means of salvation while it points to Jesus, the One who alone gives true rest from sin and death through the forgiveness of sins.

Pray that the Holy Spirit would bless all who attend His teachings in the Word.

—Pastor Joel Fleischer



God Will Never Forget You

I looked down at my watch one afternoon, and went into a minor panic—oh no, I forgot! The appointment I had made completely slipped my mind. Now I'd wasted someone else's time, and they must surely think I'm careless or rude.

We've all done this at one time or another, and it leads us to think of inventive reminders, so that it doesn't happen

again. Some use an appointment calendar; others have post-it notes stuck in various places. Nowadays there are all kinds of electronic devices that will beep at you to remind you where you need to be and when.

I've used all of these before, with varying success. But when I absolutely, positively **MUST** remember an important task or appointment, I don't trust

any of those methods. Instead, I go back to the fail-safe reminder system that I first used in junior high school. I write it on my hand. That never fails me, because you can't possibly forget something if it's right in front of you all the time.

Did you know that the Lord uses this same system when it comes to remembering you? He says, through the prophet Isaiah: "See, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands..." (Is. 49:16).

The prophet is using poetic language, of course, but the Lord's meaning is clear—"My children are so important to me that I will never, ever forget to help and defend them." Yes, those who know and trust in the Lord of the Bible are true VIPs—very important persons—to Him!

God was already busy remembering you when, in eternity, He looked ahead and saw you in need of a Savior. He made plans to fill this need by sending His own Son to become a man and to suffer and die as a ransom for your soul.

The Lord Jesus was remembering you when, from the cross, He prayed "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The Holy Spirit remembered you by bringing the good news of God's free grace to you in the Bible, so that you might put your trust in Jesus' goodness instead of your own.

Since you have been in God's heart, on His schedule—even engraved on the palms of His hands from the beginning—there will never be a reason to wonder, "Has God forgotten to help me in my trouble?" The Bible plainly says: "He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32)

So, what's your personal memory jogger? Pen and paper? A pocket organizer? A trusty spouse? Whatever it may be, be sure to remember this: God has written a note to Himself—on His hands, no less—to be sure to remember you.

So write this down today, if not on your hands, then surely on your heart: "The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Tim. 4:18).

—Pastor Bruce Naumann

(Written as a devotion for a local newspaper—ed.)



**June 5, 2005—
a day to throw
mortarboards
in Mankato
(see p.22)**

The Discourses of Christ

The Good Shepherd—John 10:1-6
Part One

“He Calls You By Name”

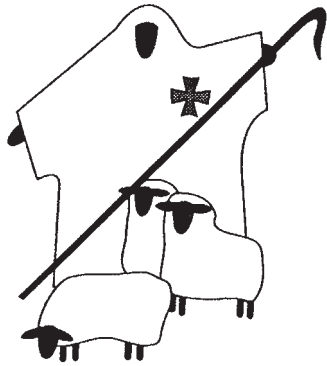
Do we not marvel at the thought that God takes notice of us and cares about us? "Who am I," we may ask, "that the Almighty should concern Himself with me?"

The psalmist David had similar thoughts. Even though he was king of Israel, he marveled that God kept track of his movements—even his thoughts—throughout each day. As a child of God, David drew comfort from this knowledge and said, "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" (Ps. 139:17)

As children of God through faith in Christ, we likewise take comfort in the assurance that God cares for each of us.

Jesus is careful to assure His disciples of His interest in each one of us. He tells us that He doesn't just think of us as a great multitude which no one can number. He thinks of us as individuals, knowing each one of us.

Jesus speaks of Himself and His relationship to us in terms of a shepherd and his flock. He is the true and rightful shepherd who enters the sheepfold by means of the door. He is not a thief or robber who sneaks in to harm the sheep. Day by day He comes into the sheepfold to lead His flock out to pasture so that they get the nourish-



ment they need. He is concerned not just for the flock as a whole but for each individual sheep.

Jesus brings home this point by a most touching detail in His illustration. He says of the true shepherd, "He calls his own sheep by name."

The sheep are not all alike to him. He notices which one is limping a little. He knows which ones tend to stray and need special watching. No matter how many sheep Jesus has, He doesn't get one confused with another. He knows their names and everything about them, and He deals with them according to their individual needs.

It is remarkable that we find such comfort in these words, for Jesus first spoke them to His enemies! This discourse of Jesus follows His healing of the man born blind—a miracle that

revealed the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees and their unfitness as teachers and leaders. They would not accept the miracle as a sign that Jesus is the Christ; they even tried to suppress the miracle by excommunicating the healed man for testifying that Jesus had healed him.

To convict them of their failure as spiritual leaders, Jesus used an illustration. Did they consider themselves shepherds of Israel? A true shepherd would enter the sheepfold by way of the door. The doorkeeper would recognize him and let him in. The sheep would recognize his voice and follow him. Only a thief or robber would sneak in by some other way.

The Pharisees had before them Jesus, who is the door. By repentance

and faith in Him they could have entered into a position of true spiritual leadership. They could have led the people to Christ.

Because of their blindness, the Pharisees did not understand what Jesus said to them. But those whose eyes Jesus has opened by the Holy Spirit do understand His words.

By the grace of God, we see that Jesus is the true Shepherd, we know His voice, and we follow Him. We see Him as the good Shepherd who gave His life for His sheep. We see Him as our Shepherd who loves us, who knows us well and cares for us according to our needs. He even calls us by name as He leads us safely to eternal life.

—Pastor John Klatt



SIGNS OF OUR TIMES

Eleventh in a series

**“Talking is sharing,
but listening is caring.”**

This is a very interesting church sign, in that it takes two very important aspects of the Christian's life on this Earth and his relationship with other people and positions them in such a way as to give one superiority over the other.

First, let us examine each of the activities mentioned.

"Talking is sharing." Obviously, this is referring not to all the chatter that fills the lives of people on this Earth, even the lives of Christians, but rather

to the speaking that was commanded by our Lord Jesus when He commissioned us to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19-20). And again when He said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15).

The best "talking" that a Christian can do is spreading the good news of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in heaven, which Jesus Christ gained

for us when He suffered and died on the cross in full payment for the sins of the whole world. This is the best kind of "sharing" that can be done on this Earth. And this was certainly part of what the apostle Paul was referring to when he wrote to Philemon, "I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ" (v. 6).

The other activity mentioned in the church sign is "listening."

The most important listening a Christian can do is listening to the Word of the Lord. "Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (Ps. 34:11). But this church sign is more likely referring to another kind of listening, namely, what we do when another person is trying to tell us something. Being a good listener is important in our dealings with our fellow Christians as well as with others in the world around us.

When a pastor carefully listens to the concerns, the fears, the doubts, or the worries of one of his parishioners, he can better understand and better apply the appropriate Word of God. The same holds true if we want to understand those outside our church.

How can we bring someone what he

needs from God's Word, if we don't know and understand how he thinks and what he believes?

You will notice that in discussing both of the activities mentioned in the church sign, we have ended up at the same place, namely, bringing God's Word to bear on the various situations in people's lives. Yet with the little word "but" the church sign makes the action of listening more important than the action of talking. If I say, "Vanilla ice cream is delicious, but chocolate chip ice cream has a combination of flavors," you will immediately understand me to be saying that the latter is better than the former.

Thus, following the lead of this modern world, the church sign subtly shifts the emphasis away from what our Lord Jesus told us to do to what the world has come to regard as more important. With this we cannot agree. While both listening to and speaking to our fellowman are important, we must come down on the side of speaking God's Word as the most important activity of the Christian.

Proclaiming the good news of salvation is not only "sharing." It is also the most "caring" thing that can be done, for no one can come to faith in Jesus unless he first hears the gospel. "So



Gerhardt & Bernice Mueller, Fond du Lac, Wis. had three granddaughters graduate from ILC, Eau Claire



Pastor Mark & Mrs. Barb Gullerud, Eau Claire, with two sons and ILC Pres. Pfeiffer (see p.20)

then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

The same holds true in counseling situations. While listening can give us a good grasp of the situation, speaking God's Word is the only thing that can really help the person. For example, if someone's life is filled with bitterness and hatred, he can be brought a Word of God such as this: "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in

Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:31-32).

When someone is full of doubts and fears, he can be comforted with God's Word: "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10). The list could go on and on.

So let us keep our priorities straight. God has promised to work through His Word that we speak.

—Gene Rutz



CROSS PURPOSES



"STRONG MARRIAGES KEY TO SOCIAL ILLS..."

"Duh," as the saying is. Is the above headline news? To some it apparently is.

This was the headline of an article in the *Caller-Times* February 12. The director of a local social organization (YOU) said, "There is a lot of research and studies that show healthy marriages are an indicator of children doing better." She also said, "We are not saying marriage. We are saying healthy marriages." The group's concern is the increase in motherhood among teenagers, the divorce rate, and families living in poverty.

The reference to the increase in teenage motherhood—no doubt unmarried teens—is indeed a concern for the Christian, beginning with the fact that sexual activity outside of marriage is sinful. It appears that not many in our society are concerned about sin, but

only about social consequences. The divorce rate is also a concern of Christians, not only because of the social consequence, but first of all because breaking a marriage is in principle a rejection of God's order concerning marriage—namely, that it is to be a union of one man and one woman so long as both shall live. Whatever lies behind the concern, there is no question that the price that society has paid is enormous.

The sad reality is that unless the core problem is addressed not much will change. The real answer to the problem does not lie in more social programs. We surely agree that healthy marriages are essential to addressing and alleviating social ills. But healthy marriages are not in themselves the answer, since what makes a healthy marriage is very



subjective. Furthermore, healthy marriages have also produced unhappy results that have contributed to the problem. We live in a sinful world!

So what is a healthy marriage, as Christ-believers define it? A healthy marriage is more than a materially successful union. It is more than being highly thought of and being a pillar in society. It is more than just getting along. A healthy marriage is one where the foundation is Christ, and where father, mother, and children have respect for the Word of God. A healthy marriage revolves around the Lord Jesus Christ as the focus of the family. Members of that family sit at the cross together in confession of their sin and with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ Who has taken away their sin.

A healthy marriage is one in which parents and children understand their responsibilities within their divinely assigned spheres. It manifests itself in mutual love and concern for one another with the common goal of seeking to glorify the Lord. Essential to a healthy marriage—and then to a functioning Christian family—is "submitting to one another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21). A family that understands Law (sin) and the Gospel (grace), and where each is applied, is one in which children will flourish, for they need to know the para-

meters of right and wrong, as well as the grace of forgiveness that is in Jesus.

When children see that their parents value and live by God's will, God will strengthen the family bond. Strong marriages established upon the sure and merciful Word of God are more than a key to curing social ills—they are essential to the spiritual life of everyone in the family; and indeed, without spiritual life grounded and rooted in Christ, social ills will continue to grow!

We are always amazed at how society arrives at the conclusion which Christ-believers have always known. But then we are not too hopeful that much will change in the world, for the article said, "The group is not defining the word marriage either." Therein lies one symptom of the problem that Jeremiah addressed when he said, "Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; then the LORD will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you" (Jer. 26:13).

Hear the Word of the Lord, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." That is the Heavenly Father's word to His children. He will bless in every way, including with a "healthy marriage," those who walk in His ways.

—*Pastor Daniel Fleischer*

(Pastor Fleischer serves Resurrection Lutheran Church, Corpus Christi, Texas)



The Christian Citizen

—Third in a Series—

MARRIAGE ISSUES: SAME SEX MARRIAGES?

You cannot improve upon perfection, can you? It simply cannot be done. After all, if something is perfect, it is beyond making better.

With God, however, even this is possible. He once did improve upon perfection. He created our world and pronounced it "very good." It met His exacting approval each step of the way and when His creating work was finished (Gen. 1:10,12,18,21,25,31).

Yet in the midst of all this perfection in the Garden of Eden, God noticed a lack and He declared, "It is not good that man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18), and He created Eve to be with Adam. It was in this way that marriage was begun, as God's idea—and as an improvement upon perfection.

God also defined marriage. This is completely natural and wholly proper since it came from Him. He said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). In addition, God has made it clear that this is to be a permanently binding union. "What God has joined together, let not man separate" (Mt. 19:6). The prophet Malachi could not have been more blunt when he reported the LORD God's words: "I hate divorce" (2:16). Marriage then—which comes from God for the blessing of humankind—is the life-long union of a man and a woman.

This pattern of marriage is for all people. God introduced marriage at the very beginning of the human race as a blessing for all people and as the source of many additional blessings. Chief among these blessings are the gifts of children, a close, intimate companionship, and an environment that makes chaste living possible. The apostle Paul even showed how marriage is a union suitable to illustrate the still more glorious and mysterious union between Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5).

How highly God thinks of marriage! In it, a love like unto His is to be shared and exchanged!

God protects marriage because it is so valuable. He forbids its desecration when He commands, "You shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14), and also commands that all people lead chaste and decent lives. Anything that tends to weaken, harm, pollute, or even mock marriage is therefore displeasing to God. Homosexual practices fall squarely in this category and are expressly condemned in numerous Scriptures. Consider God's statements in Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:24-27, and 1 Corinthians 6:9.

To a greater or lesser extent, governments and societies agree that marriage is important and worthy of their protection and promotion. They have long recognized that they have high

stakes in the preservation of marriage, for the family is widely acknowledged as the basic unit of society, and its strength is seen as important for the orderliness of society. Families are seen as sources of stability and security in society, and it is a fact that strong families pass on more effectively the values of society.

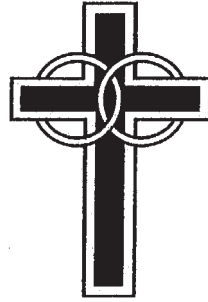
Because marriage is a universal institution found in every nation and culture on Earth, wide variations in marriage customs and regulations exist. Not all of these reflect God's high standards for marriage. Until our generation there has not been any question that marriage is restricted to the union of a man and a woman. Even where homosexuality was open and sanctioned (as in ancient Greece), these arrangements were not confused with marriage.

But now the issue of same sex marriage is before us.

Various "arguments" are used to promote this change in how marriage should be defined. As Christian citizens it is our duty to respond.

- "Same sex marriage is a basic civil right." Although race, for instance, is an innate, unchangeable characteristic and has no moral dimension, the same is not proven of sexual orientation.

- "There is no evidence that same sex marriage would otherwise affect the institution of marriage." But in



nations most friendly to the gay agenda, marriages have, in fact, suffered. For example, there is more illegitimacy; there are also fewer marriages and higher divorce rates.

- "Heterosexuals have botched marriage, so who are they to speak?" This does hit rather close to home, yet homosexuality in no way improves the situation.

- "This matter should be left to the states to decide." Imagine the confusion, legal and otherwise, if this idea is followed through.

As Christians and as citizens, we have a deep concern for marriage. As Christians we are convinced that the Creator of marriage knows best and has spoken on this matter.

As citizens we are concerned also about the effects that introducing this radical change would have on our society. We will also want to oppose measures that we are convinced harm our nation.

As we ponder all the questions that affect our nation, we will surely not wish to ignore the issue of gay marriage. We will also want to weigh this issue, along with many others, when we consider our support of candidates.

God is indeed able to improve on perfection, but when sinners oppose God's standards, they do so to their own peril!

—Pastor Norman Greve

"...Because marriage is a universal institution found in every nation and culture on Earth, wide variations in marriage customs and regulations exist. Not all of these reflect God's high standards for marriage."

The New Obedience

When we have religious discussions with friends, family, and co-workers, we may find that there is disagreement about what sin is. There is definitely a difference between the popular opinion of American society and God when it comes to a definition of what is right and wrong.

Even some in Christian churches may argue that such things as abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, and fornication are not sinful. That view is not shared by our holy God.

Consciences also may unnecessarily be burdened by elevating into law what God has not commanded. This occurred, for example, in the early New Testament Church as many Jews promoted a slavish adherence to the Old Testament ceremonial laws such as circumcision and the Sabbath.

Even today some church customs may wrongly be considered to be on an equal level with God's Law.

There are also times in which there is agreement about what God is saying in His Law and what good works are, but disagreement as to why we would want to obey God's commands. This has been a constant struggle from the days of Christ, through the age of the Apostles, in the Reformation era, and it continues in this present day.

It is crucial for us to know the "why" as well as the "what" when it comes to good works. This is the main thrust of Article VI of THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

Good works are also termed fruits of



faith. That which flows from faith in Jesus (Jn. 15:5, Heb. 11:6) and conforms to God's will (Gal. 5:22-23) is considered good in God's sight.

Both of those criteria must be true. Even when unbelievers are outwardly obeying the commandments, God is not pleased, for such works are not done in faith. Believers also must be taught through the Word what is good and acceptable in God's sight because they are not automatically aware of what pleases and what displeases God.

When it comes to good works, there are two extreme but equally wrong views. One view is to believe that good works are done to achieve favor with God and to merit salvation. (At the time of THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION this notion was very popular.) God is clear, however, that good works are the result of salvation, not the cause of it. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of

WE BELIEVE & CONFESS

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

A CONFESSION OF FAITH PRESENTED IN AUGSBURG
BY CERTAIN PRINCES AND CITIES TO HIS IMPERIAL
MAJESTY CHARLES V IN THE YEAR 1530

Psalm 119:46

*"I will also speak of thy testimonies before kings, and shall
not be put to shame."*

ARTICLES OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE

VI. The New Obedience

It is also taught among us that such faith should produce good fruits and good works and that we must do all such good works as God has commanded, but we should do them for God's sake and not place our trust in them as if thereby to merit favor before God. For we receive forgiveness of sin and righteousness through faith in Christ, as Christ Himself says, "So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants'" (Luke 17:10). The Fathers also teach thus, for Ambrose says, "It is ordained of God that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, and he shall have forgiveness of sins, not through works but through faith alone, without merit."

the law" (Rom. 3:28).

The other extreme disregards good works entirely. In battling one error it is easy to go overboard in the other direction. In our Scriptural stand against work-righteousness, we do well to be on guard against the despising of God's commandments.

Walking By The Spirit

Jesus freed us from the slavery of sin for a higher calling, which is to walk in the Spirit.

In Galatians 5 a sharp distinction is drawn between works of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit. "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past,

that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

Such works of the flesh do not accurately reflect who we are as believers in Christ. Walking in the ways of the sinful flesh is a contradiction to those who have been purchased by the blood of Jesus.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). This is what the Holy Spirit works in believers through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fruits of faith will not be produced if that faith is not watered and fed. When believers are connected to Christ—as a branch to a vine—then such works will follow.

The Lord makes it clear that we will never be saved by good works; instead, we plead the righteousness of Christ. In His righteousness alone do we find favor with God.

Nevertheless, we strive to follow all of our Savior's commands for His sake and for His honor. "If we live in the

Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25).

—Pastor Michael Schierenbeck



FROM A PASTOR'S DESK—

"Let the Buyer Beware!"

The TNIV (Today's New International Version) is a new Bible translation that claims to be conservative, faithful, and retaining masculine references to God the Father and God the Son while reflecting "gender sensitivity." (The TNIV New Testament was published in 2002; the whole translation will be available in 2005.) But "let the buyer beware!"

Consider the following comparisons. (The comparisons are made with the NIV to demonstrate the current TNIV changes.)

John 6:33

NIV — "For the bread of God is he

who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

TNIV — "*For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*"

The latter obscures or rejects the reference to Jesus.

1 Timothy 2:5

NIV — "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus . . ."

TNIV — "*For there is one God and one mediator between God and human beings, Christ Jesus, himself human.*"

The latter obscures Jesus' unique suitability for this role by no longer

From the Editor:

A brother pastor forwarded to us an article which he had composed for his congregation about a new Bible translation apparently soon to be marketed. Upon first look, we recommended that the good article—which included some original language references and/or technicalities—might be better suited for our CLC's *Journal of Theology*. However, when the article later arrived in a shortened and simplified version, it was decided to share it with our readers.

After all, it is to common folk such as you and me that the pull or pitch to purchase will doubtless be going out. Those of us who consider ourselves "verbal inspiration" people—Christians who believe that "all Scripture (every original word thereof!) is given by inspiration of God..." , 2 Timothy 3:16—will surely welcome general principles to be considered as we evaluate Bible translations for use in our private reading and study, as well as in our churches and schools.

So, fellow "verbal inspiration" Christians, carefully consider this "Buyer Beware" article.

using the same word "man" for Jesus and for the human race.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

NKJV — "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."

TNIV — "For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a human being. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."

The latter obscures Jesus' unique role parallel to Adam's as the Representative and Source of a new people of God. It was furthermore necessary for Jesus not only to become human but also a man.

Hebrews 2:6-7

NIV — "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor."

TNIV — "What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You made them a little lower than the angels; You crowned them with glory and honor."

Hebrews 2:6-7 is not just talking about humanity in general. The subject under discussion is Jesus' greatness. Psalm 8 is here quoted to prove the same.

Hebrews 2:8-9 continues: "You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a lit-



tle lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (NKJV). Notice that v.8 tells us that the words which the TNIV translates as referring to all human beings actually refer to Jesus as our Representative. Also, the TNIV (mis)translation of "Son of man" (Hebr. 2:6) removes the connection to Jesus.

Hebrews 2:17

NIV - "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people."

TNIV - "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people."

The TNIV argues that "brothers" here refers to the same group of people as it does in verses 11 and 12—both men and women who belong to God's family. But this undermines or distorts the Biblical teaching that Jesus took human flesh as a male to be the substitute in sin's punishment for all people, not just those in God's family. "Brothers" here refers to all people

with flesh and blood (v. 14) and all people in bondage (v. 15), both of which are closer references than vv. 11 and 12.

Speaking to our Culture...

The TNIV is certainly not the only new translation that is using this "gender neutral," "gender inclusive," or "gender sensitive" language. Most translations since 1985 reflect it in various degrees. Since this is occurring and the TNIV will certainly be promoted heavily this year, the TNIV examples are cited to reveal what distortions can be caused by such an approach. Remember this is happening even when the translators declare their commitment to the inspiration of Scripture, the masculine person of Christ our Redeemer, and faithfulness in translating.

Other groups besides those translating the TNIV are actually seeking to eliminate the use of any nouns and pronouns that can have a masculine sense in a generic sense (that is—referring to the whole human race, all individuals within it, or a subgroup of it); they also seek to remove any masculine language for God (including "King" and "Father") and to remove references to Jesus Christ as male (even the use of masculine pronouns referring to Him).

Words such as "man," "mankind," "he," and "him" (and their counterparts in other languages) have been understood and accepted in a generic sense—that is, referring to the whole human race, all individuals within it, or a subgroup of it—for more than 6000 years. For example: "Jesus died for all men," or "If a man opens his eyes, he will see." Under charges of patriarchal sexism, the politically correct movement in our country in the last decades

has attempted to eliminate the generic use of nouns and pronouns that otherwise have a masculine sense. So it becomes: "If a person opens their eyes, they will see."

Language does change, and we need to speak the gospel in a manner that people will understand. However, if the actual message of God's Word would be obscured or forsaken by such a change, then we must be faithful to the Word.

There are many other scriptural concepts which are often not understood by many people in common English usage—for example: sinful, justification, inspiration, Trinity, baptism, and others. The idea that all Bible teaching should be immediately obvious to any casual visitor who does not have a scriptural background can often force that teaching to become trite platitudes—with an abandoning of the very substance of law and gospel itself!

There is value in learning to speak to our culture in a gender inclusive manner, as when it is said: "Jesus died for all people." There is also essential value in lovingly teaching our children and our culture that generic nouns and pronouns are used in Scripture referring to the whole race without any sexual prejudice, as: "Jesus died for all men."

For us the Bible is the ultimate rule of faith and life. For us political correctness does not determine what the Word of God says. If man changes the meaning of God's Word in Bible translations in order to fit his own ideas, the result is setting man above God. Looking at it another way, if man charges God with sexual prejudice, that is blasphemy.

A translation should be accurate, consistent, and trustworthy to God's

own Word ("Thus saith the LORD!"). In addition: "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it"

(Luke 11:28)!

—Pastor John Ude (soon to be installed as professor at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin)



Fourteen Bible-centered devotions for the person who wants to know more about God and life with God.

#8: What is your religion?

When a passing acquaintance asked me, "What church do you belong to?" I answered, "I could tell you that, but it's more important that my religion is the same as God's religion."

Dear friend, isn't it important for you also to have the same religion as God's? True religion certainly must come from God. What good is a religion that God has not sponsored, a religion that He does not bless? (It would be a false religion.)

What, then, IS God's religion?

The Bible gives us the answer, and in a few minutes we can learn much about God's religion. In John 3:16 He tells us the grand plan of His religion: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

"But what about good deeds?" someone may ask. Shouldn't God pay attention to good deeds and decent living? Well, God is not impressed with the "goodness" of sinners.

Realizing the awful truth about our sinfulness is the first step of true religion: "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the

deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19-20).

Here we see the superiority of God's religion, in that He bypasses our good deeds as well as our sins and brings us His own, saving solution: "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed...even the righteousness of God which is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:21-24).

God has given you a Savior, and you are saved NOW and forever through Jesus! Once a prison warden asked, "What must I do to be saved?" and the Apostle Paul directed him to the salvation provided by God in His own true religion: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:30-31).

That's God's religion, and it's my religion. The Lord urges you to depend on Jesus your Savior as your religion. God bless you in this true religion!

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

—Paul R. Koch

—The Bread of Life—
Daily Bible readings for home devotions
September, 2005

Date	Joshua	A leading thought on the reading	Hymn
1	20:1-9	Cities of refuge from the avenger of blood	483,2
2	21:1-19	The clergy shared everyone else's portion	483,3
3	21:43-45	Safe at home! Safe at last!	319,3

Joshua's work now ended, there remained one final test: Would Israel remain faithful to their God? As the storm clouds of pride gathered, Joshua's motto should have carried the day: "Serve the Lord!"

4	22:1-9	Two-and-a-half tribes get the TransJordan	464,1-2
5	22:10-34	Not treachery, but to bear witness	464,5
6	23:1-13	Therefore take heed...or else...	393,1
7	23:14-16	The Lord has not failed...but you have...	393,2
8	24:1-13	The Lord's personal affidavit of support	393,3
9	24:14-21	Choose for yourselves this day...	393,4-5
10	24:22-28	You are witnesses that you have chosen	393,6
11	24:29-33	The passing of a blessed era	396,1-6

In the book of Joshua we saw a) that idolatry had infected Israel, and b) its possession of Canaan was dependent on faithfulness to Jehovah. In Judges c) the unchanging faithfulness and steadfast love of Jehovah stand out. These three facts form the subject matter of Israel's history during the military service of God's chosen judges.

12	Judges 1:1-21	First successes, then a sour note	607,1-6
13	1:22-36	More sour notes than successes	607,7-9
14	2:1-15	The next generation lost its inheritance	607,10-15
15	2:16-23	The test of obedience or of folly	607,16-19
16	5:1-31	We get the whole story in a folk-song	611,1-3
17	6:11-18	Humble Gideon was interviewed by Jehovah	34,1-2
18	6:19-32	Gideon's father put it on the line	34,3
19	6:33-40	Careful Gideon received special support	34,4
20	7:1-25	Into the valley went the three-hundred	262,1-4
21	13:1-25	A special Nazirite for God's people	26,1-3
22	14:1-9	A marriage made not in heaven but on Earth	31,1-3
23	14:10-20	Their friends were no help, either	624,1-2
24	15:1-8	An angry Samson was not to be trifled with	624,3-4
25	15:9-20	Who needs enemies with friends like these?	655
26	16:1-20	Dallying with Delilah, a dangerous game	258,1-3
27	16:21-31	Strengthened for one last dying effort	259
28	17:1-13	A sampling of self-styled "religion"	269,1-3
29	18:18-31	How bad can it get for "religious" folks?	269,4-5
30	21:16-25	Everyone did what was right in his own eyes	37



From the back row (still)



Why not use your favorite desk for a graduation photo?!!

Another spring Class Day (May 20) and Concert have come and gone, another graduation day (May 21) at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, has passed into history—and someone might venture a ho-hum.

BUT (also nevertheless and on the contrary) the bar has been raised a notch this time around. Some who raised it a bit were those who put together a movie (not a montage! not a skit! a movie!) featuring student conspirators and faculty colleagues presented in honor of Prof. David Lau. That alone cut a big notch in the uprights of Class Day activities, when awards are bestowed on meriting scholars, athletes, and such.

Others who helped raise the bar were heard at the closing Concert on Friday evening under the theme of Praises: "Yet You are HOLY, enthroned in the Praises of Israel" (Ps. 22:3). While Alleluias set ears tingling and heart ringing, the audience was elevated by Hebrew-sounding melodies together with more familiar refrains and chorales ranging from somber to lilting.

At the Saturday morning graduation exercises, ILC Pres. John Pfeiffer raised our sights to the Word of the Lord recorded in Joshua 1:1-9 and brought us to recognize that our territory lies before



Sem grad Caleb with his parents, Pastor Walter & Mrs. Kathy Schaller

us, that our God promises with compassion to be our Helper, and that He will bless us with good success as we observe His will and follow His Word.

Then came the graduates onto and across the stage, leading with the presentation of Seminary graduate Caleb Schaller to the Church (see photo). Among the nine college graduates, Michael Gurath and Aaron Ude plan to enter the Seminary department of ILC next fall; Heidi Aymond and Ryan Hammett have already received calls into the teaching ministry. It was also announced that former graduate Heather Carstensen (currently teaching at Messiah School of Hales Corners, Wis.) has completed her ILC courses for CLC teacher certification.

Thirty-five young persons were graduated from our high school department,

and we pray them God-speed in their faith-living activities as they travel home to Washington and California, Kentucky and various Mid-Western states.

God be with you, young Christians, as you go forward to serve your Savior! Press forward toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Php. 3:14)!

Retirement fete for Professor David Lau

Anyone who knows this man will understand that such a glorious and spectacular fuss made over him could be—well, sort of embarrassing. He was given an honored spot for viewing the student-produced movie featuring himself as "The Archivist" on Class Day, he received the thanks accompanying an award plaque presented during the Closing Concert, then he was honored at the evening reception in the cafeteria for more congratulations. Yet he handled it with aplomb, and we all felt as he did—that to God alone go the praise and glory for whatever benefits the Church has received from the faithful service of David Lau.

The plaque he received is inscribed: "Presented to Professor David Lau in recognition of faithful and dedicated service to the Lord and to His Church as Professor of Theology, ILC, 1991-2005."

He has now retired from fifteen years as Professor of Theology in the Seminary department of ILC. However, after forty-five years of service to the Church, on June 12 he will/has become full-time pastor of



Prof. Lau (r.) receives an inscribed plaque from Pres. Pfeiffer.

Peace with God Lutheran Church of Onalaska, Wis.

Pastor/professor Lau's record includes the following: after completing his seminary training (class of 1960) at Mequon, Wis., he pastored in CLC congregations in Milwaukee ('60-'66); in Bowdle, S.D. ('66-'72); in Okabena, Minn. ('72-'75); in Red Wing, Minn. ('75-'82); and in Eau Claire, Wis. ('82-'91).

He has served as professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire from 1991 to 2005.

David and Sue were married on June 3, 1960 and have been blessed with five children (Jim, Anne, Joe, Nathan, and Sarah) and many grandchildren.

David and Sue are residing at 2612 Beverly Hills Drive, Eau Claire, Wis. 54701. May the Lord bless them in their semi-retirement with His continuing grace and mercies!

—Paul R. Koch, reporter



Prof. Lau installed as pastor in Onalaska. (l-r) Paul Gurgel, Gordon Radtke, Mike Sydow

Graduation—Immanuel, Mankato

In a worship service on June 5, Immanuel Lutheran High School, Mankato, Minnesota, graduated seven seniors: Peter Busse, Yusef Haddad, Alex Hanel, Sarah Naumann, Paul Nolting, Daniel Pfeiffer, and Rebecca Redlin.

Thanksgiving resounded heavenward as the assembly joined in the responsive reading of Psalm 100 and the singing of "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty!" "Be thankful to [the LORD], and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations" (Ps. 100:4-5).

Thanksgiving was given to the Lord for blessing the graduates with great gifts and the spirit to use them faithfully. All seven graduates graduated with honor (GPA 3.0+), high honor (3.4+), or highest honor (3.9+).

Thanksgiving was the theme as class Valedictorian, Sarah Naumann, spoke on behalf of the graduates. The class expressed thanksgiving to parents, teachers, and the members of Immanuel congregation, all of whom the Lord used to provide a Christian education for them.

Future planning requires the counsel and direction of God's Word. Service speaker Pastor Emeritus L.D. Redlin led the graduates to consider their futures by asking the question very much on their minds: "What Shall I do with My Life?" The answer was found in the text of the address: "You are not your own. For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19b-20). We are ransomed souls. Our lives have been



ILHS Mankato Grads

redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and we belong to Him. Therefore, the proper question is not, "What shall I do with my life?" but rather, "How will I glorify God with the life He has given me?"

Pastor Redlin offered three scriptural truths for the graduates to remember as they seek to glorify God with the lives He has given: 1) In all your ways acknowledge the LORD and He will direct your paths (Proverbs 3:5b-6); 2) The fear of the Lord is wisdom (Job 28:28); and 3) You cannot serve God and mammon (Matthew 6:24).

The graduates confessed their confidence in the Lord's guidance and blessing for their lives as they sang their class hymn: "You are My All in All." The Immanuel Grade School and the High School choirs also presented God's Word in song during the service.

With thankful hearts encouraged by God's Word, the assembly and graduates joined to sing the prayer:

Take my life and let it be,
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise!

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all, for Thee.
[TLH #400, WS2000 #786]

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt

EXPANDING!

Peace Thru Christ (Middleton, Wis.) is expanding! We are building a 2,200 sq. foot addition. It includes a kitchen, fellowship hall, two bathrooms, and school-room. Presently we house our Christian Day School in the entry area of the church. We expect nine students this fall (our fifth year of existence). Our members have done the hanging of the dry wall and the painting, staining, flooring, cabinetry, and final landscaping.

—Pastor Mark Bernthal



The *Lutheran Spokesman* invites all CLC congregations to submit pictures of their Sunday School. This picture shows Sunday School children of Luther Memorial congregation, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Announcements

Great Lakes Pastoral Conference
Immanuel Lutheran College
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
September 20-22, 2005

Agenda:

- + Old Testament Exegesis of Daniel 1:1ff—
Professor Michael Sydow
- + New Testament Exegesis of Romans
1:26ff—Pastor Michael Wilke
- + Homiletics: How to prepare and preach from
an outline—Pastor Paul Tiefel
- + Luther 1517-1530—especially reviewing
what happened on October 31, 1517 and in
Worms—Pastor David Baker
- + Is the "chastening" of the Lord a means of
strengthening faith? (Hebrews 12:3-11)—
Pastor Philip Matzke
- + Are there prerequisites for adult baptism?—
Pastor Mark Gullerud
- + Nurturing a spirit of community within the
congregation—Pastor Walter Schaller
- + An outline or two for home-visit topics—
Pastor Mark Bernthal
- + Book Review—Pastor Kevin McKenney
- Chaplain: Pastor Michael Schierenbeck
- Communion Service Speaker: Pastor Joel
Fleischer

—Pastor Mark Gullerud, *Chairman*

Installation

In accord with our usage and order, David Lau, who was called by Peace with God Ev. Lutheran Church, Onalaska, Wis., to be its pastor, was installed on June 12, 2005.

—Rev. Paul R. Gurgel

Installation

In accord with our usage and order, John Hein, who was called by Grace Ev. Lutheran Church, Fridley, Minn., to be its pastor, was installed on June 26, 2005. Assisting were Pastors Joel Fleischer, David Schierenbeck, Bruce Naumann, Elton Hallauer, and president of the congregation, Paul Lentz.

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer

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