

Lutheran Spokesman

Tho' devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill, They shall not overpow'r us.
This world's prince may still Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none, He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him. *TLH 262 ver. 3*

Martin Luther – Defender of the Faith and Lover of Souls

We all know Martin Luther, the strong defender of the faith, who stood firm on the Word of God without budging, even when his life was at risk. We know well the courageous man who stood in front of the emperor at the Diet of Worms and said, “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by clear reason, I cannot and will not recant, for it is neither safe nor right to act against one’s conscience. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen.”

We all have been instructed and inspired by Luther to know that nothing is more precious in all the world than the Word of God. Luther has shown us from God’s Word that we are to stand firm on that Word at all cost, being ready and willing even to forsake the security and friendship of former fellowships rather than compromise the Word of God in one point (Rom.

16:17). Scripture teaches that we are not even to love family above God and His Word (Mt. 10:38).

It has been a very valuable lesson and a great blessing to follow Luther as defenders of the faith—especially in our day when there are innumerable attacks on God’s Word (which are all, in the end, attacks on the gospel itself). If our forefathers and we had not stood strong and defended the faith as Luther did and as God instructs, then we could well be in the same boat as much of Christianity today—sinking with a gospel robbed of its power to save.

We do not want to forget Luther, the defender of the faith, but follow his example. There is far too much at stake! However, this Reformation let us also remember Luther as a lover of souls.

When we have been struggling and fighting for a long time to preserve the

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Editor: Paul Fleischer, 1741 E. 22nd Street, Cheyenne, WY 82001-4138, E-Mail to paulgf@qwest.net; Assistant Editor: Paul R. Koch; Artists: John Fox, Matthew Schaser; Staff: Theodore Barthels, David Bernthal, Wayne Eichstadt, Warren Fanning, Daniel Fleischer, Joel Fleischer, David Fuerstenau, Mark Gullerud, Roland H. Gurgel, John Klatt, Paul Krause, Joseph Lau, Paul D. Nolting, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Peter Reim, Andrew Schaller, Michael Schierenbeck.

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gospel in our midst, it is easy to become hardened and calloused to people's needs. We could perhaps take on a battle mentality so that we lose the love and compassion for souls that Jesus had and teaches us to emulate. Or out of fear, we may strike out at everything and everyone that doesn't do everything the way we do. Perhaps we begin to equate defending the faith with holding on to our traditions and our forms and practices. Perhaps we fear that any change in our form of worship or our way of doing things is loosening our grip on the truth. We may even begin to look at people in other churches as being "bad guys" that need to be avoided, rather than as souls who desperately need to hear the Word we have to give.

A Genuine Love for Souls

Luther was in the midst of a most fierce and dangerous battle for the Word of God; quite amazingly, however, by God's grace he did not succumb to these temptations. The love of God which made him willing to stand firm—and even suffer death rather than to give up any part of God's Word—also filled him with a genuine love for

souls; this made him eager to use the Word of God to help and heal, to love and give salvation to all.

Even though the Roman Catholic Church declared Luther a heretic and wanted to kill him, Luther and the other reformers still used every opportunity to teach God's Word. At great risk to themselves, the reformers—and princes with Luther's support—wrote and presented the Augsburg Confession to try to restore the unity, or at least to lead some to know and follow God's truth.

God's love for souls permeated Luther's life. His home was open to anyone and everyone, friends and strangers alike. He used the time around the table to teach God's Word to all who were there. In many letters, as well as in his preaching and teaching, Luther used the Word of God to comfort and instruct.

May we always remember Luther the defender of the faith, for Jesus teaches us to treasure His word and not give up even one word. God's Word is our life and salvation. However, let's make sure our orthodoxy is based on God's Word and not on our traditions and forms of practice.

May we also never forget Luther as a lover of souls. May God's Word and His great love for us instill in us a genuine love for souls so that we see all people, whether friend or "foe," as souls bought by the blood of Christ, our Lord. May we use every opportunity to reach out and share the love and grace of God. In this way, we will always reflect the spirit of the Reformation and the spirit of the Scriptures.

—Pastor David Reim

Lessons From a Hollowed-out Bible (!)

As we grow up in a church that holds firmly to God's Word and seeks to avoid any teaching or teacher that is contrary to that Word, we may take this fact for granted—God establishes His Church through His Word.

Where that Word is preached, there will be believers—whether that Word is preached in a Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist or other “Christian” church—as God Himself promises through the prophet Isaiah, “...as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Is. 55:10f).

Once upon a time, the word *Lutheran* was identified with the term *scriptural*. “Lutherans” were known for taking the Bible literally and for preaching salvation by Scripture Alone, by Grace Alone, by Faith Alone!

I hope this is how people identify our church body, the Church of the Lutheran Confession today—as a church which follows God's Word without question, standing firmly on the Lutheran Confessions (which themselves are founded on the Word of God).

Sad to say, the Lutheran Church as a whole isn't what it used to be. The other day I was looking at a website called eBay. eBay is a website on the Internet that people use to auction off a



variety of things. As I was looking for Lutheran materials, I came across an auction offering a 1746 German Lutheran Bible with a price tag of hundreds of dollars.

I clicked on the auction and up came a picture of a very nice looking book with a heavy leather cover and gilded edges. However, as I scrolled down the page I was soon disappointed; sometime over the last few hundred years, a previous owner had glued all of the pages together and hollowed out the book. This person had done a very nice job. From the outside you couldn't tell that it was not a real book. Inside, the hollowed space had squared edges and was covered with velvet—just perfect for hiding valuables!

“Lutheran”?!

As I sat looking at the pictures of this hollowed-out Bible, I thought of how it depicts so many churches today, especially the majority of the so-called Lutheran churches. On the outside is the name “Lutheran.” The cover looks nice, but when you investigate further,

you find that the pages of Holy Scripture have been hollowed out and filled instead with the things of this world.

How can such churches even call themselves “Lutheran”? They claim to follow the teachings of the Reformer, but at the same time, the mainline Lutheran church—the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)—apologizes every year to the Roman Catholic Church for the teachings of Martin Luther.

Most Lutheran churches today laud and honor Martin Luther, while at the same time seeking unity with churches that obviously teach differently than Holy Scripture.

Many Lutheran and other “Christian” churches of our day deny that the Bible is the Word of God in its entirety; they question whether or not Jesus is really the only way to heaven; many teach that sinners can contribute to their salvation by good works; many deny such basic Bible doctrines as the Trinity, the existence of hell, the atonement and bodily resurrection of Christ Jesus.

I’m confident that you, our *Spokesman* readers, are equipped to mark such false teachings, for you are armed with Holy Scripture. With Bible in hand and heart, we hold our teachers to God’s Word, seeking to avoid religious fellowship with all who contradict that Word.

I’m also confident that we do not desire to pat ourselves—or even Martin Luther—on the back. Rather, we give thanks to God that He has preserved His gospel teaching to this present day through His servant Luther and through the church that bears his name.

We read the *Lutheran Spokesman* chiefly so that we may hear more of

God’s free gift, His Son Jesus Christ, by whom we are assured of everlasting life—Jesus has paid for our sins! There is nothing left to be done! Salvation is ours through His saving work on the cross! That is what we believe—and what we proclaim—from Holy Scripture.

May the Church of the Lutheran Confession ever be a group of believers who—like prophets of the Lord such as Samuel and reformers like Martin Luther—are recognized as those who boldly proclaim the pure Word of the Lord.

As we observe churches, even “Lutheran” churches of our day, hollowing out the Bible, putting emphasis on good works for salvation rather than the gospel, no longer calling sin what it is, no longer teaching Jesus Christ as the one and only way to heaven—may we on our part ever answer with Martin Luther (Diet of Worms, 1521):

“Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason...my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. God help me. Amen.”

—*Pastor Joel Fleischer*



St. Paul’s, Bismarck, banner I

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Come unto me . . .

It was early February 1546 when Martin Luther came to his hometown of Eisleben, Germany, to mediate between the counts of Mansfield. By the middle of the month, peace had been forged between the brothers. Dr. Luther concluded their final meeting with a sermon on the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 11:25-30 (a portion of which is recorded above). He returned to his room, feeling weak and ill.

On the evening of February 17th, 1546, Martin complained of pain in his chest. Early on the morning of February 18th, he told his friend Justus Jonas, “O dear Dr. Jonas, I believe I’ll stay in Eisleben, where I was born and baptized.”

He prayed, saying: “Father, into Your hands I commend myself. O my Heavenly Father, one God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God of all comfort, I thank You that You have given for me Your dear Son Jesus Christ, in whom I believe, whom I have preached, and confessed, loved and praised...I pray you, dear Lord Jesus Christ, let me commend my little soul to you. O heavenly Father, if I leave this body and depart, I am certain that I will be with You forever and can never, never tear myself out of Your hands. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish

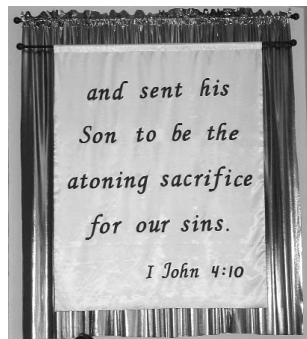
but have everlasting life.”

Only Jesus...!

These were the words of a man who had learned of the Spirit in the Scriptures to go to Jesus in time of trouble, to seek Him in His Word. While early in his life Martin had attempted to carry his own sin and even to atone for it by good works and prayers—in the end he found rest for his burdened soul in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Martin found that only Jesus could take up and bear his sin and guilt. Jesus alone could offer satisfaction for Martin’s sins and, in truth, for the sins of all people.

The cold days of February 2007 aren’t that far off. However, we Lutheran Christians will first celebrate in late October what God accomplished in the Reformation. God used a



St. Paul’s, Bismarck, banner II

sinful man to help restore His Word to prominence. In His Word God declares that we are saved by His grace (alone), through faith (alone) in Christ, and this as revealed in Scripture (alone).

May God also grant us His grace that we learn what Martin did—that we cannot bear the burden of our sin and guilt. Our mountain of sin grows greater day by day. We cannot simply promise to or try to do better and somehow satisfy God’s righteous law. We are rotten to the core—and thus what we produce by ourselves is also rotten.

But listen carefully now to the Savior speak! He invites you to come to Him. He promises rest for your bur-

dened soul. He has lifted your own burden—it was nailed to the cross!

The burden which He bids you to take requires no lifting at all.

Bowed down beneath a load of sin,
By Satan sorely pressed,
By wars without and fears within,
I come to Thee for rest.

Be Thou my Shield and Hiding-place,
That, sheltered near Thy side,
I may my fierce Accuser face
And tell him Thou hast died.

O wondrous Love, to bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame,
That guilty sinners such as I
Might plead Thy gracious name.
(TLH, 456:3-5)

—Pastor Andrew Schaller



A Reformation Message from our CLC president—

THE RIGHT ANSWER TO THE WRONG QUESTION

“What must I do to be saved?” This question was asked of the apostle Paul by the jailer of Philippi after God had broken down the prison doors with an earthquake (See Acts 16:30).

This question is the most important question a person can ask. It is a question that is part of our make-up as human beings. From the creation God has left in man a natural knowledge that a higher being exists. God has also placed in each of us a conscience which either accuses or excuses us.

Unfortunately, modern culture and science deny the existence of God and the reality of an accountability to a Higher Being. The result is that many today do not even bother to ask the

question, “What must I do to be saved?”

We need to realize the challenge of proclaiming the power of the gospel of the forgiveness of sins to a world that denies the reality of sin and accountability to God!

Luther’s Reformation began with one man desperately seeking the answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” Because it was, in a sense, the wrong question, Martin Luther found no answers that satisfied his spiritual need for a relationship with God.

The question is the wrong question because it presumes that there is something man can do to earn God’s favor

and satisfy God's rightful wrath toward us sinners. The natural law in man (the so-called "opinion of the Law") answers, "You must earn God's favor by the things you do." This law-answer emphasizes what you have to do.

The natural religion in man also gives the wrong answer. The religions of this world seek to give people "religious" works to do to satisfy God's demands. Man's religions are basically work-oriented and give the wrong answer.

When Luther asked the sincere question "What must I do to be saved?", the Roman Catholic Church gave him the wrong answer.

The Catholic Church told Martin Luther to devote his life to the church and commit his life to serving God by serving the organized church. Thus Luther became a monk who took a vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

As an act of penance, Luther scrubbed floors. He said prayers, attended daily services—doing everything he possibly could to appease an angry God. However, the harder he tried, the further behind he fell. He could find no peace of conscience through his works, because he realized that a holy God demanded perfection. There was nothing Luther could do to save himself.

All man-made religions and philosophies today give wrong answers to the most important question that can be asked. In one way or another man-made religion seeks to tell people what they need to do for God. Unfortunately, even many Christian churches turn the gospel into a law by telling people what they have to do. How often haven't you heard people—at a funeral, for example—assure one another that the person

"...We need to realize the challenge of proclaiming the power of the gospel of the forgiveness of sins to a world that denies the reality of sin and accountability to God!"

in question went to church, helped the poor, and was generally an all-around good person?

"Apart from the deeds of the law..."

Even "Lutheranism" can give people the wrong answer to our question if it points them to their works.

Only the Holy Spirit can give the right answer to the wrong question, "What must I do to be saved?" The apostle Paul told the jailer at Philippi, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." The Holy Spirit revealed to Martin Luther that he was declared righteous (justified) by God, not because of his own righteousness (which was seriously lacking), but solely by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. The book of Romans declares, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28).

The Holy Spirit alone prevents us from another danger—that is, turning our faith and our Christian conduct into something we do to merit God's favor. To find salvation the Roman Catholic Church added man's works to Jesus' work. Modern Christianity adds a person's "decision to believe" and one's sanctified life to Jesus' merit in order to assure salvation.

Still today the question is being asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

Still today few voices proclaim the gospel truth, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.”

If there is to be a reformation today, it will come about through the gospel which is “the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.” A reformation will come from individuals who are seeking answers to the most important question, “How is a person justified before God?”

“Now it was not written for Abraham’s 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, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (Rom. 4:23-25). The right answer is found in Jesus Christ and His cross. To God alone be the glory!

May the Holy Spirit bring about a true reformation in our age.

—*Pastor John Schierenbeck*



INTRODUCING the Books of the Prophets

Nahum

“...Surely the wicked and unbelieving of this world need to hear this kind of dire message. But remember, this proclamation was brought to the Children of Israel—and it is brought to us!”

Many undesirable jobs in this world are entirely necessary. Even jobs we enjoy doing often have undesirable aspects about them.

As children of God we have been given the very desirable task of sharing the gospel with every creature. However, the preaching of the gospel must be accompanied with the proclamation of the law.

Our sinful flesh may see this as undesirable. Who wants to have his faults pointed out? Isn’t the Law just too much negativity in an already negative world? Does God still want us to teach all of those “Thou shalt’s” and

Thou shalt not’s”?

May the Holy Spirit guide our study of the book of Nahum, so that we see the Lord’s desire for us to teach the whole counsel of God, both law and gospel.

When one hears of the city of Nineveh, the prophet Jonah usually comes to mind. Jonah was sent to the huge, wicked city to pronounce God’s judgment upon it. The city repented of its evil and was spared for a time.

About a hundred years later the prophet Nahum came on the scene with a similar message (for Nineveh had returned to its wickedness and was again oppressing the Children of Israel).

The main difference with Nahum's message was the recipient. While Jonah was sent to preach to the Ninevites, Nahum was sent to prophesy to the Children of Israel.

Nahum began his narrative poem by reminding Israel of the fierce wrath that our God possesses. "God is jealous, and the Lord avenges; the Lord avenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves His wrath for His enemies...The mountains quake before Him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves in His presence...Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire..." (1:2,5-6).

Surely the wicked and unbelieving of this world need to hear this kind of dire message. But remember, this proclamation was brought to the Children of Israel—and it is brought to us!

A Merciful God!

It is true, in order to prepare their hearts for the saving message of the gospel, the wicked need to be shown the evil of their ways and how they have transgressed God's holy Law. However, believing children of God see in these words how sin—our sin—is dealt with by the holy God.

We were born as God's enemies; we were His adversaries. When God demanded perfection from mankind, the crown of His Creation, we offered up self-indulgence and disobedience, evil and unspeakable atrocities towards our neighbors.

Which of us could stand before the holy, indignant God? Which of us could endure, even for a moment, the fierceness of His anger?

Thankfully, God is also a merciful God! Every ounce of His anger, the very dregs of His wrath, were poured out on our substitute, Jesus Christ! Jesus stood where we could not stand and endured what we were totally unable to endure. Now we can stand before God wearing the white robes that Christ has provided. Our heavenly Father tells us we cannot even comprehend the blessings in store for us due to His Son's obedience.

The rest of the book of Nahum graphically describes the destruction of Nineveh (which occurred about 612 B.C.). Many men and women were slaughtered or sold into slavery, and children were dashed to pieces on the ground.

Many Ninevehs await an even worse fate in our day, for we are told, "as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). When we see the wicked blindly heading further away from God and His Word, do we say with penitent heart, "There but for the grace of God go I!"? Furthermore, do our hearts yearn for the salvation of countless souls marked for destruction because they have not yet heard the gospel of Christ?

Like Nahum, we also have a very desirable task laid before us. We have been called by our Lord and Savior to bring the whole counsel of God to the world—the law with all of its thunderings and terrors to crush hearts of stone and to curb the sinful flesh; and the still, small voice of the blessed gospel which reassures of sins forgiven and life everlasting won for all by Christ Himself!

—Teacher David Bernthal

The Discourses of Christ

Love and Joy Perfected—John 15:9-17

The Greatest Love of All

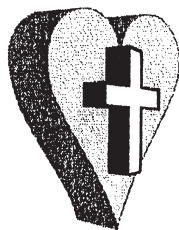
Some years ago there was a popular song sung by Whitney Houston about the “Greatest Love of All.” The claim of this catchy and beautifully sung lyric was that the greatest love of all was the love one had for oneself—that before one could truly love others and be happy and fulfilled in life one had to learn to love oneself.

That philosophy is still commonly found in the world in which we live; but it is not the philosophy which our Savior Jesus Christ revealed in His life, in His death, and in His teaching.

The words before us are taken from the teaching of Jesus on the night He was betrayed into the hands of His enemies. He had much to teach His disciples before His capture and crucifixion. Without doubt Jesus focused on the events that were about to transpire and how He was to die. These events would certainly be troubling for the disciples and could easily have been perceived as tragic and pointless, but they were anything but that!

Jesus teaches us that it was all about love; indeed His is the greatest love of all. Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13).

To comprehend the wonder and extent of the love expressed in these words, we consider their context. They were spoken by our Savior, the eternal



Son of God come in the flesh. He went forth to suffer and die for His friends. It was not just a common death, or even a tortuous death, that He was to endure—but the pangs of hell, the curse of God.

Is it not an amazing statement that Jesus would declare these mere men to be His friends? After all, these were men who in their weakness would forsake and even deny their Lord; yet He pointedly declared them to be His friends. Knowing all that lay ahead, all He was to endure, and how the disciples would react, His was the greatest love of all!

An All-encompassing Love!

What is even more amazing is that this truth is not limited to the eleven who accompanied Jesus on that fateful night. It encompasses us as well!

Unworthy as we are to be regarded as Jesus’ friends, He does so regard us. As often as we have failed Him, sinned against Him, and even denied Him, He

still owns us as His friends. He does not regard us merely as lowly servants who must do His will, but as dearly loved friends.

For us, His friends, the Lord Jesus laid down His life. This is the greatest love of all, for Jesus laid down His life to save us from death, eternal death in hell.

This greatest love of all instills love in our hearts also. Such love cannot but fill our hearts with loving gratitude for the One who so loves us! Such a deliverance cannot but bring joy to our hearts. A love-filled heart is a joy-filled heart. A love-filled heart is a directed heart, a heart that directs one's life to live that love for the One who has so loved us.

And so we love the Lord Jesus and are led by the Spirit to dedicate our

lives to Him, to live in willing service to Him. The service He asks of us is that we love one another as He has loved us. In living our lives for Him, His love lives on within us and in our lives. He chose us to be His own, to bear fruit to the glory of His name. He opens the way to God for us, that whatever we ask the Father in His name, we shall receive (v. 16).

The greatness of the love with which Christ has loved us has made it possible for the relationship we have with the Father to be one of love—not only that God loved the world and gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16), but also that by His grace we might love Him and live to the glory of His name for time and eternity. Truly, His love for us is the greatest love of all!

—*Pastor Theodore Barthels*

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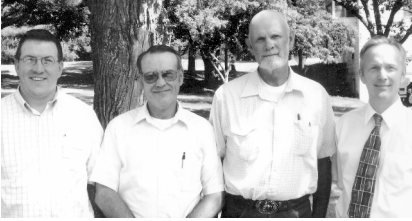




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Lunch Time



STRICT OR FAITHFUL?

In course of our history—either of our church body, the Church of the Lutheran Confession, or of our individual congregations—the suggestion has been made by some from the outside that we are too strict.

In the context of this characterization, the meaning is that we are a church that is against everything. At the risk of sounding presumptuous to some, we emphatically declare that if we are “against” something, it is because we are “for” Christ.

The fact is that if we say what we are for, it is implicit that we are against the opposite. In response to those who think we are too strict—we are not going to apologize for what we are and what we teach. Nevertheless, we are ourselves going to ask a few questions.

If God says that He is triune, and we insist on confessing that to the exclusion of identifying with those who deny the Trinity, are we too strict?

If the Bible is the Word of God and we believe the Bible, are we too strict if we will not identify with those who do not know what the Bible is—or even worse, who reject its claim for itself?

If we believe that the Word is eternal and is therefore timely in every age, are we too strict when we reject the idea that God’s Word changes with the times?

If we believe that going beyond Scripture is as wicked as denying any

part of Scripture, is that being too strict?

If the Bible says that God created the world in six ordinary days, are we being too strict when we deny evolution in whole and/or in part?

If God calls a certain thought, word, or deed sin, are we too strict to call sin what God calls sin?

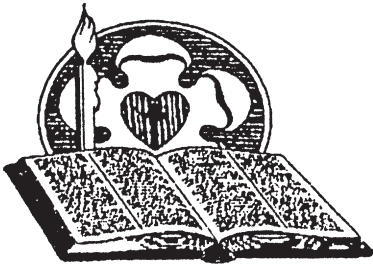
If we believe from Scripture that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, are we being too strict when we insist on believing and teaching what Scripture teaches?

If we believe that all people are born in sin and are under the wrath of God unless delivered from death by the merits and substitutionary atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, are we too strict?

If we believe that we are saved by grace alone through faith in Christ—without works, as Scripture teaches—are we too strict in calling the teaching of salvation by grace through faith plus works contrary to Scripture?

If we believe that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved and he who does not believe shall be condemned, are we going beyond Scripture?

If we believe what Scripture teaches that there will be one judgment at the end, at which time God will separate the believers in Christ from the unbelievers, are we too strict?



If we believe that we are to live as people transformed by the gospel rather than being conformed to the world, are we too strict?

If we believe that we are not to sit at the feet of false teachers or that we are not to join in worship with, study with, or pray with those who teach contrary to Scripture (whether in the church or outside of it)—in other words, if we believe that we are to “avoid” false teachers and that we are not to lend credence or support to those who teach falsely, are we too strict?

If we believe that we cannot be neutral in what we believe as compared to those who believe that compromise of faith is an acceptable way of life, are we too strict?

Enough! Finally, we will not be dissuaded by what people think. Rather, let those who think we are too strict prove their assertion from Scripture! We maintain, and shall continue to do so, that as Christ-believers it is our duty—

yea, our privilege—to speak up in defense of what we believe. With the exception of those who know nothing for sure, no one is to be pitied more than those who once knew the truth and lost it, and who in their loss equate faithfulness to the Word with being too strict!

For our part, God help us to stand in the faith against every accusation or temptation to compromise. C. P. Krauth wrote (if only his heirs still believed it), “Faith makes men Christians; but Confession alone marks them as Christians. The Rule of Faith is God’s voice to us; faith is the hearing of that voice, and the Confession, our reply of assent to it. By our faith, we are known to the Lord as His; by our Confession, we are known to each other as His children. Confession of faith, in some form is imperative. To confess Christ, is to confess what is our faith in Him” (*Conservative Reformation And Its Theology*, p. 166).

We cannot confess the truth and confess Christ by speaking out of both sides of our mouth. It is not “strict” to stand in the truth and confess it against everything contrary to it. It is called being faithful! Scripture tells us, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer



On a beautiful June day in North Dakota, the West Central District Delegate Conference was hosted by St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Bismarck

Christianity Under Attack!

Our country is in the midst of a “war on terror,” but it may not seem so. Life goes on most days as it has in the past without any serious interruption. There has not been a terrorist attack on our United States, at least of any great significance, since 9/11. It is tempting to believe that we are really not in danger, and that the war is really more a matter of some people’s imagination than actual fact. Yet the “war on terror” is fact—certainly for those of our young men and women serving in our military forces. In addition, the threat of further terrorist attacks is real and deserves our utmost national attention.

We Christians are facing another “war on terror,” but of a spiritual sort. The apostle Paul warned the Christians in Ephesus, even as he warns us, that “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (6:12). Satan wants to destroy our faith and he enlists not only his dark spiritual allies, but also the minds and pens of men whose hearts he controls. These men do not strap bombs to their bellies and blow people up in bus stations, but rather strive to influence the minds of our young people in public schools and universities and to drive policy opposed to biblical morality in the public forum. While on most days the words and policies of these men may go unnoticed and we may feel quite safe here in Mankato, let us recognize



“PUT ON
THE FULL
ARMOR OF
GOD... AND
TAKE THE
SWORD OF
THE SPIRIT,
WHICH IS
THE WORD
OF GOD.”
EPHESIANS 6:13 & 17



the importance of spiritual vigilance in this war on terror, even as we debate the physical security of our borders and ports in public.

Consider these assertions written by the very influential evolutionist and atheist, Dr. Richard Dawkins of Oxford University:

“I’m very concerned about the religious indoctrination of children. I want to show how faith acts like a virus that attacks the young and infects generation after generation.... It’s time to question the abuse of childhood innocence with superstitious ideas of hell-fire and damnation. And I want to show how the scriptural roots of the Judeo-Christian moral edifice are cruel and brutish. What in the 21st century are we doing venerating a book (the Bible) that contains such stuff?

“The God of the Old Testament has got to be the most unpleasant character in all fiction—jealous and proud of it, petty, vindictive, unjust, unforgiving, racist, an ethnic cleanser urging His people on to acts of genocide....

“When it comes to children, I think of religion as a dangerous virus....”

[Quoted from an article in “Answers Update,” a monthly newsletter from *Answers in Genesis*, Volume 13, Issue 3, page 1-2]

It is obvious that Dr. Dawkins has not learned to know the love of our Savior God in Christ Jesus and fails to understand the Scriptures. However unfortunate his personal spiritual life, his views are taken seriously by many powerful and influential people.

Lest anyone think that we need not worry, however, seeing that Dr. Dawkins lives in England and so will not affect thinking and policy here in the United States, consider some of the thoughts of Dr. David Menton, a former member of Immanuel congregation and current member of our sister congregation in St. Louis. Dr. Menton recently attended the 172nd national meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in St. Louis. This is the world’s largest scientific organization. Its meeting was attended by thousands of scientists and teachers of science throughout our country. One of its major themes this year was the growing controversy between the teachings of creation and evolution within the public school system of our country.

Dr. Menton, who attended the conference, wrote in summary: “In several different symposia with titles like ‘Anti-Evolutionism in America’ and ‘Science under Attack,’ dozens of speakers raised a strident and angry denunciation of Christian ‘fundamentalists’ who, they claim, seek the end of all science!” Dr. Menton went on to summarize keys points made in a vari-

ety of sessions, all of which aimed at removing any thought of creationism from public school classrooms and, quite frankly, from the American public square. Assertions were made that believing and teaching creationism will lead to a decline in scientific knowledge and remove America’s competitive edge in the workplace. It was suggested that evolution must be taught already in the earlier years of grade school, for by the time students reach junior high school, it is already too late. It was suggested that the scientific community recruit Christian clergymen to support and promote evolution in opposition to biblical creationism.

Unfortunately, there are all too many such clergymen available. One who addressed the convention, Reverend George Coyne, Director of the Vatican Observatory outside Rome, stated in his address, “Is God a Scientist? A Catholic Look at Evolution”, “If God is a scientist, He is a poor one.” He quipped that if God were a scientist, “I would want an eye with 360 degree vision.” Coyne also explained that “the Scriptures were written before science was developed,” and that its authors “couldn’t have known the future.” According to Coyne, “God let the universe participate in its own creation.” Dr. Menton concluded his summary of Coyne’s presentation by quoting his concluding statement: “I’m sorry to be so emphatic about fundamentalism, but the literal interpretation of Scripture is a plague in our midst.” [All quotations are from an article entitled, “A Battle for Men’s Souls,” posted on the *Answers in Genesis* website www.AnswersInGenesis.org.]

Truly, our Christian faith is under attack. To a certain extent, this has

always been so. Yet, let us ever remain vigilant. Let us use every opportunity we have to foster our faith and that of our children. Let us strive to grow in our love and in our hope through daily reading of our Bibles and regular wor-

ship in God's house!

—Pastor Paul D. Nolting

(This article first appeared in the April 2006 edition of the Immanuel Home Messenger, newsletter of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minn. where Pastor Nolting serves.)



SMORGASBORD

From the Editor's Desk

• **REAPING AN UNDESIRE-ABLE HARVEST.** It was as we were making final preparations for this October Reformation issue that our eyes fell on a *Christian News* news piece titled “More and More Germans Become Muslims” (Aug. 14, 2006). Immediately we gave thought to what Dr. Luther might say about such a sad and sorry piece of information. For one thing, there came to mind the Reformer's classic “passing shower” quote (see box).

In 2000 this writer was part of a “Luther Heritage Tour” with fellow Lutheran Christians. We had been reading and hearing for decades of the decline of church attendance in Luther's Germany, something confirmed by our tour guides as we toured Luther sites and Luther(an) churches in such familiar Reformation cities as Augsburg, Eisleben, Eisenach, Erfurt, and Wittenberg. 'Tis beyond sad that stately, ornate cathedrals in such cities are nigh unto empty on worship days. And from what we heard and learned, those who do attend cathedral services hardly hear solid, scripturally based law/gospel sermons such as Dr. Luther delivered to congregations he served.

Yes, there's a connection with the

above-mentioned news item. “More and more Germans are converting to Islam,” says the article. “Last year approximately 4,000 persons became Muslims....Up to the year 2000 the annual number of conversions stagnated at 300, but it has been rising ever since....There are 3.2 million Muslims in Germany. Most of them are Turkish immigrants. Their religious life is flourishing...The number of Mosques (is expected) to double within the coming years (there are now 143-ed.)....Interest in religion is rising in Germany, but it is not focused on Christianity. Today, the citizens in Martin Luther's home country are equally fascinated by esoteric practices, Buddhism, and Islam.” We trust that's enough so you, the reader, get the bitter-taste flavor.

Anyone interested in digging a bit into Luther's prolific writings will not have to search very far to find where the Reformer addresses the “threat” to the gospel of Christ not only from the Roman Catholic Church, but also from “the Turk” (by the way, are you aware that history reveals that both of these enemies of biblical Christianity had their rise in the seventh century?!). While both movements were given to undermining the gospel of Christ,

Luther's classic "passing shower" quote

"Let us consider the wretchedness of our former condition and the darkness in which we were enveloped. I believe Germany has never heard so much of the Word of God as at the present time; history reveals no similar period. If we let the gracious season pass without gratitude and improvement, it is to be feared that we shall suffer still more terrible darkness and distress. My dear countrymen, buy while the market is at your door; gather the harvest while the sun shines and the weather is fair: use the grace and Word of God while they are near. For know this, that the Word and grace of God are like a passing shower, which does not return where it has once been. The Divine favor once rested upon the Jews, but it has departed. Paul brought the Gospel into Greece; but now they have the Turks. Rome and Italy once enjoyed its blessings; but now they have the Pope. And the German people should not think that they will always have it; for ingratitude and neglect will banish it. Therefore seize it and hold it fast, whoever can; idle hands will have an evil year."



—From Luther's "Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen of All the Cities of Germany in behalf of Christian Schools", *LUTHER ON EDUCATION*, Painter, Conc. Publ. House, p. 176

Luther—with Scripture behind him—contended that Catholicism was more dangerous for its subtlety (it was the devil at work *within* the church where, as St. Paul teaches, the Antichrist "sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God..." [see 2 Thess. 2:3ff]). By contrast, the Reformer contends, "I do not consider Mohammed the Antichrist. His teaching is too obviously false...For how can he possibly deceive a Christian—he who rejects the Holy Scripture, both the Old and the New Testament, considers of no account Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Office of the Keys, or the forgiveness of sins, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, marriage, and teaches nothing but murder and immorality?..." (*WHAT LUTHER SAYS*, CPH, Vol. I, par. 88, p. 32) Any number of other quotes could be given showing that Luther saw Mohammedanism as an ungodly spiritual force not to be ignored already in his day.

And we would surely agree with Luther that a Christian whose faith is solidly based on Holy Scripture cannot possibly be deceived by the Islamic religion. That said, however, we have a plausible explanation, don't we, for why a for-the-most-part biblically bankrupt Germany is seeing more and more Muslim converts?!

On our 2000 tour to Lutherland, we did discover that there exist pockets where rays of gospel hope are still cast. As a matter of fact, we sat in a couple chapels "off to the side" of the aforementioned cathedrals, and heard talk of how small groups of more or less conservative Lutherans conduct worship services in these chapels.

Either way, a harvest is being reaped—either by the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God still working on the hearts of God's elect children there; or by the devil who sows his soul-destroying seed when, through ingratitude or neglect, the Divine favor of the once abundant

gospel-shower has been allowed to pass.

Dear friends in Christ, we are talking about a matter of spiritual and eter-

nal life or death, aren't we? Therefore, we do well to read and pray regularly over Luther's words to the wise in the "passing shower" quotation.

—The Bread of Life—

Daily Bible readings for home devotions

November, 2006

God loves folks who were raised on the Hebrew Scriptures, and they should learn to appreciate the better covenant God gave them in Jesus. The story of salvation culminates in Jesus, only Jesus! In His hands we rest securely.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Thought gleaned from the text</u>	<u>Hymn</u>
1	Hebrews 1:1-14	How does Jesus rate? Above the angels!	254
2	Heb. 2:1-9	Where did Jesus work? Below the angels	219
3	Heb. 2:10-18	Why did He partake of flesh and blood? For us!	98
4	Heb. 3:1-6	Since Jesus surpasses Moses in faithful labors—	295
5	Heb. 3:7-19	therefore harden not your heart against Him—	338
6	Heb. 4:1-10	for many others lost heaven that way!	660
7	Heb. 4:11-16	Which brings us to another aspect of His work,	531
8	Heb. 5:1-14	the paramount importance of Jesus' priesthood.	177
9	Heb. 6:1-12	Our sanctification is not an elective.	401
10	Heb. 6:13-20	Anchored in Jesus, we are anchored in God.	385
11	Heb. 7:1-10	Melchizedek was certainly very special,	220
12	Heb. 7:11-19	but Jesus surpasses even Melchizedek,	346
13	Heb. 7:20-28	because Jesus is God's preeminent Priest.	348
14	Heb. 8:1-6	Now this is the main point of the subject—	352
15	Heb. 8:7-13	A new covenant makes the old one obsolete.	469
16	Heb. 9:1-10	Some particulars of the obsolete covenant	289
17	Heb. 9:11-15	in contrast to particulars of the new—	293
18	Heb. 9:16-28	Sacrifices that never removed sin-guilt	222
19	Heb. 10:1-18	versus one perfectly sufficient Sacrifice;	152
20	Heb. 10:19-39	therefore, enjoy your relationship with God.	395
21	Heb. 11:1-16	Consider the important subject of faith —	394
22	Heb. 11:17-29	and those who lived and died in saving faith.	372
23	Heb. 11:30-40	We give thanks for His faithful saints!	463
24	Heb. 12:1-6	And we eagerly walk the Jesus walk of faith.	398
25	Heb. 12:7-17	What is the purpose/function of chastening?	358
26	Heb. 12:18-24	This great blessedness is ours!	478
27	Heb. 12:25-29	Let us stay in God's good graces!	374
28	Heb. 13:1-9	and live as befits our privileged status!	120
29	Heb. 13:10-17	Therefore let us go forth to Him.	349
30	Heb. 13:18-25	We are in good hands with the Trinity.	51

The Word From Immanuel

*Chapel Talks to the student body of
Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire,
Wisconsin*

To our young readers - This is for you!

Our God's Excellent Name!

An original translation of Psalm 8

Jehovah our Lord,
How excellent is Your name in all the earth,
Your splendor, which You surely display upon
the heavens!

From the mouth of children and
nursing infants
You ordained praise, because of Your adver-
saries,
To cause both enemy and avenger to cease.

When I observe Your heavens, the works of
Your fingers,
The moon and stars which You established,

What is man that You remember him,
And the Son of man that You visit Him?

You cause Him to be devoid of God for a little
while
And with glory and splendor You crown Him.

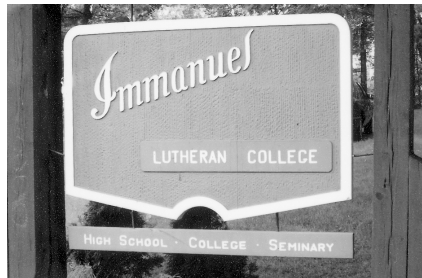
You cause Him to rule over the works of Your
hands;
All things You put under His feet.

Sheep and cattle, all of them,
And beasts of the field,

Birds of the heavens and fish of the sea,
Things passing through the paths of the sea.

Jehovah our Lord,
How excellent is Your name in all the earth.

Let Your word be to us the joy and rejoicing of
our hearts;
For we are called by Your name, O LORD God
of hosts. Amen.



Definition—*to excel: to be superior to; to surpass in accomplishment or achievement.*

Whom do you know who excels in something...who surpasses everyone in accomplishments or achievements in that thing?

Well, let's consider a thing: basket-
ball. What name comes to mind?
Michael Jordan? What about quantum
physics? Max Planck or perhaps Albert
Einstein?

There are very few people who truly
excel all others. Some people may be
very good at something and their
names may stand out for a while.
However, eventually others come
along to take their place.

Today, in connection with Psalm 8,
we will hear about One who has

An Intentional Play on Words

This new series scheduled to appear monthly has a title which is an intentional play on words. “Immanuel” is the name of our synod school in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, as well as one of the Bible names for our Savior, Jesus Christ.

During chapel time in each school day one of the professors at Immanuel brings the life-giving, life-inspiring Word of God to the young men and women of the high school, college, and seminary departments attending there.

At times we have heard comments that the *Lutheran Spokesman* would do well to have articles intended for the younger generation. That is the aim and goal of our printing samples of these chapel talks—each one especially prepared to reach the up-and-coming generation with the timeless Word of the living God, of Jesus, the Word made flesh, “Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:23).

THE WORD FROM IMMANUEL — Young people, this is for you!

always excelled; none have ever or will ever take His place.

King David presents two areas in which the Lord excels. The first of these is creation.

**Jehovah our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the Earth,
Your splendor, which You surely display upon the heavens!
When I observe Your heavens, the works of Your fingers,
The moon and stars which You established...**

As for the Earth, David mentions the works of God’s hands: sheep, cattle, birds, fish. The excellency of the name of Jehovah is written in the pathways of the sea, all over the land, in the skies above us and even into the far

reaches of outer space. The more we are able to peer through microscopes at the tiniest of things or through telescopes at the most distant objects in the universe, the more we are amazed at the excellency of our God.

Who has ever been able to come even close to doing what God did? Who among men has ever started with absolutely nothing but made something? And then, consider the complexity of an individual cell or the immensity of the universe or the vast diversity of living things or the seemingly limitless shades of color. Who among men has been able to make anything so complex or so immense or so diverse or so limitless? Neither a single human



The original Ingram Hall on the ILC Campus (slated for renovation)



The new ILC Commons and Dining Room

being nor the combination of all human beings together.

Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the Earth!

What words are sufficient to describe how far, far superior God is to everyone and everything else that exists? Our Lord is infinitely superior; His name excels all others in an immeasurable number of ways.

However, this pales in comparison to the greatest of all God's deeds. Whereas the work of creation displays the greatness of God's power and wisdom, it is the work of salvation which displays the greatness of His love.

**What is man that You remember him,
And the Son of man that You visit Him?
You cause Him to be devoid of God for a
little while
And with glory and splendor You crown
Him.
You cause Him to rule over the works of
Your hands;
All things You put under His feet.**

In the person of Jesus, the most excellent Creator of heaven and earth came down to visit us. This He did in spite of the fact that every one of us hated Him and wanted nothing to do with Him. We despised His commandments of love and made it our purpose to violate them.

Yet He did not put us out of His mind. He remembered us; He kept us in His mind and made it His purpose to

save us from our sins, from our death, from our condemnation. And so in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, God visited us.

He visited us, but not in the form of God. He was made lower...so low in fact that He was even devoid of being God for a little while. David here takes us to the lowest moment of Jesus humiliation: that moment when He cried out, "My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?" To save us, He became one of us. To save us, He became the worst of us, for He took all our sins on Himself. To save us, He took our place before the judgment throne of God and was condemned. God forsook Him to the agonies of hell.

Then in that glorious moment on the third day after His death, God raised Him up and crowned Him to glory and splendor and placed Him upon the throne of heaven, where He now rules over all things.

Thus has the excellent Creator taken away our sins and our punishment. Thus has He saved us.

So complex, so immense, so diverse, so limitless is His love, that it embraces us all. There is no human being who is capable of displaying such love.

Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!

—Prof. John Pfeiffer

Announcements

South-Eastern Pastoral Conference

October 10-12, 2006
Bethel Lutheran Church
Spring (Houston), Texas

Agenda:

- New Testament Exegesis, Colossians 3:1ff — Pastor Dennis Rieken
- Old Testament Exegesis, Genesis 1:20-23 — Pastor Todd Ohlmann
- Isagogical Study of Zephaniah — Pastor Karl Stewart
- Foreign and Domestic Mission Models in the light of Matthew 28:18-20 — Pastor John Schierenbeck
- Whose Servant is the Pastor? — A Study of the Pastor's Role in the Congregation — Pastor Matthew Hanel
- Does the phrase "breaking of bread" refer to the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42)? — Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
- What are the Reformed influences affecting our members, and how can we help them recognize these influences? — Pastor Glenn Oster
- Scriptural teaching concerning the role of men (males) in the home, church, and society — Pastor Vance Fossum

Conference Chaplain — Pastor Luke Bernthal
Communion Service Speaker — Pastor Daniel Fleischer

—*Pastor Nathanael Mayhew, Secretary*

2006 CLC Teachers' Conference

October 18-20
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Mankato, Minnesota

Agenda items include:

- "Improving your Serve" — Pastor Paul Nolting
- Book Review: "The O'Reilly Factor for Kids" — Prof. Joseph Lau
- Depression — Daniel Loe
- Christ-like Attitudes — Ted Quade
- All-Day Kindergarten — Kathleen Olmanson
- Curriculum Review — Joel Gullerud, Erin Libby
- Teaching Students to Be Spiritually Active — Herb Geiger
- Teacher Attributes/Best Practices — Justin Olmanson

Time is allotted for Title Fives; Idea Exchange;

Field Trips; Business Meetings.
Daily Devotions by Nathan Wales

—*Lane Fischer, Secretary*

Send Change of Address to :

Lutheran Spokesman
2750 North Oxford Street
Roseville, MN 55113



**Children from Redeemer, Cheyenne,
visiting a pumpkin farm**

Due to production problems, our October issue was delayed. We are sorry for any inconvenience. —The Editor

Cover: John Fox