

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

WE TEACH that in the fulness of time the eternal Son of God *was made man* by assuming, from the Virgin Mary through the operation of the Holy Ghost, a human nature like unto ours, yet without sin, and receiving it unto His divine person. Jesus Christ is therefore “true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary,” true God and true man in one undivided and indivisible person. The purpose of this miraculous incarnation of the Son of God was that He might become the *Mediator* between God and men, both fulfilling the divine Law and suffering and dying in the place of mankind. In this manner God has reconciled the whole sinful world unto Himself, Gal. 4:4-5; 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:18-19.

Of Redemption
THE BRIEF STATEMENT OF 1932



A Confirmation devotion—

Rethinking Our Confirmation Vows

I recently saw a picture of myself taken on my day of Confirmation. I believe it was the first suit I ever wore. Passé by today's fashion, it was tan, polyester, and three-piece. I was also sporting some big, dark, plastic glasses.

How things can change in some twenty-plus years. Dig out your Confirmation picture and see if the same can be said of you.

Are our looks and clothing style the only things that have changed since our Confirmation? Have you thought much about your Confirmation vows lately?

Can you say with conviction that you *“renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways”*?

If we are honest with ourselves, we look back on the years since our Confirmation and realize how often we have allowed the devil to gain a foothold in our lives, a place of residence in our hearts.

“Do you hold the canonical books of the Bible to be the inspired Word of God...?”

If you still reply “I do” to this question, you are in a small minority in the world, even in this country. Most would have the Word of God conform to their lives rather than conforming their lives to the Word of God.

“Do you intend faithfully to conform all your life to the rule of the divine Word, to be diligent in the use of the means of grace, to walk as it becometh the gospel of Christ, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to the Triune God, even unto death?”

I remember pondering those words “even unto death” as I made my response, “I do so intend, by the grace of God.” Was I willing to die for my faith? Was I willing to be like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego? Like Daniel? Like Paul?

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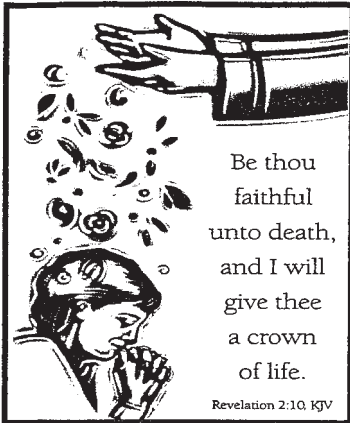
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It is only by the grace of God that we can make such a promise, both as teens and as adults. It is the Holy Spirit working through the Word that preserves us in the faith. That is why we need to be diligent in the use of the means of grace, the gospel in Word and sacrament.

Without these means we would fail miserably to keep our vows, but with the Holy Spirit working through these means we cannot fail, no matter how difficult the task may prove to be.

Now back to your Confirmation picture. Who are those people standing next to you? Have they changed? Do you still see them on a regular basis? Do they still belong to your church? Do they still diligently make use of the means of grace? Do they still renounce the devil and all

his works and all his ways?

Perhaps now is a good time to reconnect with your fellow confirmands, to remind them of their Confirmation, to remind them of their Savior. Too often confirmands stray from the solid rock of the Word—feeling that their religious instruction is complete, and they are swimming aimlessly in the sea of life’s troubles. They may need you and the message you share!

This year when your congregation confirms its youth, take the opportunity to renew your own vows and commitment to your Triune God.

Many things have changed, but one thing has not—the love your Savior has for you and the heaven that awaits you because of Him.

And Thou, O Holy Spirit,
 My Comforter and Guide,
 Grant that in Jesus’ merit
 I always may confide,
 Him to the end confessing
 Whom I have known by faith.
 Give me Thy constant blessing
 And grant a Christian death.
 (TLH #334:3)

—*Professor Joseph Lau*
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

(Note: the “confirmation questions” used in this article are from *The Lutheran Agenda*, a Concordia Publishing House book.)



ASCENSION DAY GIFTS

Did you attend any Ascension Day (AD) parties this year? Send or receive AD cards? Get delayed at the airport because of the AD rush?

No, you probably didn’t. Not a little of what we do is conditioned by the

world, and the world knows nothing of the joyous, holy Ascensiontide.

But the Church does. It celebrates the homecoming and glorious coronation at the throne of God of Him who is our Savior and King. The Old

Testament Church shouted for joy when God ascended up to Jerusalem in connection with the Ark of the Covenant. Surely we celebrate our Lord's victorious ascending on high.

Newton formulated the physical law of gravity: What goes up must come down. Our Lord Christ proved another maxim: What comes down must go up!

First Jesus came down as our divine Substitute, living a perfect life in human flesh, dying an innocent and atoning death for all. In mortal combat with Satan, sin, and death, our Champion captured all three of our dread enemies and lorded it over them at His glorious ascension coronation. "Sing praise to God, sing praises...For God is the King of all the earth...God sits on His holy throne... Sing praises to our King, sing praises!" (Ps. 47:6-8)

Oh, I forgot to ask earlier, 'Did you receive any AD gifts?'

Yes, you did! St. Paul wrote: "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift...When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:7,8).

Usually it's the other way around: gifts are given to the celebrant. But our victorious and celebrating King gives gifts to His people. Not earthly toys or the latest electronic gadgets. His gifts are of His grace bestowed on His beloved people for their kingdom work in this world. We might even say they are multiplier gifts—gifts that keep on giving.

Celebrate His Gifts Joyously!

The ascended Lord gives personal gifts and talents to individuals that they might become gifts to His Church—



"for the perfecting of the saints...for the edifying of the body of Christ..." These gifts to His Church are the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. But no believer is left out, for Christ graciously gives to all. To one it might be a special measure of wisdom, or a strong faith in the Lord and His Word. To another He might give a great love for souls still trapped in spiritual darkness, or the gift of continual prayer, marked with insight and fervor. To others He gives the wherewithal and desire to give liberally to the King's cause; or the courage and ability to meet and combat the fierce attacks of the world against the Lord's Anointed and His Church; or the knack of speaking a comforting and encouraging word.

The gifts are many and varied—whatever is needed. And every Christian has received his/her gift(s) for use in the kingdom. "Shout to God with the voice of triumph!...Sing praises with understanding" (Ps. 47:1,7).

I have heard that certain native peoples of New Guinea had never seen an aircraft before 1940. But with the advent of WWII in their region, not only did they see them, but they also benefited from the cargo planes landing in their backyards bringing in supplies and other good things they had never before imagined.

After the conflict was long over, they still crudely maintained those wartime runaways, in the hopes of attracting and yet receiving good things from the ‘gods’ in the heavens.

We may chuckle at this, but on another “plane,” Christ’s war in our behalf is over. He has departed from the earthly battlefield victorious, that He might fill all things. Our God of the heavens “reigns over the nations” (Ps. 47:8).

And He keeps on sending His gifts of victory and grace.

Are the runways of our hearts always open to receive? Are our minds, hands, and tongues ready to use? Only by Spirit-worked repentance and empowerment—itsself a gracious gift!

Celebrate the Lord’s ascension with praises and song! Celebrate joyously by using His gifts zealously!

—Pastor David Fuerstenau
Ketchikan, Alaska



Mother’s Day Devotion—

The Virtuous Woman

Mother’s day—a day set aside to express appreciation for those women who are and have been our mothers and wives. It is a day which the world has set aside, and even though the world has established this day, it just as quickly saturates society with the notion that being a mother is really not all that important (get out of the home, be the President, be a CEO, demand equal pay, demand equal rights etc.—items which easily become more important than mere “motherhood”).

Yet the idea prevails that being a wife and a mother whose main focus is on bearing and raising children is, after

all, archaic.

Our Lord looks at it differently.

“Who can find a virtuous wife?” King Lemuel posed this question in Proverbs 31:10; he then goes on to state, “For her worth is far above rubies...She does (her husband) good and not evil all the days of her life” (vv. 10,12).

There in the twelfth verse the king takes us back to the creation of woman, to why God created women, and to the honorable position He gave to her and all her descendants: “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’”

That helper “comparable to” the



**Ladies Aid,
St. John’s
Lutheran
Church,
Clarkston,
Wash.**

man was and is to be one who assists him, aids him, supports him in his work and life—particularly, and most importantly, the spiritual life.

“In the sight of God”

Who is or what is a virtuous wife? In 1 Peter 3:1-6 the apostle answers those questions. Note particularly verses 3-4: “Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

That last phrase is to be foremost in the minds and hearts of all women and all who are involved in teaching young women. “In the sight of God” is more important than what the world thinks or deems important, for it is God to whom we answer.

It was God who there at the end of the first week of creation created woman and gave her the role, the honor, and the calling to be a faithful wife and mother. There is no higher position, no greater goal or honor than being that which God gave—and the

honor which God places upon it.

When the desire is to do and be that which is precious in the sight of God, it becomes easy in our society for wives, mothers, and young women to be made to feel inadequate.

However, mothers should never let the world convince them that they are less important or that they are not reaching their “full potential.” When mothers among us need encouragement or a lift, let them read what the Heavenly Father has to say in the 31st chapter of Proverbs, verses 10-31.

The Lord God has given women as a gracious and precious gift to men and has honored them in the position for which He created them. He has blessed the world through women—and, through the SEED of the woman, has given to all the world eternal life in Jesus Christ.

“Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her; Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised” (Prov. 31:28,30).

—Pastor Roland Gurgel
Weslaco, Texas



“MY MESSAGE IS NO FASHION STATEMENT!”

I don't think that I would want to be a fashion designer. First of all, I know for a fact that I would not make a very good one, what with my lack of fashion “awareness”—but there is more than that. Being a designer not only would involve having good, tasteful

ideas—but having ideas that will sell to the public. Designers (and the stores that carry their work) need to make guesses as to what will sell on the shelves of the stores during the coming seasons. It may not always be enough to have the name of some designer on

the cloth, for no matter whose name is on it, if it doesn't sell well, it's a financial loser.

There are other businesses too that are concerned about what the public will want. As I am writing this, Microsoft has come out with Vista. Many dollars are spent even before the product hits the shelves to see if it will be what people want.

Churches are tempted to think that the same model should be true for them—that the message they and their pastors present needs to be what the human nature of their people want to hear. And so the temptation is to fit their message to the popular ideas of the day.

The young pastor Timothy was confronted with this temptation already at his time. As God inspired him, the apostle Paul wrote to him about it: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

What was—and would be—his

advice to Timothy and to Christian pastors (and their churches) today? "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ... Be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (4:2,5).

I am so glad that as a pastor I do not need to be concerned about what people may "want" to hear. The Lord does not want the message at the churches I serve to be "tailored" to what society dictates. My message is to be the Word—nothing more and nothing less—centering around that "one thing needful," that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16).

With God's blessing, my goal is to be able to say as did the apostle Paul: "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." (Acts 20:27)

—Pastor Paul Krause
Clarkston, Washington

(from the pastor's column of a local newspaper)



Second in a series on the life of

Samson

Samson—An example of pushing the envelope of grace

You will remember that we are walking behind Samson, that odd Old Testament saint who caused himself a lot of trouble because he stumbled

through life in a series of awful sins that finally put him, blinded, into the hands of God's enemies.

If it were not for God listing Samson

From the Editor: The first article in this series appeared in our November 2006 issue. We are sorry, but due to space constraints we found ourselves unable to continue the series until this time. If the reader is unable to lay hands on the first article, please e-mail the editor (see address in masthead).

among those honored saints in Hebrews 11 as examples of faith, we would be hard pressed to find much good in him. Of course, God knows them that are His, and God certainly knew Samson's heart and soul, as He knows yours and mine. And it is reassuring to know that in spite of his egocentric pride, his discarding that special calling in life to be God's servant, and in spite of his moral weakness and bad judgment in his sex life—nonetheless God worked on his heart to bring him back to genuine sorrow so that he did from time to time repent and recommit his body and life, his soul and his future into God's hands—also as he went to his death.

One commentator says that Samson had a Jekyll and Hyde personality. He was set apart as a Nazirite for God's work, yet he toyed with evil associations. He was on occasion powered by God's Spirit, yet he was a wimp in fighting temptations. He had a wonderfully blessed birth but a sad death.

All of which makes him like many other mortals, I'd say—in some respects like you and me. Now if a person of such extremes is listed among the victorious martyrs of faith, then the Lord God can do a miracle for the likes of us—and on that we depend, as always, for our souls' safety. If God were not on the job to snatch us from the jaws of our sinful stupidities, our sinful selfishnesses, and our sinful disobediences, we would be in trouble as bad as Samson was for a lot of his life. Thanks be to God for not holding us to pay for our many great sins and for His never going off duty

on our case as we face each day's choices and each hour's decisions!

Thus we do NOT take Samson as a good example to follow, but rather as a warning: beware lest your biography be written with chapters like his!

In chapter two, Samson grows up at home with Mom and Dad—but not content. Perhaps tired of labor on the farm or with too much leisure time (and idle hands are the Devil's tools), especially for a lad who had a physique envied by his chums and interesting to the girls. Such a teenager gets bold; self-confident in his macho masculinity, he finds he can do as he may please, whether his parents like it or not. I think Samson caused them many a heartache and sleepless night as he explored those allurements Satan uses so proficiently on teenagers to turn them away from God and from His blessings intended for them.

To counteract that, "The Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him," we are told (Judg. 13:25), to use that vital energy in the right direction, to put his muscles and brain and stamina into serving God's people in a very practical and spectacular way. He was going to be a one-man strike force, a Jewish Rambo. We can readily picture this husky Hebrew, figuring out how to get the drop on a squad of Philistine soldiers—or how to torch a whole outpost of those ugly heathen.

A Major Decision!

Along the way he fraternized with some of the teenage girls that lived in the borderland. And as it happens all

too often, “the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were good-looking; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose” (Gen. 6:2). You’d think God’s teenagers would have better sense. Your parents have seen what happens in mixed marriages, where one spouse is Christian (or Lutheran, or CLC), but the other one isn’t. Things that can’t be told this side of the grave mark the majority of those unions with heartache, frustration, and wasted lives.

His father and mother tried to spare him all that. “Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines!?” (Judg. 14:3) Isn’t there one girl anywhere in any of the congregations of the CLC that you can find attractive—not just in looks and personality, but because of her Christian character and morals?

The one decision you will have to live with day in and day out for the rest of your life, to your regret or your rejoicing, dear young friends, is your choice of a spouse. You young Samsons and you potential partners, take heed to the concerns of your parents and other mature Christian friends who want you to be

blessed with the wonderful life that comes with the right spouse! And keep your eyes open to the warning example of other couples—including this fellow from these pages of Scripture!

Samson had some bad urges pushing him. He was fascinated by a female he had seen a few times down in a valley town; he was a victim of his hormones. “Get her for me, for she pleases me well,” he announced to his parents. He was hooked. God did not tell the parents that He was going to use this fatal attraction as an occasion to move against the Philistines, but this marriage was marked for disaster. Samson was not going to be blessed with a wonderful wife, and God was going to make everybody regret it a lot.

I know God can turn our personal private waywardness into something good; God can and does take spiritual wreckage and salvage something from it, perhaps for the next generation. BUT it’s a lot of heartache for the people who are going through it when they choose to do their thing regardless of whether it’s good for them. Lord, have mercy!

—Paul R. Koch

*First delivered as a chapel talk at ILC,
Eau Claire, Wisconsin*



**Renovated worship
nave at Messiah
Lutheran Church,
Hales Corners
(Milwaukee), Wis.
(story, p. 23)**

Studies in Second Thessalonians—

“...God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13).

Chapter 1:1-12

Comforted in the Righteous Judgment of God

As he did in his first epistle, the apostle Paul once again commends the faith and love of this young congregation. He commends it because it is growing in these qualities: “Your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other” (v. 3).

What makes this so striking is that faith and love have grown, not in a bed of roses, as it were, but in a garden of adversity.

The persecution of their faith defined the Thessalonian church almost from its beginning. It was a major issue in Paul’s first letter and it continued afterward. The Christians there bore with persecution “in patience and faith,” but that did not mean they weren’t affected by it. This lovely growth of faith and works would dry up and wither if not nourished from above by the showers of God’s gracious Word.

Paul offers encouragement in this chapter by bringing up the righteous judgment of God.

That may give some people pause. Is the Judgment a comforting thought for you, dear Christian, when mockers and hateful people attack your faith? “I feel better knowing that the people

who trouble me will burn in hell one day.” Clearly, there’s something perverse about thinking that way, as if God’s judgment were a joyous opportunity for personal retribution. There’s nothing celebratory about the perishing of even one soul (God doesn’t seek it, either—see 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:3-4).

But Paul does comfort these believers with the words “it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you.”

The trials of the Christians there—and their continued faith despite them—actually serve up “manifest evidence” that they are living under the grace of God. This was God’s work in them, proven!

Remember, in the first epistle Paul made a point of showing that God’s hand was evident in that they turned from sin and believed Paul’s gospel “which did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance” (1 Thess. 1:5).

God’s Scheme of Things

Now, in their stressful and dangerous lives as confessing Christians, they relied on that assurance—that they were redeemed through the blood of

Jesus, justified through faith in Him, counted worthy to be children of God. And God will not—cannot—ignore all that they have endured for the name of Christ. That means He, their heavenly Father, cannot look lightly on those who mock, harass, pervert, or persecute their loving obedience to Jesus.

The Day of Christ's second coming will be a glorious day for the Thessalonian believers. They (we!) will see with their (our!) eyes the precious Savior with whom they (we!) have entrusted their (our!) whole life and salvation. The lowly, crucified One whom they confessed as Savior will be recognized unmistakably as God and Lord.

In God's scheme of things, it will be justice to repay those who troubled His children with trouble themselves. The Word is unequivocal: this trouble will be "everlasting destruction" in "flaming vengeance" worthy of those who have spurned God's gracious appeal to turn and believe His gospel of peace. (Think of Jesus' weeping tears over Jerusalem's refusal to be gathered.)

At the same time, the Lord, according to His promise, will unite Paul, the Thessalonians, and all believers in

"rest." There will be everlasting peace and refreshment in the presence of our Savior; the uninterrupted knowledge of the fullness of His love; the amazing grace that delivered us from the curse and punishment of our sins into His merciful forgiveness.

God's dealings with the wicked, who reject this salvation, are right and just for His sake, not ours.

In taking comfort in the prospective punishment of our persecutors, we are honoring an objective, impartial, divine attribute of justice in our God. It is not the punishment of the unbelieving that is to be regretted; rather, what should weigh on the believer's mind is the terrible prospect of the un-evangelized.

So then, even in our troubles, we pray that "our God would count [us] worthy of this calling" and be comforted by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Until then, we join the apostles in their appeal to the unbelievers, "as though God were pleading through us:...be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20).

—Pastor Peter Reim
Loveland, Colorado



**New exterior of
Messiah Lutheran Church,
Hales Corners, Wis.**

**New school wing
for Messiah's
school**



INTRODUCING the Books of the Prophets

Zechariah

“...What a blessing that in these visions of the prophet our loving Savior gave our spiritual forefathers a pre-vision of His gracious, saving work. What a blessing that we can see how Christ fulfilled each minute detail showing Himself to be the prophesied Branch and true Son of God.”

The prophet Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai. His work was carried out in Jerusalem about 520 B.C., when the Children of Israel were busy with the reconstruction of the temple.

The theme of the book appears to be twofold. First the prophet wishes to encourage the returning exiles to return to their Lord and once more enjoy His blessings. Zechariah also offers words of encouragement in the rebuilding of the temple and the promise of the Lord’s work among them in the future.

When one reads the many prophetic visions Zechariah was given, they may appear strange, deep, and perhaps irrelevant. However, with the Holy Spirit’s guidance may we come to understand the relevance of a few of these visions—for us Christians living now as well as for our forefathers then.

A Call to Repentance

“Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Return to Me,” says the Lord of hosts, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 1:2).

God’s unconditional love has

always and will continue to call His rebellious people back to Him. Time and again the Children of Israel had turned aside for the gods de jour. Yet the Lord of hosts—literally, “of angelic armies”—wanted them to return to Him to perform the work He had prepared for them.

Even though open idolatry (the outright worship of idols) may not be that prevalent today in America, there are many opportunities to practice secret idolatry. Anytime we put family, career, finances, pastimes, or self on an equal or higher plane than our God, we have fallen prey to this breaking of the first commandment. The Lord of hosts calls us to return to Him as well, to get our priorities back on track.

The Temple of God

What exciting yet arduous work—to build the temple and city of God!

Centuries before, the Lord had given the very plans for His temple to His servant David. David’s son, Solomon, had been the instrument of actual construction. Due to the rebelliousness of His people, the Lord had that glorious, gold-

Outline of ZECHARIAH

I. Ten Symbolic Visions (Chaps. 1-6).

II. The Mission from Babylon (Chaps. 7-8).

III. The Messiah in Rejection and Afterwards in Power (Chaps. 9-14).

(Outline adapted from *Introduction to the Books of the Bible*, Drewes, Concordia Pub. House, St. Louis, Mo., 1965)

en temple destroyed and the people deported.

Now they have returned and David's descendent, Zerubbabel, is able to take part in the reconstruction. What gracious mercy shown on the part of our God!

And the best was yet to come. The visions of Zechariah tell of a time when Jerusalem's walls wouldn't be able to contain all of her inhabitants. It would be known as 'The City of Truth.' It would be a time of peace and prosperity.

A picture of heaven? Or perhaps also a picture of now? We know that we are engaged in the very same work as our spiritual forefathers—not the building of an earthly temple (for our God does not live in temples made with hands), but rather the building of His Church. We have peace and prosperity—peace with God through the forgiveness of sins; and He has promised all that is necessary for this life and the next.

With God on our side, what harm can men do to us? Nothing should get in the way of our spreading the gospel. "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Let your hands be strong, you who have been hearing in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, who spoke in the day that the foundation was laid for the house of the Lord of hosts, that the temple might be built....Do not fear, let your hands be

strong'" (Zech. 8:9,13).

The Branch

The Lord said, "For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the Branch...and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" (Zech. 3:8,9).

How the people must have wondered about this coming "Branch"! He would be a descendant of Zerubbabel—thus of David's line. But what manner of man would He be? The picture becomes clearer. "Behold, the Man whose name is the Branch!...He shall build the temple of the Lord...He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne..." (Zech. 6:12,13).

Not only would this ruling priest build the temple of God, but He would also perform other wondrous and miraculous deeds.

The visions become more familiar to us: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zech. 9:9). The vision declares that the Branch would be a smitten shepherd, and would be betrayed by one of His own for thirty pieces of silver. He would be pierced, and "in that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

What a blessing that in these visions of the prophet our loving Savior gave our spiritual forefathers a pre-vision of His gracious, saving work. What a blessing that we can see how Christ fulfilled each minute detail showing Himself to be the prophesied Branch and true Son of God.

And what a blessing awaits the

whole Church of Christ which will be united under His rule for all eternity. "They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The Lord is my God'" (Zech. 13:9).

—Teacher David W. Bernthal
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin



**Noting the 75th Anniversary of the
"Brief Statement of the Doctrinal
Position of the MISSOURI SYNOD"
(1932-2007)**

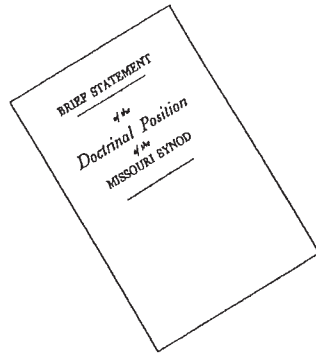
**A Trumpet Which Gave—and Gives!—a Clear Sound
(See 1 Corinthians 14:8)**

*Brief Statement
Of Redemption*

Introductory Thoughts:

This article is the saving counterpart of (and directly follows upon) "Of Man and Sin." It is entitled *Redemption*, which speaks of being redeemed by our Redeemer, Jesus. Same as Salvation (is it not?), which speaks of being saved by our Savior, Jesus. It always comes out to Jesus, Jesus, only Jesus!

It came as a surprise to me that the *Brief Statement* contains no specific article that concentrates on God's motive behind everything good and gracious and saving—that He loved His fallen creature above and beyond everything else, no matter what he had done wrong or how far he had fallen from the family circle. The wonder of redemption has always lain in God's



essential, defining characteristic—that God IS love.

This answers the puzzle, "Why not let Satan have his way with humanity? Why not just surrender the contest and shut down the Park when there were only two souls to be sacrificed?" Because God's overpowering love

does not allow Him to abandon or desert or forsake, but impels Him to rescue and reclaim => Redemption. God cannot suffer Satan to rape precious souls from Him and Paradise!!

As we read Article V (V for Victory!), we find that here is presented the pair of God's lovely twins—both Incarnation and Redemption.

Brief Statement text [with comment]:

Of Redemption

8. We teach [and confess] that in the fullness of time [echoing Gal. 4:4—that when all the dominoes were properly arranged—from the Pax Romana and Greek universal language to the collapse of common morality and loss of faith in pagan deities—then the universe was ready for God's love-gift] the eternal Son of God was made man [the text's italics emphasize the mind-boggling revelation that the Infinite became finite] by assuming, from the Virgin Mary through the operation of the Holy Ghost, a human nature like unto ours, yet without sin, and receiving it into His divine person. Jesus Christ is therefore “true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man” in one undivided and indivisible person.

[How the Eternal could become temporal is a mystery not to be pigeon-holed with human riddles, for this puzzle has its key in heaven—in God's love that would not let humanity go to hell wholesale, not while He had means to salvage.

It was not a matter of His power, but of His desire and will. Though human hearts had turned cold, God's heart did not freeze up over Eden's disaster. His

Father's love warmed Adam and Eve again at His hearth, telling them He was putting a barrier between them and their deceiver, and He would send a chosen Man to rescue them.

Over the centuries Satan has assaulted this truth with might and main, for if the truth of the Incarnation be lost, then the Incarnation's purpose—Redemption—is also lost. The two are inseparable twins, born of God's love for fallen sinners.]

The purpose of this miraculous incarnation of the Son of God...

[Though we understand the purpose—that God had the beneficial purpose of saving us by degrading Himself via the Incarnation, so that a Mediator be brought into the breach between mankind and God—we cannot make our brain understand the mechanism itself, that the Deity could take on Himself humanity; that the Creator would partake of the creature.]...was that He might become the Mediator between God and men, both fulfilling the divine Law and suffering and dying in the place of mankind.” [And there we have it! God bridged the chasm that separated Him from His fallen children, the bridge constructed with the body and blood of His Son. We do well to note the “both...and”—that is, the double accomplishment of Jesus—that He BOTH lived His life as the holy Substitute for sinners, AND He also died the death of the worst sinner. No matter which way Satan attacks, Jesus has us covered front and rear with the double-layered armor of both His living and His dying as our Substitute.]

In this manner God has reconciled the whole sinful world unto Himself, Gal. 4:4,5; 3:13 [“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having

become a curse for us, for it is written, ‘cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.’” Let us recognize that estrangement begs for reconciliation; that enmity hungers for pacification. Since fallen mankind had lost his moral compass and spiritual powers, pacification and reconciliation were beyond mankind’s capability. So God stepped into the breach, decided on His part to be at peace with the rebels, and declared amnesty to the entire human race.] **2 Cor. 5:18,19.** [“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” The job got done only because God did it Himself, with Himself, and by Himself.

And how extensive was the accomplishment of Redemption? Extensive enough to cover each and every person who has already died, is now living, or shall yet be born. God did not consider it good enough to save only the descendants of Abraham but abandon all others to hell. All souls, every soul—whether Chinese or Arab; German, Scotch, or Polish; Aztec, Hun, or aborigine—it makes no difference to God. Jesus is the universal Savior, because God is the universal God, and His love is the universal love.

It has always been about Jesus; it still is all about Jesus; and it always will be all about Jesus! Hallelujah to Jesus, true man and true God, the Author of our Redemption!]

—Paul R. Koch
Eau Claire, Wisconsin




CROSS PURPOSES


The Keys to What?

In the Lord’s Prayer we pray, “Thy kingdom come.” In his explanation to this petition, Luther helps us understand that it is a mission petition.

How does God’s kingdom come?

When our Heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life, here in time and hereafter in eternity.

In this petition we are asking that God would graciously grant us true

faith and a godly life, and that He would extend His kingdom—His gracious rule to save—on the Earth. Indeed, the Lord God brings to faith through the gospel; He is gracious to keep us in the faith as that gospel is preached and heard. And it is His will that this rule be extended through the preaching of the gospel of Christ. So He commissioned the Church to proclaim the gospel of Christ crucified and risen again to all people and

nations. Thereby, by His Spirit, He draws the elect into His family, giving to all who believe in Christ eternal life. In keeping with this divinely ordained commission, the apostle Paul said, “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

To see how far removed from that simple apostolic focus and purpose the external church is moving in our day—all in the name of reaching more people!—consider the following.

Recently we were directed to the web page of the “Epic Church” in Rochester Hills, Michigan. In looking at the church’s statement of “What we believe,” many fine Lutheran statements can be found.

But apparently for this church—affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS)—the gospel is not enough. The report comes that its pastor is having a six-week-long sermon series (during Lent, no less) entitled “Pure Sex.”* As the local paper in Rochester Hills wrote, “A 45-second introduction to the Web site features two pairs of feet poking out from the bed sheets and a sultry ‘boom-chikka-boom’ tune playing over the words, “Is your sex life a bore? A chore?”

To the credit of many within the LC-MS, there have been protests. We would hope so.

Epic Church did not originate this website. The web site as well as the sermon series was developed by a community church in Indiana and is also used by other church growth churches. While



the bishop of the English District of the LC-MS allows that the web site may have gone over the edge of “good taste,” he says that the LC-MS pastor who is using it is “trying to do a good thing.” The English District is funding Epic Church as a mission congregation.

We recognize that churches and pastors may stray off the path. One does not necessarily hold the whole church body responsible for that—except that the past failure to exercise discipline emboldens such behavior. The question is, does the LC-MS have the will to exercise discipline in the face of this blatant abuse which—besides its church-growth implications—cheapens the ministry of the gospel?

Unless the LC-MS exercises discipline, it cannot escape identification with this distortion of the ministry of the church. If a church body sows indifference to the truth and tolerates error in teaching and in practice, it will reap the consequence.

While the above example is extreme, there is abundant other evidence of how church-growth mentality has infected today’s church with “another gospel.”

Woe to us of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) if we buy into the mentality that suggests we must enhance the gospel or make the

* The sermon titles are: 1) The Greatest Sex You’ll Ever Have; 2) The Bedroom: Battleground or Playground; 3) Real Desperate Housewives; 4) Porn: What’s the Big Deal?; 5) Sex Ed: Teaching Children about Sex; 6) Affair Proofing Your Marriage.

church more attractive through gimmicks and/or through accommodation with society to get people into the church! We are not worthy of our synod's name if we feel compelled to satisfy the fickle whims of people. We will never out-gimmick church-growth churches. We ought not even try! Furthermore, we are not called upon to "grow the church." We are commissioned to proclaim the gospel of Christ crucified through which the Spirit of God extends God's Kingdom as He will!

Think of it this way. If a down-and-out individual—stricken in conscience and troubled in heart as he faces his mortality—walks into our church on a given Sunday morning, he should be able to leave having heard the gospel. Hardly will he find peace—and that

church will have failed him miserably—if he happens to walk in on a Sunday when the sermon theme is "The Bedroom: Battleground or Playground."

The Lord did not commit to the Church the "Keys to good Sex." He committed to the Church the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven, as we read, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt. 16:19).

We are called to be the Church in the world with the message of salvation in Christ. We are to resist letting "the world in the church" (as a recent LC-MS essay was aptly titled).

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer



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!*

"Resist the Beginnings"

(Text) *"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able; but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

Jesus, be with us now and in our lives this day. Amen.

The laws of physics which God built into this world apply not only to

the physical things in this world but also to religion and—more specifically—to sin and to me and you, the Christian.



Ingram Hall,
Immanuel
Lutheran
College

Law of Momentum — “An object in motion tends to stay in motion in a straight line, and an object at rest tends to stay at rest, unless acted upon by some outside force.” Or, it may be easy to hold up a bowling ball, but have you ever tried catching one dropped from a two-story building? Or, an evil thought or intention is easier to change than a full-fledged, ongoing sin—a way of life.

A new semester and a new year are times for new beginnings. Some of us probably do not make resolutions anymore, and that is understandable because dealing with the symptoms of a problem does not affect the root cause of a problem.

All the bad things in our lives can be traced to one basic root cause—SIN.

We can make resolves to eat less, drink less, get better grades, stop smoking, keep our rooms clean, be honest, do more homework—and the list goes on. But trying to deal with these symptoms one at a time—at least if these bad habits are in full swing—is like continually bailing out your basement with a bucket, instead of fixing the broken pipe. Our problem is SIN.

A new semester is a time for new beginnings, a time to start over, to get a clean slate.

God, however, is not on our semester basis. He does not forget our sins simply because we turn the calendar and start a new year or semester.

Our slate is wiped clean only by the sinless Lamb of God who suffered and died on the cross.

We know that “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1:9, NIV). THAT is a CLEAN SLATE.

Now, when we are assured of forgiveness and His grace, we no longer want to fall into our old sins that we love so much. So we look to our little resolves to stop this or that sin. And then we do the silly thing—we try it on our own and leave God out of the equation; AND, when we do that, we give Satan momentum. When sin has momentum, it is hard to stop.

There is a short, simple, Latin phrase which means “resist the beginnings.” God shows us in James chapter one that there is a definite progression to sin. “But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged

away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when full grown, gives birth to death” (Jms. 1:14). Lesson: RESIST THE BEGINNINGS!

Our text speaks of the strain and struggle of bearing up under the load of sin, but we make it more difficult. We don’t want to sin; yet think of how we help the devil.

We want stronger faith but we are not always attentive to His Word. Advantage Devil!

We don’t want impaired judgment and/or to make bad decisions, but we drink alcoholic beverages to excess. Advantage Satan!

We don’t want to wound our Christian spirit or dull our conscience, but we still watch truly bad movies and videos, and we read magazines and books not fit for Christians. Advantage Satan!

We want to make more use of the Word, but we skip chapel, forget about our devotions, and read the Bible only

if it is assigned. Advantage Devil!

We do not pray enough. Advantage Devil!

Our text shows us that God promises the strength to resist temptation, but we do not use it. Advantage Satan!

As we look at our lives, we see our sinfulness; and at the same time we also see our total forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Surely He has showered more blessings on us than we have a right to expect.

Because we are, thankfully, aware of His goodness, it is right for us to make a resolution, such as resolving—with the Spirit’s help—to walk ever closer with our Savior-God.

What is the most effective way of accomplishing this resolve? Remember the bowling ball idea—resolving, with the help of the Spirit, to RESIST THE BEGINNINGS.

In our text God promises strength to endure. ADVANTAGE CHRISTIAN.

—Prof. Ronald Roehl



Pastor Victor F. Tiefel

September 12, 1912 - March 23, 2007

“Our Good Shepherd Jesus has safely gathered into His heavenly fold His precious sheep and faithful earthly shepherd, Pastor Victor Tiefel, Friday night about 9:00 p.m. at the age of 94. He was at home with family members...” His pastor, James Sandeen of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lakewood (Denver), Colorado, used those e-mailed words to inform fellow CLC Clergy of Pastor Tiefel’s entrance into glory. A “Victory Celebration” was conducted at the Lakewood church at



Pastor Victor Tiefel

11:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 29, with Pastors Delwyn Maas, James

Sandeen, and Paul Fleischer participating. Interment followed at the Crown Hill Cemetery (within a mile of the church).

Pastor Maas of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Phoenix, preached the funeral sermon based on Philippians 3:7-14; he began with these words:

“‘Well, I do declare!’ Pastor Tiefel would often use that expression when he was surprised or particularly pleased. I suspect he would say it in response to this gathering here today. He would be particularly pleased to see you all in church—not on account of him, but on account of the opportunity for you to hear the Word of God.

“Vic lived his life in full agreement with the Apostle Paul—there is only ONE thing that means everything, and that is knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. All the rest is just extra. That is why, in the manner of the Apostle Paul, Pastor Victor Tiefel, and all the other saints who have gone before us: ‘We Press on to the Goal of the Resurrection!’...”

Victor Fred Tiefel was born in Orchard, Nebraska to Pastor George and Pauline Tiefel. He was educated at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. and Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis. In 1937 he was graduated from the Wisconsin Synod Seminary in Thiensville, Wis. His first ministerial call (1938) was to Platteville, Colorado. On June 25, 1938 he married Arleen Dollase, a union which was blessed with four children (Judy, John, Pamela, Douglas). “During the leaner years, the meat found on their table was often duck, pheasant, and even jackrabbit...As he traveled about making calls,

it was always with his Bible and his shotgun next to him on the front seat” (obit.).

After starting a number of mission congregations in Colorado, Pastor Tiefel accepted the call to St. Luke’s in Denver in 1945. He served as Chairman of the WELS Mission Board from 1948 until 1961, when he resigned for doctrinal reasons and joined the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC).

As a result of the “third use of the law” controversy, Pastor Tiefel left our CLC fellowship for a time (1978); in the interim he formed and taught at the Colorado Lutheran Seminary. “St. Luke’s merged with St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church of Golden in 1993 to form St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church. In 1996, the Holy Spirit led the CLC and St. Paul’s to a resolution of their doctrinal differences (*Te Deum Laudamus!*)...In 1992 Victor retired after faithfully serving the Lord in the holy ministry for over 53 years. He touched the lives of hundreds of people, and through his ministry many came to love the Lord and His saving grace” (obit.).

Pastor Tiefel’s beloved wife Arleen preceded him in death in 2003. He is survived by the four children, nine grandchildren, and thirteen great-grandchildren.

A More Personal Note:

This writer views the passing of Pastor Victor Tiefel with a bitter-sweet mix of emotions. We would not for a moment wish him—or any other of God’s saints—back into this world of sin, sorrow, and suffering. Yet most of us can list some Christians from our

past—be they parents, teachers, professors, clergymen, lay people—who have been a special, godly influence in our lives.

Pastor Tiefel is counted by this writer as one of those—together with Prof. Edmund Reim, Prof. C. M. Gullerud, Prof. E. Schaller, Rev. W. Schuetze, and others—who had a profound influence on our Christian life and ministry. When such respected mentors precede us to heaven, we are moved to exclaim with Elisha at Elijah’s ascension to heaven—and as Melancthon did at Luther’s passing—“My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof...!” (2 Kings 2:12)

Blessed be their memory, and above all their example of a godly spirit and

fortitude in the Church Militant. May we work and pray to follow in their train until, by God’s pure grace alone and in the merits of Christ alone, we join them in the Church Triumphant. To God alone the glory!

As was sung by those of us who attended Pastor Tiefel’s funeral:

Behold a host, arrayed in white,
Like thousand snow-clad mountains bright,
With palms they stand. Who is this band
Before the throne of light?
Lo, these are they of glorious fame,
Who from the great affliction came
And in the flood of Jesus’ blood
Are cleansed from guilt and blame.
Now gathered in the holy place,
Their voices they in worship raise,
Their anthems swell where God doth dwell,
Mid angels’ songs of praise. (TLH #656:1)

—*Pastor Paul Fleischer*



In Our CLC Classrooms—

Meet Ryan Libby



Ryan Libby was trained at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Ryan teaches subjects in all the grades at Grace Lutheran School, Fridley, Minnesota.

Conducting devotions and teaching religion provide the highlights of Ryan’s school day. He also enjoys extracurricular projects and directing

school plays.

He appreciates the impact of the gospel of Jesus Christ on the lives of his students, as well as the effect which they, in turn, have on him.

Meet Rachel Dassow



Rachel Dassow (nee Snell) teaches grades two through four at St. Stephen Lutheran School in Mountain View, California. She is now in her sixth year

of teaching. She was married on December 31, 2005.

Rachel comments: “I am reminded daily how important my God-given work is—especially when I see the growth in my students physically, emotionally, socially, and most importantly, spiritually. I see how the Lord truly uses them to strengthen and encourage me

and others around them.”

This teacher’s interests include reading (which is also her favorite school subject), hiking, and craft-making.

Rachel was a graduate of Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. She is the daughter of two former teachers.



Messiah Dedication—

A Gracious Gift

While “church” is essentially people gathered in Jesus’ name rather than a building, it is a wonderful gift from the Lord to also have a place of worship dedicated to His glory.

So it was with great joy that members and friends of Messiah, Hales Corners, Wisconsin, gathered on October 1, 2006 to thank the Lord for a newly expanded and remodeled church and school facility.

It was the culmination of a project which began in the spring of 2003 with the appointment of a building committee to study ways of gaining more classroom, fellowship, and worship space for the growing congregation.

Various plans were considered with the hope that construction could start in early 2004, provided that the congregation’s building fund would have a balance of at least \$50,000. That goal was not reached, and so construction was put off. The Lord’s hand can be seen in this as well, since the delay allowed for additional time to better define church and school needs and to determine what type of design would best meet them.

Finally, in January 2006 a plan was approved for the construction of two classrooms, new restrooms, a kitchen, and storage areas. Also, the design incorporated extensive remodeling and



Members and friends of Messiah congregation enjoying a fellowship meal in their expanded facility



Former pastors John Pfeiffer (l.) and Bertram Naumann (r.) with current pastor



Daughter of the church, Carrie (Mrs. John) Reim & children with the pastors and their wives, Alice and Barbara

renovation of the existing building in order to provide more narthex and worship space. A new HVAC system throughout the old and new structures was included.

Construction began in March. The new classrooms were first used for Vacation Bible School in August.

The majority of the work was done by a local design/build firm. However, the remodeling of the altar area was accomplished solely by talented volunteers from the congregation.

The members of Messiah are grateful to their brothers and sisters in the CLC who helped finance the project through the Church Extension Fund.

We especially praise our gracious Lord for this gift. We are confident it will serve the congregation well for many years to come as we teach and preach the gospel good news.

—*Pastor Michael Eichstadt*

Send Change of Address to :
Lutheran Spokesman
 2750 North Oxford Street
 Roseville, MN 55113

CLC General Pastoral Conference
Immanuel Lutheran College
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
June 19-21, 2007

Agenda:

- A Study of Available Worship Resources—
Professor John Reim
- Old Testament Exegesis (Joel 2:12ff)—
Pastor Paul Naumann
- New Testament Exegesis (1 Thessalonians
2)—Pastor John Klatt
- Ephesians 4, Equipping the Saints
(involving more of our members in the
work of the congregation)—
Pastor Delwyn Maas
- The Shepherd Leads His Flock—
Leadership Skills in Public Ministry—
Pastor Karl Stewart
- Helping our Members Maintain a Christian
Worldview in a Secular Society—
Pastor Theodore Barthels
- Preaching Sanctification (dealing with such
texts in a well balanced way)—
Professor Paul Schaller
- A Review of Scriptural Principles concern-
ing Man and Woman's Role in the Home,
Church, and Society—Pastor Michael
Roehl
- Excommunication and ByLaw 6—Group
Discussion
- Presentation of revised "Statement of Faith
and Purpose"

Communion Service Preacher: Pastor David Schaller

Liturgist: Pastor Matthew Hanel

Chaplain: Pastor James Albrecht

Program Committee (2009): Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, Pastor Caleb Schaller, Pastor James Naumann

Excuse Committee (2007): Pastor Steven Karp, Pastor John Johannes

Organ Coordinator: Pastor Paul Krause