

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

SINCE GOD has reconciled the whole world unto Himself through the vicarious life and death of His Son and has commanded that the reconciliation effected by Christ be proclaimed to men in the Gospel, to the end that they may *believe* it, 2 Cor. 5:18-19; Rom. 1:5, therefore faith in Christ is the only way for men to obtain personal reconciliation with God, that is, forgiveness of sins, as both the Old and the New Testament Scriptures testify, Acts 10:43; John 3:16-18, 3:36. By this faith in Christ, through which men obtain the forgiveness of sins, is not meant any human effort to fulfill the Law of God after the example of Christ, but faith in the Gospel, that is, in the forgiveness of sins, or justification, which was fully earned for us by Christ and is offered by the Gospel. This faith justifies, not inasmuch as it is a work of man, but inasmuch as it lays hold of the grace offered, the forgiveness of sins, Rom. 4:16.

Of Faith in Christ
THE BRIEF STATEMENT OF 1932



A Burning Book

I have always been a fan of science fiction. Several months ago I decided to revisit the book *Fahrenheit 451*. (As a coincidence, our hometown took up reading and discussing this book in a public forum soon after I finished.)

In the book author Ray Bradbury paints a haunting picture of the future. The government attempts to control the thoughts of its citizens by pumping nonstop media into individual's homzies and heads through wall-sized TV's and phone-radios that can fit into the ear.

Not a bad prediction from 1953! Probably the most disturbing control method of this "future" world is the absolute banning of books and the thoughts and ideas they contain. You see, in this future firemen do not put out fires, they start them—for the purpose of eliminating books. *Fahrenheit 451* is the temperature at which paper burns.

Over the centuries the Bible has been banned and burned, vivisected and vilified. Yet, unlike documents such as the U.S. *Constitution*—which is claimed to be a living document—the Bible IS actually alive! "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. 4:12).

Our Savior, Jesus, is the living embodiment of the Scriptures and vice-versa. If anyone wants to know Jesus, read His Word!

We know that the Lord does indeed work in mysterious ways. In the past He chose diverse means (His prophets, visions, His Son, the Scripture) to communicate with His people. However, we are shown in Holy Scripture that the vehicle of choice for the Holy Spirit today is the Scripture itself. We know "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy

Postmaster: Periodicals postage paid at Roseville, MN 55113 and at additional offices. Send address corrections (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford Street North, Roseville, MN 55113.

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Website address: www.CLClutheran.org

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Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Fleischer six weeks before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Fleischer.

Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. E-Mail to BennoSydow@yahoo.com. Individual subscriptions {foreign—U.S. currency only}: \$13.00 {\$17.00} for one year; \$24.00 {\$32.00} for two years; \$35.00 {\$47.00} for three years. Subscriptions sent in bulk to congregations: \$11.00.

Spokesman Internet access: <http://www.lutheranspokesman.org>

Printed in U.S.A.



Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21); and also, “(God) has in these last days spoken to us by His Son” (Heb. 1:2), that is, through His words, the Bible.

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit made a dramatic appearance upon the followers of Jesus. In fact, Jesus had instructed His believers to remain in Jerusalem until they received this special outpouring of His gift. They had been told, “It is to your advantage that I (Jesus) go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you” (Jn. 16:7).

Alive by the Spirit!

What a great gift and blessing our Lord poured out on these individuals—the tongues of fire, the ability to speak in different established languages, the zeal to stand up for the Word!

Yet is the Holy Spirit’s work in our hearts any less miraculous? Haven’t our spiritually lifeless souls been made alive by the Holy Spirit? Haven’t we also been transformed from those destined for destruction into the children of God?

Recall the two on the way to Emmaus Easter night. The men asked each other, “Did not our heart burn

within us while He talked with us...and while he opened the Scriptures to us?” (Lk. 24:32)

I will admit, there are times when I am sitting at synod convention and singing with my fellow believers that my heart burns within me. I have been lifted into “heavenly places” in prayer and song. I have felt holy zeal burn in my heart.

Yet at many other times, I have not experienced this feeling. One of the biggest problems we face in this fallen world is our sinful flesh, which enjoys “feelings.” Many of these feelings are wonderful and God-pleasing—our joy in marriage and raising children, love for fellow believers and God’s Word (let us remember that such godly feelings are the work of the Spirit).

But keep in mind the horrible ability we have of creating deceptive feelings. Feelings such as lust, anger, envy, self-glorification, and pride sprout and grow in our sinful hearts, competing for the “good ground” the Lord would have solely for His Word.

The Christian apologist C. S. Lewis once commented, “We are half-hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mudpies in the slums because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

Trusting in feelings we might produce ourselves is dangerous when what we should be doing is wholly clinging to what Jesus has done!

That was the powerful miracle of Pentecost—the disciples fearlessly preaching the name of Jesus! They proclaimed to the masses what He has done for them and us.

We take our confidence, then, not in the fact that our hearts are right, but in the fact that the Word of the living God dwelling in our hearts is always right.

Rather than a book that can be burned, the Bible is a Burning Book!

—Teacher David W. Bernthal
Fond du Lac, Wis.



Trinity Sunday Is June 3, 2007-

How Important is the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity?

For their service on *Trinity Sunday* some congregations use the Athanasian Creed (*The Lutheran Hymnal*, page 53), either all or part of it. This ancient creed sets forth the biblical teaching of the Holy Trinity in plain language and at some length.

From the outset the Athanasian Creed states the importance of the teaching of the Trinity—that the true God has made Himself known in His Word as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Creed begins, “Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic [that is, universal, Christian] faith. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.”

Is the teaching of the Trinity really that important? Is it really so serious to reject this doctrine? There are many who do reject it, including Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Unitarians, and modern theologians in churches that historically have taught the Trinity. Judaism rejects the teaching of the Trinity. Islam teaches one deity whom they call Allah, but you don’t have to go very far into their theology to

find a specific repudiation of the Trinity. “Allah has no one beside him,” they say.

But yes, the teaching of the Trinity is that important because it is the teaching of God’s Word. God Himself has made Himself known as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Trinity is important. It is the teaching of Jesus Christ. He is the One who gave us this understanding of the true God when He commanded His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Since Jesus Christ has said this about God, let no one say otherwise. For “no one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (Jn. 1:18).

Anyone who wants to know the true God must know Him from Jesus Christ. Anyone who will not accept what Jesus has revealed about God cannot know God.

To know God as Jesus Christ has revealed Him is to know Him as the God of grace and love. He is the Father who so loved the world even in its fallen state that He sent His only-begotten Son so that whoever believes



With Trinity Sunday on June 3, we print the following variety for Luther's hymn in *The Lutheran Hymnal* #249. The first stanza is an alternate translation by someone identified only as K.K., in the Jan. 11, 1927, issue of *The Lutheran Witness*. The April 12, 1932, issue of the same magazine then contained a second verse composed by Pastor W. M. Czamanske. — We thank Pastor Arthur Schulz for this hymn and information.

ISAIAH'S VISION

(Isaiah 6:1-4)

*These things the seer Isaiah did befall:
In spirit he beheld the Lord of all
Upon a throne raised high in splendor bright,
His garment's train o'erspread the Temple quite.
Above him stood two holy seraphim,
Six wings the seer beheld on each of them;
With twain they hid the brightness of their face;
With twain they covered up their feet apace;
And with the other twain they both did fly.
One to the other thus aloud did cry:
"Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
His glory filleth heaven and all the earth!"
Their voices moved the Temple's doors and posts,
While incense rose up to the Lord of hosts.*

ISAIAH'S RESPONSE

(Isaiah 6:5-8)

*Stirred by a vision brighter than the sun,
I cried, "Oh, woe is me! I am undone!
My lips and all my people's are unclean;
For mine own eyes the King of kings have seen."
The vision faded, and th' angelic hymn
Had died. Then flew one of the seraphim
And bore a coal from where the altar stood
And where a lamb was bound upon the wood.
Upon my mouth he laid the living coal
And said, "Lo, this hath made thee clean and whole.
Thy sin is purged, and thine iniquity
Hath been removed and taken far away."
Also I heard Jehovah speaking thus:
"Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"
Then, readily responding to the plea,
I said, "Here am I, Lord, send me, send me!"*



in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. He is the Son who willingly came into this world and took on human nature so that He might suffer death for us. He is the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, sent into the world to open our hearts and to give us faith to take hold of the gifts of forgiveness

of sins, life, and salvation.

We have been baptized into the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. By this baptism we are in fellowship with the one true God and have eternal life.

—Pastor John Klatt
Rapid City, S.Dak.



Symbolism of the Interwoven Triangles

The three-triangle configuration was a design found on the walls of the catacombs, where early Christians buried their dead. It symbolizes the nature of the God of the Bible: three persons but only one God.

God the Father is represented by the lower triangle. It is reminiscent of water because an early symbol of the Father was the river. The blessings of the Father are said to flow down to mankind like a river—unceasingly and



in abundance. The eye represents how His eye sees all. The hands are the hands of a Father who is ready to welcome His child home.

God the Holy Spirit is represented by the upper right triangle. The Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove when Jesus was baptized. The Holy Spirit showed His presence at Pentecost by a great sound of wind and with tongues of fire appearing on the heads of the disciples of Jesus. The scriptures on the side of the triangle are two passages from the Bible. One is from the New Testament, in Koine Greek (2 Peter 1:21). One is from the Old Testament, in Hebrew (2 Samuel 23:2). Both state that the Lord's prophets spoke the words that He gave

them. The Bible, though written by men, was truly authored by God.

God the Son is represented by the left triangle. A new star appeared over Bethlehem to guide the Magi to the infant Jesus' temporary home there. Jesus was born to die—yet His death was not pointless, for His perfect life, suffering and death won forgiveness of sins for all people. To show that this sacrifice was acceptable, God the Father raised Jesus from the dead, leaving an empty tomb to proclaim this reality. This empty tomb is the joy of every Christian, and a foreshadowing of the future which is theirs in Christ.

—Pastor Caleb Schaller
Lynnwood, Wash.



A Father's Day Devotion—

Every Day is Father's Day

Do we really need a national decree to pay homage to our fathers?

TO CHILDREN, YOUNG AND OLD:

God is not silent to us as children about our relationship to our fathers. One of the Ten Commandments is addressed to our relationship with our fathers. "Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you" (Deut. 5:16).

Our Father in heaven did not intend that we honor our fathers on just one day a year, for honoring our fathers is to be a life-long endeavor. Honoring

our father means not back-talking, ignoring, or "diss-ing" (that is, dishonoring, disobeying, or disagreeing with him). Honoring means setting a high place in our hearts for our fathers and letting our words and actions reflect that position.

Commenting on the fourth commandment, the apostle Paul writes in Ephesians chapter 6, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.'" It is youthful human nature to think of one's father as out-of-touch and unacquainted with reality. With growth and maturity most children learn to appreciate their fathers'

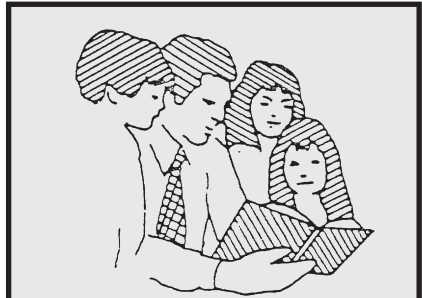
wisdom and experience. Whether you are five or fifty, this commandment speaks to you about how you are to treat your dad: with honor!

TO FATHERS:

Father's Day is also an opportunity for you fathers to consider what God has to say to you in His Word. In the very next verse of Ephesians 6, Paul writes to you, "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (v. 4). It should be your goal to avoid provoking your children to anger and frustration. Instead your goal ought to be a heavenly one: bringing up your children in the training and admonition of the Lord!

After giving the Ten Commandments, the LORD had a directive to fathers, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:6-7). God rests this work of training children in the Word primarily on the shoulders of you fathers. Carrying out Christ's great commission to make disciples of all nations begins with you and your children. That's right, mission work—right at home!

So how have you done? As a child have you honored your father? As a father have you been diligent in having devotions with your children and helping them with their catechism? While there are days when we may think we might get a passing grade—we must confess we have failed. As children we have failed to honor our fathers as God



"And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

demands of us—with a loving and obedient heart. As fathers we have failed to train our children and discipline them with a loving heart.

Thanks be that we have a perfect Father who knows all our needs and well supplies them. God sent His Son to be the sons we were not. Even while dying on the cross, Jesus kept the fourth commandment perfectly for us. Jesus followed the will of His heavenly Father throughout His life—even going so far as to give His life for the sins of the world because it was His Father's will.

Let us as children and/or fathers repent of our failings. But let us also rejoice that we have a perfect Father in heaven. He, our loving Father, sent His Son to redeem us from all our failings.

May the Spirit of God spur us on so that, in the love of Christ, we as children may honor our fathers every day—and that we as fathers may train up our children just as our Heavenly Father desires!

To such holy ends God help us!

—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
Hecla, S.Dak.

The Discourses of Christ

Sorrow turns to Joy—John 16:16-24

“A Big U-Turn”

Have you ever felt really silly? If so, then the second half of chapter sixteen in John’s Gospel is for you! Take a look.

We’re not just talking silly—but really dumb, incompetent, ignorant. Then join this band of Jesus’ disciples here! Like them, you don’t want anyone to discover such naivete and are reluctant to talk about it or admit it to anyone—not even to yourself, and certainly not to Christ. Not yet, anyway.

Ever felt like that? Sure you have. Not because of something you did, but because of something you could not do. You thought you could easily understand or accept something, or maybe you thought you had already comprehended it, but you couldn’t, or you didn’t. You found yourself powerless to do anything about it.

Each of us is right at home in the setting of that very first Holy Communion Service! For Christ already understands, and He is most kind and gentle in the face of such misunderstanding—theirs and ours.

The focus is on Jesus’ words “a little while” iterated seven times. (You heard them recently—in the Gospel reading for *Jubilate, the Third Sunday After Easter*.) And you possibly wondered why they are repeated so often.

And maybe you thought that by this time in Jesus’ ministry, the disciples

should have known what these words mean. But they did not have a clue, even when Jesus expanded on the words. Looking at verses 29 and 30, it seems that they did understand.

Well, they might think they did, but....

...Martin Luther’s comments on these two verses imply that they were “stupid” (his word!), but they hid it, as children often do. For had they understood these words and Jesus’ explanation, they would have fled the room and scattered right now—not waiting for the horror to come which did scatter them!

“Outrunning the Devil”

The horror is that God, their God, is to be taken away, going to His Father indeed, but first by being forsaken by Him, and done to death...taken from their world and from their hearts. This is a horror laced with lamentation and weeping, floundering and hiding in fear. The disciples had no clear idea what was in store for Jesus or for themselves.

They were struggling against ignorance here at this Holy Supper, with conversation simply artless and unpretentious. They loved their Lord Jesus, and He loved them, and they knew that He loved them.

We are right there with them—and

with Jesus. You are His dear children, and this Holy Communion (as always) is a very pleasant atmosphere. He listened to them and spoke to them in a childlike manner. They trusted Him; yet we know that this trust will soon be tested; their hearts will be burdened with great sorrow.

So we must back up now to verse 20, to find these good words of Jesus: “The world shall rejoice, and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy” (v. 20). And: “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and no man will take away your joy” (v. 22). And finally, at the close of the chapter: “In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world” (v. 33).

Ah, now we can explain these things—after the events! And this is always a big U-turn for Jesus’ disciples. We make it often, in the risen Christ, turning from grief to gladness.

Luther said that here we get ahead of the devil. We outrun him.

Then we gladly learn the hard labor of prayer. And Jesus warmly encourages us here also: “Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full” (v. 24). It takes concentration, but we continue to talk to Jesus, gladly to admit our sin(s), gladly to admit what we once could not.

In Christ we also ask for the Spirit to spread God’s law and gospel to those not yet His children, to those helpless in an ignorance which is most serious and damnable. Thus mission outreach is a mixture of joy and tears, in Christ.

In Christ the joy wins out. It does not turn us backward. It keeps turning us forward. To “Our Father, Who art in heaven...” And—to be with Christ—in “a little while.”

—Warren H. Fanning
Pastor Emeritus, Phoenix, Arizona



**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 Faith in Christ

Introductory Thoughts:

Faith is one of those words often used and yet not always so well understood. How would you define *faith*?

We could say that faith is “believing.” Then the next question is, “What does it mean to believe?” To which we might answer, “It means to have faith.”

It can be difficult to define and explain faith without using other words that are assumed to be simply understood but may not always be. A good understanding of *faith* correlates it with *trust*.

Trust is an attitude toward someone that is created by the trustworthiness of the person being trusted.

Why would you not trust a child to make adult decisions? Because the child does not yet have the maturity for such things. The child is not equipped to be trustworthy in adult situations.

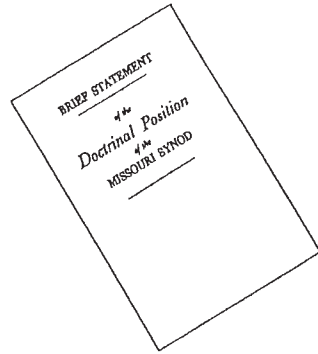
Why do you trust someone with the care of your children in your absence? Because that person has been proven responsible and trustworthy. Trust is not created by the one doing the trusting; it is instilled by the one being trusted.

Our Savior's love and faithfulness are proclaimed in the gospel. The Holy Spirit uses the gospel to create trust in our hearts. That gospel message is what is able to instill in us the knowledge of our Savior and make Him the object of our unwavering trust. That trust is deepened as our knowledge and love for the Savior grows by our continuing to hear of His love for us.

Faith is the confidence to "let go" and trust that God will direct our lives—we don't have to be the ones who figure it all out.

Faith is the confidence of knowing that what God says is true even if it doesn't always make sense to our logic.

Faith is the confidence of being convinced that Jesus is God's Son and that He has redeemed the world and forgives my sins. Through such faith God brings the forgiveness of sins to each of His children.



Brief Statement text [with comment]:

Of Faith in Christ

9. Since God has reconciled the whole world unto Himself [*Universal justification—the barrier between the holy God and sinners is removed; every single sinner is reconciled to God; there is not a single soul that has not been redeemed by Christ.*] **through the vicarious life** [*Jesus lived perfectly under the law as our Substitute to fulfill God's expectation of us.*] **and death** [*Jesus laid down His life in sacrificial payment for the debt of our sins, enduring the eternal punishment of every sin for every sinner.*] **of His Son and has commanded that the reconciliation effected by Christ be proclaimed to men** [*All people are in need of salvation, therefore the reconciliation is to be proclaimed to all people.*] **in the Gospel** [*the power of God to salvation, cf. Romans 1:16*], **to the end that they may believe it** [*that is, to put their complete trust in the Savior which the gospel proclaims. The gospel is the means by which the Holy Spirit creates faith. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God," Romans 10:17*], **2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Romans 1:5, therefore faith in Christ is the only way for men to obtain**

personal reconciliation with God [*The universal reconciliation won by Christ for all sinners comes to the individual sinner through faith*], **that is, forgiveness of sins, as both the Old and the New Testament Scriptures testify, Acts 10:43; John 3:16-18,36.** **By this faith in Christ, through which men obtain the forgiveness of sins, is not meant any human effort to fulfill the Law of God after the example of Christ** [*our efforts, our works can never save us. The best efforts are as filthy rags, cf. Isaiah 64:6*], **but faith in the Gospel, that is, in the forgiveness of sins, or justification, which was fully earned for us**

by Christ and is offered in the Gospel [*Salvation itself as well as the faith to believe it are purely God's work and come to us by His grace. "By grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."* Ephesians 2:8-9]. **This faith justifies** [*brings God's declaration of righteousness to the individual sinner*], **not inasmuch as it is a work of man** [*not of works*], **but inasmuch as it lays hold of the grace offered** [*the gift of God*], **the forgiveness of sins, Romans 4:16.**

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt
Mankato, Minn.



CROSS PURPOSES



The Iniquities of the Fathers

(First of two)

The Lord God had promised to Abraham that His seed would occupy the Promised Land. After reiterating His promise to the patriarchs, and after the years of Egyptian bondage, the time had come to occupy it.

As God's people stood at the brink of entering, twelve spies were sent to spy out the land. Ten of them feared to take the land in spite of the Lord's promise, "I swore to make you dwell therein..." (Num. 14:30). The people doubted the Lord's promise, saying, "If only we had died in the wilderness" (14:2).

Be careful for what you wish. All the adults who left Egypt died in the

wilderness. There is a consequence to doubting the Word of God.

Of all the people who were twenty years old and over when they left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb would enter. These two men believed that the Lord would redeem His promise in spite of the challenges.

The people chose to listen to the ten who did not believe. The majority is not always correct. Only they are correct—and blessed—who follow God's Word!

It is in this context that we find this significant word: "And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms (bear

the brunt of your infidelity—NKJV), until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness” (Num. 14:33). For forty years—one year for each day that the spies were in Canaan—Israel wandered in the wilderness.

The children would suffer during this time because of the spiritual unfaithfulness of their fathers.

What does this say to parents? Children are a gift of God placed in your home. They are not your own. Christian parents have the responsibility before God to bring them to baptism. Baptism is the means of grace which the Heavenly Father has instituted for bringing infants into His kingdom—under His gracious rule and care.

Further, it is the responsibility of Christian parents in the home (first of all) and through agencies of the church (for example, Christian Day School, Sunday School, worship) to faithfully direct their children to the Word of their Savior—who said, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:20)—so that the young, in turn, may know the blessings of their baptism and grow in God’s grace.

Children are to be taught the Word so that they can distinguish between right and wrong and between good and

evil—and above all that the young may find personal joy in the forgiveness of sins, that they thus might find eternal life and glorify the Lord in their life.

“What if...?”

It is the parents’ responsibility to bring their children to Jesus so they may know salvation and be bold in living their faith before the world. Finally, it is the responsibility of father and mother in the home to set for the children a good personal example in faith, trust in the Lord, and godly living.

But what if parents are indifferent to the Word? What if they murmur about how “strict” the church is? What if they are ready to compromise the Word of God in order to make accommodation with the world? What if they themselves doubt God’s promises as Israel did? What if parents are not diligent in matters of faith?

We simply ask the question, “Do you want your offspring to bear the brunt of parental infidelity?” We know how this judgment manifested itself in Israel’s time—the children had to wander in the wilderness forty years while they watched their parents die.

Granted that many children today are architects of their own grief because they have rebuffed the efforts of faithful parents—nevertheless, we



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observe how in general children in society today are paying the price of the parents' indifference and misguided values, as well as all too frequent parental unfaithfulness to the Lord and His Word.

Many children—while enjoying the material things of this world—are wandering about in the wilderness of this evil world without discipline, without purpose, without direction, without faith, and without hope. In many (if not in most) cases this is because father and mother have neglected their spiritual well-being! Unless God, through His gracious Word, draws and sustains the children in spite of parental neglect, the lives of the children will be incomplete; even worse, spiritually malnourished and starved children will suffer eternal consequences!

“Think of the children,” because “it’s for the kids,” we hear today. Yet the

children of our generation are for the most part a cheated generation unless they are “trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6: 4).

An expression such as “We love our children and would do anything for them” is a hollow echo if the children are denied God’s Word and truth without which they cannot grow in knowledge of the true God, faith in Christ, and trust in the Lord. What will children gain if parents give them everything spiritually useless, expect nothing godly, and do not raise them in the Word?

What is a child’s soul worth? Parents who truly love their children do not neglect their spiritual welfare. They will not sentence their children to suffer the consequence of parental infidelity!

(To be continued)

—*Pastor Daniel Fleischer*
Corpus Christi, Tex.



Another (Christian) Perspective—

VIRGINIA TECH SCHOOL SHOOTINGS— WHAT MORE CAN OR SHOULD BE SAID?

Regarding the unbelievably tragic school shooting—with 32 students and faculty members shot to death, plus the killer killing himself in the massacre at Virginia Tech on April 16—what more can, need, or should be said?

Of course, the mainstream media does its thing, much of which we would question and even disagree with. Need the images of the obviously disturbed, deranged individual who perpetrated this horror be shown over

and over again on television screens piped into our homes? Is not the mere reporting of the numbers of deaths—and perhaps the manner it was done—sufficient to satisfy the “need to know,” as well as the curiosity of the watching, wondering public? We feel for the families of the murdered victims and suspect that they care little or not at all to have so much publicity given to the killer, his dastardly deeds, and his deranged utterances (in some twisted

The accompanying article appeared in the bulletin of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, Wyo., Sunday, April 22. Paul Fleischer is pastor. Herewith also a portion of a congregational prayer used that Sunday:

Oh Savior-God, as our nation is reeling from the school shootings in Virginia, keep before us the peace and joy of Your gospel. Help the surviving victims in that tragedy, directing them to Your gospel which alone grants solace and relief in an evil world. Curb Satan's attacks, and use each of us as instruments of Your peace and love wherever there is hatred and ill will...in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

way the killer himself would doubtless be pleased with all the publicity accorded him).

In its reporting the media, of course, brings in a wide variety of “experts” 1) to analyze how the school, its security forces, and other law enforcement agencies (mis)handled the situation, as well as 2) to psychoanalyze the killer—the motives, means, and madness which led him to carry out his insane ends and deeds.

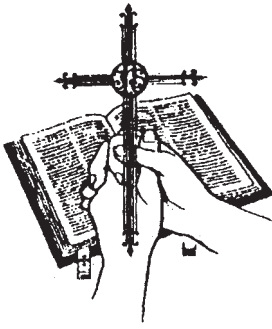
On one hand, we can heartily agree with what the “experts” say when they speak of the “death of civility” and the “loss of a sense of community” in our “me, me, me” culture; when they speak of the desensitization and increasing degradation of that society and culture as “kids watch hours of violence in movies and television”; when they speak of a “calloused, coarsened” society and culture which in our postmodern day no longer allows for the proper labeling of truth and error, good and evil, right and wrong, etc. Such “expert” analyses, with all their evil forebodings, are most sadly “right on.”

On our part, we of the older generation have seen life—our American

society and culture—change before our very eyes in our lifetimes. Sure, the world/nation/culture has always been sinful/wicked/evil (that’s hardly new, not unlike the world before Noah’s Flood). But should we be surprised at increasing violence in a society which has—through the “blessing” of the highest Court in the land!—legally cheapened life by allowing the murder of millions of babies in—torn out of!—the womb? Should we be surprised at these horrendous school shootings when movies and videos and rock (rap, hip hop, or whatever) “music” glorifies violence, adultery, materialism, secularism, hedonism, and all the other “ism’s” which play into the hands of Satan?

It doesn’t take an expert in (child) psychology, does it, to call attention to what the results will be when, for example, the highest grossing movies (not only at Halloween, but regularly) are such as “Saws I/II/III,” with their unbelievable depictions of human-against-human violence? “It’s just a movie”??? “It’s just entertainment”??? No, it’s not! What people—sinners all!!!—hear with their ears and watch with their eyes is bound to make and leave an impression on the hearts, minds, and psyches of those who indulge in such “entertainment.”

Much more could be said on all this from the Bible-believing, Christian perspective. We would simply point out that our Lord Jesus teaches what the sinful nature of all people is capable of, when He says: “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Mt. 15:19). And unless such a sinful heart of a person (“sick” or “normal”) is checked,



“Call upon Me in the day of trouble” (Psalm 50:15).

restrained, reborn (!), the time may well come when such a heart erupts into a full-blown “work of the flesh” such as was carried out again, as witnessed by the nation.

The apostle Paul too lists these “works” of the sinful nature, describing them as “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like” (Gal. 5:19ff).

What we are here pointing out is that mainline media spokes-persons either know nothing about the ugly, unspiritual component behind all evil or simply ignore its reality. That, in turn, is so because it is not politically correct to reference religion or Christianity—or the lack of these—and the good influence which true religion (Christianity!) can have upon the lives of the nation’s citizenry.

Thus our nation’s media—and most of the so-called experts solicited for societal/psychological insight and awareness—is unable to really get to the solution of man’s inhumanity-to-man violence, whether in society in

general or in its school “sanctuaries” in particular.

And if one doesn’t, can’t, or won’t get to the true root of society’s problem(s) (call that root the biggest little word in all human language: “sin”!), one is destined to flail about with all sorts of baseless psychobabble, skirting and even missing outright the only God-prescribed (!) answers and solutions to that problem.

Put another way, here is what we are saying: Only a Bible-based, Christian understanding can and will diagnose aright the problems of a given society heading downhill toward self-destruction. Only a Bible-based, Christian understanding can and will show a fallen world/nation/society/culture that the gospel of Jesus Christ alone can effect change—beginning with hearts of sinners reborn and recreated by the Spirit of God through that gospel of Jesus, the Prince of Peace!

May the Lord, through His Spirit, keep each of us—including our children—close to Him and His Word of life in the gospel, the only antidote against all sin and evil, until by His merciful grace our earthly time of grace runs its course and we enter the mansions of the Father. As the exalted Christ says: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:6ff). •

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!

What's a Good Name Worth

The grace of the Father, the mercy of His Son, and the peace of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Oil - Used in Biblical times

- Oil for cooking
- Oil for ointment
- Oil for anointing
- Oil for faces
- Oil for lanterns
- Oil for smelling good

Oil - Used Today (visuals)

- Oil for cooking
- Oil for ointment
- Oil for cars, trucks, planes, motorcycles, lawnmowers...
- Oil for gasoline
- Oil for squeaky things
- Oil for heating some houses
- Oil for keeping bugs away
- Oil for smelling good
- Oil for removing oil from our oily faces

It is obvious...the many types of oil we have are good and very beneficial. Oil is just as—if not even more—precious today than it was back then! In fact, it is so valuable that many wars have been fought over it. What would we do without our oil??? If in your lifetime you struck oil...you'd likely be rich!

However...in the book of Ecclesiastes we are told of something that is more valuable than oil. "A good name is better than precious oil..." (Eccl. 7:1).

The subject in this passage is "a good name." How important is a good name? In the Bible we may recall how Joseph's good name was taken away from him. Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph when he would not sleep with her, and she got him thrown into prison.

How important is a good name, a good reputation? Speaking of prison, how is an ex-con typically treated? Being a convicted felon and spending time in prison, his or her good name has been greatly tarnished. How important is a good name? If you've ever known a liar, you probably know well that a liar cannot be trusted. A good name is very valuable!

"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches..." (Prov. 22:1).

I'm sure each of us wants to be known as someone who has a good and trustworthy name. But if we want this kind of a name for ourself, shouldn't we want this for our friend or neighbor also? The eighth commandment reminds us of God's gift of a good



name. Remember Luther's explanation to the eighth commandment which says:

"We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way."

How often do you find yourself gossiping about other people? After all, it is human nature to enjoy other people's sins and failures. They can make our own seem less sinful! How often do we speak of people in an insulting or hurtful way? Is there someone we don't particularly care for? Is there a teacher or classmate—or someone at work we don't get along with? Are there other schools or people about whom we don't say anything good?

The society we live in certainly doesn't help us put the best construction on everything. After all, it thrives—and makes great amounts of money and riches—on breaking the eighth commandment. The tabloids and countless other magazines even label themselves as "Gossip columns or magazines."

A good name is very valuable! And the eighth commandment is God's way of protecting His gift of a good name. God commands us not to lie, betray, or give ANYONE a bad name!

How often do we find ourselves

breaking this commandment? In reality, when we view OUR so-called "good name" in light of God's law, what chance is there of our ever being called "good"? In fact, so evil is our human nature in this regard that our sins have paid the price for a one-way ticket to hell. That is what our "good" name earns for us...eternal hellfire!

"A good name is better than precious oil..." (Eccl. 7:1). "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches..." (Prov. 22:1).

Isn't it so that the Devil accuses us of our sin and wickedness day and night before God? He wants to remind God of our "evil" name. The devil wants to reveal to God how our thoughts and actions according to our sinful nature are hateful and hostile to Him.

Thankfully, despite our sin, despite our selfishness, and despite our failures, Jesus has given us a good name. Throughout His life on Earth, He kept not only the eighth commandment but all the commandments perfectly!

Jesus has paid the ultimate price for our good name. You and I and all people were once in an evil standing before God's righteous throne. It took our Savior's perfect name—which He substituted for our own—to give us a good standing before God. It took His precious, innocent blood on the cross to purchase for us the good names that we now have through Him.

And with His precious blood Jesus has anointed us—as was done in the past with oil!—in preparation for the eternal feast and eternal life we will have with Him in heaven. Jesus' atoning sacrifice was the price for our good name.

Knowing this wonderful news about

how we have a good name because of our Savior, we joyfully seek to serve Him for what He has so graciously done for us.

In service to Jesus, take caution and seek His help to speak well of others; He wants us to put the best construction on everything; He wants us to DEFEND the GOOD NAME of others.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against

one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col. 3:12, NIV).

How valuable is a good name! It is greater than precious oil and it is to be chosen over great riches. Every day may we keep in mind how Jesus has selflessly purchased a good name for all people, so that in turn our thoughts, words, and actions may reflect to all people the same love that our Savior has shown us.

To that end, God through His Spirit help us! Amen.

—Neal Radichel (Seminary senior)



(“From One Christian to Another” might be the subtitle for this article/letter, written by a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran, Loveland, Colorado, to her former congregation, St. Stephen’s of San Francisco (West Bay). With the letter writer’s permission, St. Stephen’s pastor, Rollin A. Reim, forwarded it to the *Lutheran Spokesman* that it might be shared with our readers.)

“LC Young Music Makers”

Dear friends in Christ at St. Stephen,

Just wanted to share something wonderful with you, especially since this involves a son of the St. Stephen congregation. Last week the congregation here in Loveland was honored to host one of our church body’s true treasures—our Immanuel Lutheran College Tour Choir directed, of course, by your own John Reim.

It was a quick visit, but oh, so rewarding! The Tour Choir bus pulled up in the driveway here at Prince of Peace Lutheran, and a bunch of lively young songsters spilled out, duffel bags in hand. They hurriedly changed into their elegant choir outfits and partook of the meal that was ready and waiting for them. Then it was back on the bus again and on to the Good Samaritan facility here in Loveland for the evening’s concert.



Choir Members (l-r) Nikki Reim, Noelle Pansch, Emily Roehl, Emily Ryan



Tour Choir in warm-up mode



A photographer's attempt to capture the majestic Colorado Rockies rising behind the choir!

Good Sam's chapel forms a perfect setting for a worshipful concert the likes of ours. It is quite large, more like a full-sized church, and last Tuesday evening the audience packed it quite full! The huge windows at the front of the chapel hold a large cross in the center and have as backdrop the gorgeous Colorado Rockies! Wow! The singers marched in from the back, singing the first hymn, and just kept singing one worshipful hymn after another. It was an exquisite mix of voice and piano and organ and brass quartet and drums! Under the leadership of their director, the choir members sang and played their hearts out! People's hearts were truly uplifted as the concert throughout was a labor of love to the glory of Jesus our Savior!

The choir members wore several hats. They seemed to be everywhere we looked—handing out programs, mingling afterward with the appreciative audience, always telling people how glad they were that they came! The young songsters were vocally appreciative of everything done for them, thanking their hosts and all involved. But it really is we who've been the more richly blessed by them!

My prayer is that you will be honored, too, to host a concert of another group of ILC's young music makers in the near future.

*Love in our Lord Jesus,
/s/Jackie Booth*



2006 CLCI VBS Report

(What follows are excerpts only from a report to the Board of Missions by Pastor Jyothi Benjamin. We're sure you will agree that these words and accompanying pictures tell a wonderful story of the Spirit's work through the gospel. —The Editor)

Dearly beloved brothers, Greetings to you all in name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The CLCI VBS celebrated another successful year. 978 children (ages 5 through 12) participated in VBS at the CLCI Mission house from December 17th through December 23rd, 2006. Quite a few Hindu and Muslim children also participated in this VBS-2006, and the Lord's Name was glorified. Praise God for a wonderful and memorable week....

This one week VBS program planted the wonderful gospel truth in the lives of these children in a great way and gave much relief from their Hindu influenced school lessons. This 2006 VBS was just another example of how so many Sunday School teachers, youth seminary students, and women fellowship members volunteered their time and talents wholeheartedly as planners, coordinators, cooks, teachers, helpers, etc. to ensure its success....As usual in this VBS-2006 we focused our main attention on activities like Bible education program, Bible quiz programs, Bible written tests, Bible story-telling competitions, coloring of biblical pictures, songs, competitions, sports, and games. During 2006 VBS the youth choir continued to play an active role in providing inspiring songs and music for the children.

...We specially thank the lovely CLC-USA Sunday School partners who pray for this heart and soul-touching VBS and render support to this CLCI VBS service with their great prayer support and contributions to run this type of VBS service in this Hindu land. THANK YOU!!! To our CLC-USA Sunday School prayer warriors, your prayers meant more to us than you will ever know. May the Lord bless you all in



every manner. We love you all in Jesus. Please do not forget to uphold these little children of the CLCI ministry with your prayers. The Lord shall be mindful of you and bless you.

Please keep the welfare of our congregations and members in your daily prayers. We pray that the gospel will go out freely and bring many souls to salvation and greatly strengthen those already in the faith. Let us humble ourselves before God and the Savior our Lord Jesus Christ and follow HIM.

Thank you very much. Yours in His grace, Rev. Jyothi Benjamin



Sample testimony from VBS-2006 (we print just one of six-ed.):

Sastri (16 years boy): *"I am 16 years old and I came from Mannava village. I was born and brought up in a Hindu family. I have troubled the people who have preached Jesus to me, and I used to scold them and use bad words. In the year 2004 there was a CLCI VBS program going on near my home at Mannava village, and I went there to point out their mistakes. I was attracted by the word of God, the syllabus, visual aids, and attendance and memory awards. The curriculum challenged me to have a change of heart and attitude. During that time, I heard the story of the rich man and Lazarus. God spoke to me and touched me. I was convicted of my sins and was struggling for deliverance. The CLCI VBS staff and volunteers invited me to participate in the VBS programs. I could see the love of God in them and Jesus Christ. From that onwards, I quit worshiping all my idols and received Jesus as my Savior. I was baptized in 2005 and became a child of the true living God. From that day of my baptism onwards, my involvement in VBS has increased. Through VBS, I have seen so many children and youth enjoying their salvation and spiritual life of holiness. Praise be to God!"*

Announcements

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 concerning 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

Omission

In the April issue, p. 8, the title for the sixth devotion in the series was inadvertently omitted. It should have read: *No. 6 - The Father Sent his Son to be a Ransom for Us.* – Editor



West Central District Delegate Conference
St. Luke's Lutheran Church
Lemmon, South Dakota
May 29-31, 2007

Agenda:

- End of Life Issues—Should we pull the plug?—Teacher James Arndt
- A brief survey of the New Testament Apocryphal books like the *Gospel of Judas* with a discussion of indications why they were rejected—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer)
- An explanation and critique of the Preterists—Pastor Peter Reim
- Evangelical and responsible ways to approach and deal with members who have distanced themselves from the church—Pastor Andrew Schaller
- Historical Review of the Brief Statement of 1932 on its 75th Anniversary—Pastor Timothy Wheaton
- Book review: *The Defense Never Rests*—Lay Delegate Al Johnson
- A Study of Genesis 3:16-19—a Curse or a Blessing?—Pastor Eric Libby
- Gnosticism—then and now (Bible Times and now)—Pastor James Naumann

Chaplain: Pastor Matthew Gurath

Communion Service Speaker: Pastor James Sandeen

—Pastor Frank Gantt, Sec'y



Minnesota Delegate Conference
June 3, 2007 — 3:00 p.m.
Faith Lutheran Church, New Ulm

Agenda:

- Opening Devotion — Pastor Bruce Naumann
 - The Roles of Men and Women in the Church — Pastor David Schierenbeck
 - Bible Study — Pastor Rick Grams
 - Business Meeting; closing and adjournment
- Please announce your attendance to the host congregation.

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, Secretary



From the office of the President

Philip Matzke has resigned from the preaching ministry for health reasons. Please remember Philip and his family and the congregation (St. Peter's, Stambaugh, Mich.) in your prayers.

The Board of Doctrine has recommended to the President that Mr. Ed Starkey be considered eligible for a call into the public ministry after having completed his colloquy.

I hereby certify that Ed Starkey is eligible for a call into the public ministry of the Church of

the Lutheran Confession and has made himself available for service.

— Pastor John Schierenbeck



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- E. In the Kingdom of God to the End

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— Paul R. Koch

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THE BRIEF STATEMENT (PROOF PASSAGES)

2 Corinthians 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."

John 3:16-18

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Romans 1:5

"Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,"

Acts 10:43

"To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

John 3:36

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Romans 4:16

"Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all."