

Lutheran Spokesman



Celebrating Fifty Years of Speaking God's Word of Truth

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Christ our Hero!

There were many great heroes of the Old Testament—men like Moses (who spoke with God and faithfully led God’s people with His powerful word) and David (who fought and killed the giant Goliath and then ruled God’s people). These great heroes might also be used as pictures of our even greater Hero, Jesus Christ.

There are other lesser-known heroes in the Old Testament, such as a group of heroes known widely as “The Mighty Men.” They were mighty indeed.

Take for example Adino the Eznite who had single-handedly killed 800 men at one time. Or think of Eleazar the son of Dodo; when the army of Israel retreated from the Philistines, Eleazar arose and attacked them “until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword,” and he defeated them. Then there was Shammah, the son of Agee, the Hararite. The people of Israel again fled from the Philistine army, but Shammah would not retreat. He stood his ground in the middle of a field surrounded by Philistines; he killed the Philistines and defended the field that day all by himself. Of course,

that was without help from other humans—he defeated them with the power of God. For “The Lord brought about a great victory” through each of these men. (2 Samuel 23:8-12)

We can picture these truly impressive heroes of Israel standing alone against a multitude of enemies, one by one slaying them all. We can get chills thinking of such mighty warriors.

What a marvelous picture this can be of Christ, our great Hero. In Isaiah 63 Jesus Christ is pictured as a great and mighty warrior who is coming back from battle. He is traveling in the greatness of His strength in glorious apparel. As He approaches, His garments are stained in blood. Then Christ says, “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me” (v. 3). Again He says in verse 5, “I

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looked, but there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me.”

He Fought the Battle Alone

Christ, our Hero, stood alone to fight all our enemies. There was no one to help or stand beside Him. When the great battle began, His closest disciples forsook Him and fled.

We too have forsaken Him. We were too busy enjoying the pleasures of sin to help. We were asleep in indifference. Nor COULD we help, even in the slightest. Jesus was fighting great enemies against which we were powerless. He was fighting Satan and the host of demons. He was battling against a world of sin and rebellion. He was fighting against death and the torments of hell. Such are the enemies He slew for us single-handedly.

Not only did we retreat and leave Jesus to fight the battle alone, we gave

up the fight and joined the enemy! Yet Jesus stood up to fight and win the battle.

During the season of Lent, we watch the replay of each battle. We watch blow by blow and marvel at the mighty power of our Hero. We look on with mournful repentance that still to this day we so often continue to go over to the losing side, against our Hero. We watch in sorrow that we had forsaken Him so. Such treachery is seldom displayed by a coward on the battlefield, yet we have done it again and again.

At the same time we watch with tears of joy, because we have seen this battle many times over and know that the victory has already been won. We marvel with astonished reassurance that, despite our rebellion and treachery, Jesus chose to fight this battle to rescue us. We watch with somber but triumphant pleasure as we see our Hero deliver the death-blow to our enemies, returning risen and victorious over all!

And now, though He fought the battle alone, He shares the spoils with us all—bliss and glory forever. What a Hero we have! May we never leave Him again!

—Pastor David Reim
Vernon, British Columbia



“Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’” (John 12:20-21)

WE NEED TO SEE JESUS

The Gospel of John tells us their purpose in coming to Jerusalem—they had come to worship. They sought the LORD...but that wasn’t all they want-

ed. They were respectful and polite. They came with hat in hand to Philip of Bethsaida with a single request: “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”



We don't know exactly why they wanted to see Jesus. The Spirit of God has not seen fit to record their thoughts or reasons for seeking Him. It may have been that they had heard of His miracles and wanted to see the miracle worker. It may have been that they came with sober hearts, seeking the Word of Him who healed the sick and raised the dead.

Theirs was a simple request: "We want to see Jesus."

As we enter the Lenten Season, there are those who will look to themselves and ask, "What can I give up for Lent?" While we may not choose to 'give up' something for Lent, it is proper to begin the season by taking a look in the mirror.

When we look at ourselves (honestly) in the mirror of God's Law, what we see will not be pretty. There is no make-up that can cover what we have done.

We have disobeyed God's commandments. We have not humbled ourselves before God, putting His Word and will in first place. We have placed ourselves and our desires first, before God and neighbor. We have taken our eyes off Christ and have wandered on the pathways of sin. We have hurt one another in thought, in word, and in

action. "I won't do that again," we've said—and then did it again. We have proven time and again in thought, word, and deed that we are truly worthy of death eternal.

This is what we see in the mirror, isn't it? The longer we look into the mirror that is God's Law, the more despair creeps into our hearts, and our fears rise. We need to turn away from the mirror—we don't want to see ourselves anymore!

This is our heart-felt desire: "We want to see Jesus." We don't just want to see Jesus, we NEED to see Jesus...especially when we see our sin, feel our guilt, and hear Satan whisper, "Do you really think He'll forgive YOU?"

We need to see Jesus. We see Him in the accounts of Scripture.

We need to see Him living in faultless love to God and man. We need to see Him carrying the cross and our sins through the streets of Jerusalem toward Calvary.

We need to see Him stretched out on those rough beams and nailed fast, praying all the while for us: "Father, forgive them."

We need to see Him more concerned about providing for His mother Mary than for His own needs.

We need to see Him fulfill the Father's promise, crushing the head of the serpent, forever taking away his power over us.

We need to see Him left alone with our sins on the tree, so that we might be freed of them eternally.

We need to see what Jesus gave up and what He shed to redeem us unto God.

What we see is not pretty...but it is wonderful. It is especially wonderful

when we see Him alive the third day, bearing in His hands and feet the proof of our redemption!

We need to see Jesus!

We will see Him—in the Scriptures

now, and in the resurrection face to face.

God help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus until that Day!

—Pastor Andrew Schaller
Watertown, South Dakota



“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work” (2 Thessalonians 2:16,17).

Moving Out of Our Comfort Zone

Not long ago I heard a doctor giving advice on how we can maintain our mental health as we get older. He said that it wasn't just a matter of engaging in activities that exercise the mind (such as reading or doing crossword puzzles). We need to branch out from what is familiar and easy—try to learn a new skill; do some reading in an unfamiliar subject; make an effort to talk to someone you don't know well. “Be willing to move out of your comfort zone,” was the way he put it.

Maintaining and improving our spiritual well-being also involves moving out of our comfort zone. Reading and studying the Word of God exposes us to much that makes us uncomfortable. It brings us face to face with God's law, His holiness, His holy will for us. It brings us to the distressing realization that we have not kept His law. Exposure to God's law doesn't make us feel good and does nothing to build our self-esteem.

It is easy to avoid the uncomfortable feelings that God's law produces in us—just stop reading the Bible; stay away from church where the preach-



ing, the hymns, and the confession of sins remind us of what sinners we are. If anyone begins to talk to you about your spiritual welfare, change the subject.

Attending worship services during Lent will surely make us uncomfortable. Who can hear the history of Jesus' passion without squirming? And it isn't only because we are exposed to acts of cruelty and brutality, is it? It is the preaching about the passion of Christ—and even the Lenten hymns—that show us that it was our sins that brought such suffering on the sinless Christ.

The Discomfort of the Cross

Yet it is only by way of the discomfort of the cross that sinners are brought to the comfort of the gospel. In the reading and preaching of the passion history of Christ, not only do we

see our sins, but we also see our sins laid on Christ. We see Him willingly taking our sins upon Himself and bearing them in our place. In His sacrificial death we see our guilt removed completely and forever. His suffering and death assure us that we are at peace with God; He has nothing against us; we are not condemned and will not be condemned on the day of judgment.

This is real comfort! And it's what God wants to give us! It isn't that He wants to make us uneasy and miserable. Quite the opposite: God is eager to comfort us. But He doesn't want us to look for comfort in the wrong places. He doesn't want us to be temporarily soothed by false comfort. He

wants to give us the true and lasting comfort that is found only in Christ, His Son, our Savior.

During Lent let us be willing to move out of our comfort zone and hear and meditate on the sufferings of Christ. Let Him soothe us with the true comfort of forgiveness.

As our theme verse puts it: "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work" (2 Thess. 2:16,17).

—Pastor John Klatt
Rapid City, South Dakota



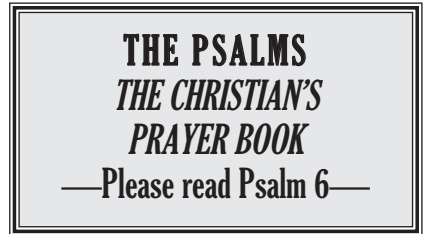
David's Expression of a Contrite, Confident Faith

If a person were looking for the definition of repentance, perhaps the simple catechism answer would do: "sorrow for sins and faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins."

But it would be even better for us as Christians to look at the account of one of God's own as recorded in the Bible, and to witness repentance in real life.

This is what we find in Psalm 6, a psalm of David. There was some quandary in which David found himself and it brought him low, as he writes: "My soul is greatly troubled...I am weary with my groaning; all night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears. My eye wastes away because of grief..." (vv. 3,6,7).

Most likely you and I have found ourselves in similar spiritual straits. We have heard those words of encour-



agement from Paul: "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). And yet it seems that when we are tempted to get angry at our spouse, most of the time we do; most of the time when we resolve to use our time better, we don't; and when the opportunity comes to commit that pet sin, most of the time we do...and even willingly.

In His Word God makes it clear that He expects us to be holy, for He as our Lord God is holy (Leviticus 19:2); but we don't even come close. With Isaiah we must confess, "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (64:6). How often are we not, as David, reduced to tears over our sinfulness, confessing with Paul, "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom. 7:24)?

A Thrilling Sound!

What a wonder that even though it is all too apparent that we are sinners, God sent His Son to go the way of the cross in our place! How thrilling it is to hear those words: "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life!" (Jn. 3:16) It is because "the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy" (Ps. 103:8) that we can do as David did. He threw Himself on God's kindness, pleading: "Oh, save me for Your

mercies' sake" (v. 4).

Afterwards we find David filled with confidence: "The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping. He has heard my supplication; He will receive my prayer" (vv. 8-9).

We too know that when we come before our Lord with godly sorrow over our sins—a contrite heart—He will forgive us. This was exactly why Jesus came to Earth. As the apostle writes, "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:13-14).

During this Lenten season, let us lay our sins before God our Father with a contrite heart, and for the sake of Jesus our Savior cheerfully receive His forgiveness, full and free!

*—Pastor Paul Krause
Clarkston, Washington*



The Discourses of Christ

Lamp of the Body—Luke 11:33-36

The Lamp that is in You

Jesus had an unnerving way of pinning His opponents. He could say things in a way that shifted the burden of admission to the individual. Think of His interview with Pilate: "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus' answer: "Are

you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" (Jn. 18:33-34) Or before Caiaphas, the High Priest: "I put You under oath by the living God; Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Jesus: "It is as

you said...” (Mt. 26:63-64).

By doing so, Jesus pressed His adversaries to reflect on the truths that they had spoken with their own mouths. They were compelled, perhaps only for a moment—but still, compelled to consider the great truths that surrounded Jesus, the Christ of God.

At other times, He compelled His hearers to look inward and to see what was really going on within their own souls.

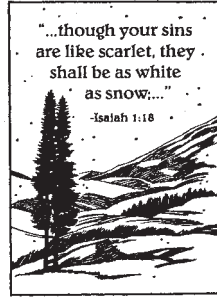
The discourse of Christ before us was occasioned by comments of some hostile observers when Jesus was casting out a demon. Jesus acted successfully to deliver a person from the demon’s evident power, but some people sneered, blasphemously, that Jesus was acting in concert with “Beelzebub, the prince of demons.” Others challenged Jesus to prove His divine authority with some sign from heaven.

After answering His critics directly, Jesus spoke more generally to the crowds: “This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.” The only mark of divine authority (well, beyond “the blind seeing, the lame walking, the lepers cleansed and the deaf hearing, the dead raised up, and the poor having the gospel preached to them”—Mt. 11:4-5) was the sign of Jesus’ burial and third-day resurrection.

But woe to those who demanded such proof to satisfy their stubborn blindness against the Lord’s gracious visitation. The men of Nineveh, who had listened to Jonah, would stand in judgment of such.

Meant to be Seen

Then, a warning meant to cause all



His hearers to examine themselves: a lamp does not send forth its light in secret. It is self-evident that a lamp is meant to be seen and to give light to all who come in.

Now, the lamp of the body is the eye—with the eye we lock in our focus; with it we follow the object of our desire. The eye is a great communicator. We often feel that we can tell what a person is thinking by watching the eyes—even if he says something different.

The eye of the body is a lamp. It can shine with sincerity or sensuousness; it can reveal compassion or covetousness. The religious leaders of the Jews presented themselves as divines—experts in the scriptures, leaders in the prayers of the people, priests to commune between God and men. But their reaction to Jesus and His ministry—a ministry which so dramatically proclaimed the presence of the Kingdom of God and His salvation to God’s people—was oozing with dark jealousy and hatred.

The leaders’ disarming manner and cloying inquiries into His right to minister were betrayed by the blind hatred in their eyes.

“The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body

also is full of darkness. Therefore, take heed....” This warning was meant for everyone. It was meant to spur self-examination.

Were any others in the crowd as darkly cynical as the Pharisees? Were there any among these people who could observe God’s gracious hand so manifestly evident—offering mercy, grace, and eternal life to the poor, the weary, the troubled—and yet dismiss it all, unmoved?

The question is put to us today as well. What light is it that is in us? Is it the light of faith, hope, and love? Is it a brilliant flame of holiness ignited by the Spirit of God, leading us to trust in the Lord and hold Him and His Word as more precious than any other thing? Is it the light of recognition that “the grace of God that brings salvation has been manifested to all men”? (Titus 2:11)

Jesus asks the question to make us reflect and take care. It is hard to recognize what is in the eye, unless one looks in the mirror. The law of God is such a mirror, which can unerringly expose our sins; it can scare up some blind spots in our habits or thinking or beliefs. We will see sin’s true ugliness, and repent as did the men of Nineveh.

All this is so that we, having seen the darkness of our own sin, may better

see the light of God’s grace. Jesus’ followers, if they stayed with Him and followed Him with eyes of faith, would see the Son of Man lifted up. The Lamb of God sacrificed, bearing all our sins away. They would see the risen Lord, and believing, be filled with a light that can shine only from heaven.

That light shines on us now, in this day and age, through Word and Sacrament. Look on Jesus, who manifested His power over demons and finally will crush Satan under our feet (Rom. 16:20). Look to Jesus and see God’s gracious visitation in our lives, and He will become the light that shines in our eyes. He will be the light that shines in eyes full of joy, peace, hope, and love.

He will give us the steady gaze that sees beyond the turmoil of this world—to His world in the realms of light where the faithful will behold Him in glory forever. And in our own eyes will shine forth the Light of the world.

Lift up thine eyes in wonder;
See, nations gather yonder,
They all come unto thee.
The world has heard thy story,
Thy sons come to thy glory
And daughters haste thy Light to see. (TLH #126:4)

—Pastor Peter Reim
Loveland, Colorado



West Central
Pastoral Conference met
at Berea, Sioux Falls,
Sept. 11-13; (l-r)
Standing: Mark Gurath
(host pastor), Geo.
Dummann,
Tim Wheaton; below:
J. Klatt, Matt Gurath,
P. Fleischer, E. Libby,
F. Gantt, A. Schaller,
P. Reim, M. Roehl,
A. Pfeiffer

Second in a series—

“Savoring the Spirit-fruit”

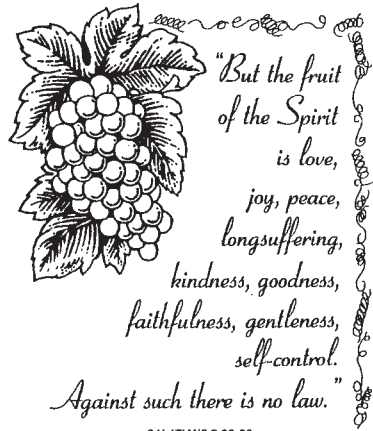
Joy

This writing on the Spirit-fruit of Joy is being written during the joyous season of Christmas. And the time it reaches you, our readers, will be close to the onset of the mournful season of Lent.

As children of the heavenly Father, we understand there could be no joy found at Christmas time without the sad realities of Jesus’ sufferings and death as our Savior. The birth announcement by the Christmas angel to the Bethlehem shepherds said as much, when these familiar words were exclaimed, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:10-11).

Living as we do in a sin-cursed world—which is known to us as a ‘vale of tears’—we give thanks to our Savior God for making it possible to have joy in the midst of sorrow and sadness. What our Savior worked out for us through His life, death, and resurrection, the Holy Spirit brings to fruition through the enjoyment of His priceless gifts such as the gift of joy, by blessing us with spiritual knowledge and faith.

King David is a good example of the great depths of anguish to which a person can fall over unconfessed sin, as well as the exalted heights of joy and gladness to which the heart is elevated when the Spirit of God works repen-



tance and faith in God’s forgiving love through His only begotten Son.

In Psalms 32 and 51 read for yourselves what David wrote from personal experience concerning the highs and lows in his life (recorded in 2 Samuel 11 & 12). When he was troubled over sin, David’s plea to our merciful and forgiving God can be heard: “Make me hear joy and gladness” (Ps. 51:8). In the opening words of Psalm 32, David tells of the great joy experienced in knowing by faith that his transgression is forgiven and his sin covered.

In All Circumstances!

This is the message of “good tidings of great joy” with which the Spirit of God blesses us through a heart-felt knowledge of Jesus who was born to die as our Savior.

The truly amazing thing about the Spirit-fruit of joy is that we Christians can find cause for joy even when going through trials and tribulations.

When Peter and the other apostles were persecuted to the point of beatings for their Christian witness, they rejoiced with joy that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Jesus’

name (Acts 5:40,41). In the epistle of James, Christian brethren are exhorted to “count it all joy when you fall into various trials”— because trials help us to draw closer to our Savior God in faith and to grow in Christian maturity.

The apostle Peter writes of the same blessings (1 Peter 1:6-9; 4:12,13) which come out of life’s trials and religious persecution; he speaks of believers rejoicing with inexpressible joy. And why is this? Because we receive the end of our faith—the salvation of our souls.

This draws our attention to the reason why we can rejoice even over a loved one who has died in the Lord

(while the unbelieving world mourns over their own in death because they have no hope); the Lord Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life, rejoices our hearts concerning His victory over death, and concerning the knowledge that the saints in heaven are in His presence where there is perfect, never-ending joy.

Knowing and experiencing joy in these various situations, we understand why the apostle Paul exhorts believers to “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Php. 4:4)

—Pastor Mark Gullerud
Eau Claire, Wisconsin



Volume 50 Revisits Earlier Volumes

Volume 20, Number 3 (September, 1977)

Editor’s Note: This reprint is but the final one-third of a writing by Pastor David Lau (who now serves Peace with God Lutheran Church, Onalaska, Wisconsin) which appeared under the above title in the *Lutheran Spokesman* some thirty years ago. 2007, of course, would have been the 430th anniversary of our confessional document, the *Formula of Concord*. As is being discovered again and again in these “Revisit” articles, when Bible (church) teaching is involved, elapsed time rarely changes things, at least not for the better. If the reader would like the complete article, please contact the editor (e-mail address in masthead).

Four Hundred Years of Concord (1577-1977) God’s Gift to Confessional Lutherans

...*The Formula of Concord* was completed in May of 1577. In the next few years it was signed by many pastors, teachers, and rulers in Germany. Some refused to sign, of course, for God’s truth is never accepted by all. The King of Denmark threw his copy of the confession into the fireplace.

But the majority of Lutherans in Germany and even in other countries eventually signed the *Formula of Concord*. As long as subscription to this confession was taken seriously, the Lutheran Church enjoyed an unprecedented period of doctrinal unity. The century from 1577 to 1677 was truly

the age of orthodoxy, and not even the horrible Thirty Years' War from 1618-1648 could rob God's people of the spiritual blessings of the pure Word. Paul Gerhardt's many hymns in our Lutheran Hymnal testify to the rich doctrinal heritage enjoyed by the Lutherans of that era....

The time came, however, when pietism replaced confessionalism, and rationalism replaced pietism. The eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century witnessed a remarkable deterioration of true Lutheranism, noticeable not only in Europe but also in the United States. Most of the early Lutherans settled in our country were not confessional Lutherans but unionistic Lutherans who were faithful neither to the *Formula of Concord* nor to the Bible.

But in the middle of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, there was a revival of confessional Lutheranism. The Lutheran Synodical Conference, organized in 1872, was a church body that subscribed wholeheartedly to the *Formula of Concord*. Again there was a large group of Lutherans that spoke God's truth in unity for almost 100 years. What a blessing that was!

Our Unionistic Age

Today, however, the situation in Lutheranism is worse than in the thirty years after Luther's death. Lutheranism and Christianity are disgraced by the absence of confessional unity among Lutherans. Most of those calling themselves Lutherans today cannot even agree that all of the Bible is God's inerrant Word. Lacking an authoritative source for their teaching, they get lost in the maze

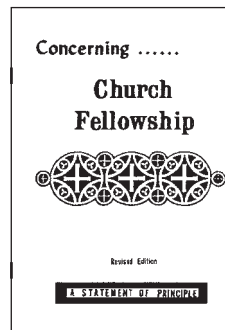
of human opinions.

Even among those who are known as confessional Lutherans, there are few who want to follow in the footsteps of Martin Chemnitz and Jacob Andreae by giving no room to the least error. Parts of the truth are being compromised for the sake of temporal peace, particularly those parts of the truth that deal with church fellowship. The spirit of our age is unionistic, not confessional.

We are convinced that our God has given us in the Church of the Lutheran Confession the privilege of being confessional Lutherans in a unionistic age. We do subscribe with all our hearts to the *Formula of Concord*. We are convinced that its teachings are God's truth. When a controversy arose among us concerning the use of the Law, the *Formula of Concord* proved to be of great benefit to us. What we confess in this document is no dead letter to us.

In our contemporary confession *Concerning Church Fellowship*, the *Formula of Concord* was our model. What God had to say on this matter was carefully studied. The true doctrine was laid out, and the false doctrines exposed as false.

If the present divisions in Lutheranism are to be healed in the proper manner of the *Formula of*



Concord, some such confession in church fellowship will have to be adopted by Lutherans and put into practice. Only in this way will we be speaking the same thing without divisions, in accordance with our Lord's will.

Here then is a brief summary of our confession on church fellowship. Test it according to God's Word. We believe it can stand the test.

1. *We believe, teach and confess that complete doctrinal agreement is the scriptural basis for church fellowship. (1 Cor. 1:10)*

2. *We further believe that the doctrine which the Church should teach and hold is restricted to the doctrine of the Bible. (1 Peter 4:11)*

3. *We further believe that the Word of God (The Old and New Testaments) is inerrant, inviolable and clear. (2 Tim. 3:16, John 10:35, Psalm 119:105)*

4. *We believe that all aberrations from the doctrines of Scripture are condemned by God. (Jer. 23:31, Gal. 1:9)*

5. *We believe and teach that church fellowship is forbidden with all who deviate from the Word of God in their*

teachings. (Rom. 16:17)

6. *We further believe that **all manifestations of fellowship are forbidden with those who deviate from the Word of God in their teachings. (Rom. 16:17b)***

7. *We further believe and teach that suspension of an established fellowship is to take place when it has been ascertained that a person or group is causing divisions and offenses through a false position in doctrine or practice. (Rom. 16:17-18)*

As the Foreword to *Concerning Church Fellowship* states, the *Formula of Concord* "was eminently successful in bringing order out of a welter of controversy and confusion. By the grace of God it served as an instrument of unity on a large scale, far larger than seemed possible when the strife was at its height."

Our own confession on church fellowship has the same aim today, not to divide, but to unite, in the unity that gives glory to our Savior-God. May we always continue to pray for God-pleasing Christian concord and peace.



Great Lakes Pastoral Conference, Sept. 18-20, in front of Ingram Hall at ILC, Eau Claire: (l-r), W. Schaller, D. Schaller, D. Naumann, J. Schaller, P. Tiefel, J. Lau, J. Fleischer, J. Ude, M. Ude, M. Wilke, P. Koch, M. Gullerud, T. Schuetze, M. Eichstadt, J. Pfeiffer

Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference
Trinity Lutheran Church,
Spokane, Wash., Oct. 23-25: (l-r) front:
N. Radichel, C. Schaller, B. Naumann,
A. Gullerud; back: D. Maas, P. Krause,
P. Naumann, R. List, T. Kesterson
(host pastor), S. Karp, D. Reim



The All-Important Question!

—Worship bulletin (Sept. 9, 2007) of Berea Ev. Lutheran Church, Inver Grove Heights, Minn. David Schierenbeck is pastor

Over the past few weeks, reports have again been coming in from church conventions held by a number of mainline denominations. In many of them the Convention is dominated by both a power struggle for leadership and a battle over important theological issues such as marriage, homosexuality, abortion, the role of women, fellowship, and others.

In some cases these debates have raged for years—with each “side” (liberal and traditional) seeking to gain the upper hand. Their formula for church unity and survival—“agreeing to disagree agreeably”—is being severely tested in the face of growing frustration in all camps.

Sad to say, this will never change so long as the clear voice of Biblical truth and authority does not rule and resound in their midst. Without that clear voice, both individually and collectively, these church ships will continue adrift on the sea without either the anchor or the oar to prevent them from being carried “in every direction by every wind of doctrine which happens to be blowing” (Eph. 4:14).

It is only by God's grace and mercy that we are not in a similar situation. Even with all our weaknesses and failings, He has not only brought us into His holy Christian Church by faith in Christ, but He has also brought us into

a visible church and fellowship which is united in and around His holy, inspired, infallible Word of truth. Whenever questions and issues arise in our midst, it matters not what the church says, what the pastor's view is, what the consensus of the people is, or what the prevailing views of society are. The only voice and view that matters—and it has all the truth and authority of the Almighty God behind it— is what Scripture says.

As we say these things, we in no way intend to undermine appropriate respect for the office of the ministry and Christian love for the brethren. The apostle Paul was not offended but rather commended the Bereans who measured what he said against the truth of Scripture (Acts 17). It is simply a fact that the Church and our church are not democracies in matters of belief. We have only one Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and only one Word that is God-authored, trustworthy, able to save our souls, and creating true unity as it guides us safely through life.

In all this there remains a powerful and practical lesson for us. All of us have personal thoughts, opinions, and feelings that are at times very strong. It is important to realize that not everything even Christians think or feel comes entirely or exclusively from God or His Word. There are a number of voices and forces at work inside our minds and hearts—including our sinful nature which hates and rebels against God and His Word. What we really

need to ask is: “What does Scripture say?” And then pray for the faith and strength to follow and apply His Word

and will to our lives—to His glory and to our great blessing.



**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)**

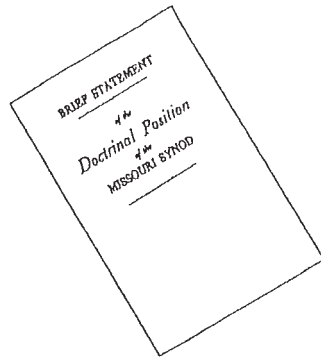
Brief Statement
Of the Election of Grace

Introductory Thoughts:

When sorrows and difficulties enter the life of a child of God, one of the passages frequently used for comfort and encouragement is Romans 8:28: “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God....”

This passage of comfort is, for good reason, committed to memory by every confirmation student. However, the depth of comfort and understanding of these words is really found in the following words which aren’t always remembered: “...to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son...Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Rom. 8:28b-30).

The basis for our confidence that “all things work together for good” is God’s eternal election. Before time began, God chose you to be His child.



The creation of the world occurred and thousands of years passed in time before you were brought to faith. However, God is faithful, so in time He calls to faith those whom He predestined in eternity. Through faith God brings the forgiveness of sins that enables sinners to stand blameless before Him on the Last Day and then to enter eternal glory.

God will see His election through to its completion, and for that reason we can be confident that even now He is working all things—yes, even the sor-

rowful things—for His purpose of bringing us to glory.

The truth concerning God’s eternal election is easily skewed if and when human logic is applied to it. Like other teachings of Scripture, this teaching is true on the basis of God’s Word, not on the basis of human reason.

The doctrine of election does not give a license to sin, for that would be despising God’s grace. The doctrine of election is not a teaching of Scripture for unbelievers, nor does it teach how someone is brought to faith (conversion). It is intended solely for the comfort and assurance of God’s children.

God’s election of grace emphasizes that our salvation is completely tied to the merits of Christ, and that our redemption is accomplished purely by God’s grace. “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Cor. 9:15)

Of the Election of Grace

35. By the election of grace we mean this truth, that all those who by the grace of God alone, for Christ’s sake, through the means of grace [the gospel], are brought to faith, are justified, sanctified, and preserved in faith here in time, that all these have already from eternity been endowed [graciously given] by God with faith, justification, sanctification, and preservation in faith, and this for the same reason, namely, by grace alone, for Christ’s sake, and by way of the means of grace. [None of this is accomplished apart from Christ or the working of the Holy Spirit. Thus the truth concerning God’s election is not at odds with the rest of Scripture concerning our salvation.] That this is the doctrine of the Holy Scripture is evident from Eph. 1:3-7 [Notice how

many times even in these few verses Paul connects our salvation to Jesus—”in Him...by Jesus...through His blood” *etc.]; 2 Thess. 2:13,14; Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Tim. 1:9; Matt. 24:22-24 (cp. Form. of Conc. Triglot, p. 1065, para. 5,8,23; M., p. 705).*

36. Accordingly we reject as an anti-Scriptural error the doctrine that not alone the grace of God and the merit of Christ are the cause of the election of grace, but that God has, in addition, found or regarded something good in us which prompted or caused Him to elect us [such a teaching would mean that we are contributors to our salvation and would deny that all people are equally born dead in sin—thus a contradiction of Scripture], this being variously designated as good works, right conduct, proper self-determination, refraining from willful resistance, etc. Nor does Holy Scripture know of an election by foreseen faith, in view of faith, as though the faith of the elect were to be placed before their election [This addresses the false teaching that God looks ahead in time to see who will believe and, in view of that faith, elects the individual to salvation.]; but according to Scripture the faith which the elect have in time belongs to the spiritual blessings with which God has endowed them by His eternal election. [Rather than faith preceding election, Scripture teaches us that the creation of faith in a heart is God’s election in eternity being brought to fruition in time, cf. Romans 8:28-30] For Scripture teaches, Acts 13:48: “And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed.” Our Lutheran Confession also testifies (Triglot, p. 1065, para. 8; M. p. 705): The eternal

SIDEBAR EDITORIAL NOTATION

Dear Readers:

A total of nineteen articles comprise the *Brief Statement*. This means that, at one per month, the series must continue beyond the twelve months of the 75th anniversary year (2007) into 2008. Five truly brief (!) articles are yet to follow.

However, this month's treatment of "election" is another of the longer articles in the *Brief Statement*. Yet we print it in its entirety [with comment] for the sake of its spiritually compelling content. Our prayer is that the Spirit of God will guide our readers to a careful, prayerful consideration of the scripturally based subject matter.

In recent months yours truly has read a book entitled *The Foolishness of God—The Place of Reason in the Theology of Martin Luther* (Northwestern Publishing House, Milw., Wis., 1982). The book, authored by a Wisconsin Synod Seminary professor Dr. Siegbert Becker (1914-1984), is helpful for anyone desirous of getting a "holy handle" on the place of human reason in connection with so many articles of our Bible-based Lutheran faith. The conundrum the book treats might be illustrated by the fact that while, on the one hand, Luther calls reason a gift of God (first article), at the same time he teaches that reason dare receive no credit for conversion (third article).

With regard to the doctrine of election specifically, the author of the aforementioned book has this to say: "*Everyone concedes that the doctrine of election is difficult for human reason...It would seem that if God's eternal decision to save a particular man is a cause of his conversion and perseverance, and if God earnestly desires the salvation of all, then all men should be elect and saved. Yet such is not the case...The Brief Statement of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which all synods of the former Synodical Conference recognized as orthodox, says of these two doctrines, 'Blind reason indeed declares these two truths to be contradictory; but we impose silence on our reason' ...*" (p. 214f).

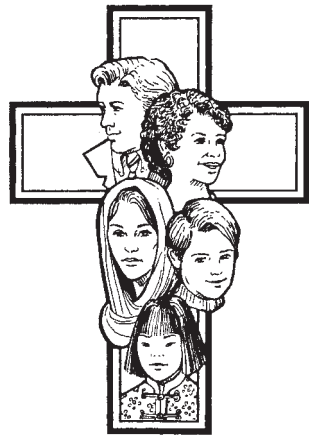
Besides the election of grace, other difficult-for-human-reason doctrines enlarged upon in the afore-mentioned book for which we must "impose silence on our reason" include conversion, the virgin birth/incarnation of Christ, the person/two natures of Christ, the bodily resurrection of Christ (and of us all!), and the "Real Presence" of the Lord's body and blood in the Sacrament.

The "anti-rationalism" of Luther is apparent with regard to such doctrines, yet all true heirs of the Reformer stand with him on them, confessing with the hymn-writer:

*I know my faith is founded On Jesus Christ, my God and Lord;
And this my faith confessing, Unmoved I stand upon His Word.
Man's reason cannot fathom The truth of God profound;
Who trusts her subtle wisdom Relies on shifting ground.
God's Word is all-sufficient, It makes divinely sure,
And trusting in its wisdom, My faith shall rest secure. (TLH #381:1)*

election of God however, not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also, from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, a cause which procures, works, helps, and promotes our salvation and what pertains thereto [When God begins a good work through election He will bring it to a glorious completion, cf. *Philippians 1:6*]; and upon this our salvation is so founded that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, *Matt. 16:18*, as is written *John 10:28*: ‘Neither shall any man pluck My sheep out of My hand’; and again, *Acts 13:48*: ‘And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed...’

37. But as earnestly as we maintain that there is an election of *grace*, or a predestination to salvation, so decidedly do we teach, on the other hand, that there is no election of wrath, or predestination to *damnation* [even though this would be a logical conclusion by human reason]. Scripture plainly reveals the truth that the love of God for the world of lost sinners is universal, that is, that it embraces all men without exception, that Christ has fully reconciled all men [all mankind] unto God, and that God earnestly desires to bring all men to faith, to preserve them therein, and thus to save them, as Scripture testifies, *1 Tim. 2:4*: “God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” [The gospel’s power does not act differently toward one vs. the other. It calls out to all to repent and trust in Jesus for forgiveness, cf. *Ezekiel 33:6*]. No man is lost because God has predestined him to eternal damnation.—Eternal election is a cause



The Family of God

why the elect are brought to faith in time, *Acts 13:48*; but election is *not* a cause why men remain unbelievers when they hear the Word of God. The reason assigned by Scripture for this sad fact is that these men judge *themselves* unworthy of everlasting life, putting the Word of God from them and obstinately resisting the Holy Ghost, whose earnest will it is to bring also them to repentance and faith by means of the Word, *Acts 13:46; 7:51; Matt. 23:37*.

38. To be sure, it is necessary to observe the Scriptural distinction between the election of grace and the universal will of grace. This universal gracious will of God embraces all men; the election of grace, however, does not embrace all, but only a definite number, whom God hath from the beginning chosen to salvation, *2 Thess. 2:13*, the remnant, the seed which the Lord left, *Rom. 9:27-29*, the election, *Rom. 11:7*; and while the universal will of grace is frustrated in the case of most men, [not all will inherit eternal life because many will resist the Holy Spirit and

reject God's salvation] **Matt. 22:14; Luke 7:30**, the election of grace attains its end with all whom it embraces, [*God's election of grace cannot fail; it will be brought to completion*] **Rom. 8:28-30**. Scripture, however, while distinguishing between the universal will of grace and the election of grace, does not place the two in opposition to each other. On the contrary, it teaches that the grace dealing with those who are lost is altogether earnest and fully efficacious for conversion. [*God doesn't try less with some than with others. The power of the gospel is the same towards all*] Blind reason indeed declares these two truths to be contradictory; but we impose silence on our reason.** The seeming disharmony will disappear in the light of heaven, **1 Cor. 13:12**.

39. Furthermore, by election of grace, Scripture does not mean that one part of God's counsel of salvation according to which He will receive into heaven those who persevere in faith unto the end, but, on the contrary, Scripture means this [*what follows is a summary definition*], that God, before the foundation of the world, from pure grace, because of the redemption of Christ, has chosen for His own a definite number of persons out of the corrupt mass and has determined to bring them through Word and Sacrament, to faith and salvation.

40. Christians can and should be assured of their eternal election. [*This is the heart and purpose of this teaching. The doctrine of election is intended for the comfort and reassurance of*

God's children.] This is evident from the fact that Scripture addresses them as the chosen ones and comforts them with their election, **Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13**. This assurance of one's personal election, however, springs only from faith in the Gospel, from the assurance that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to *condemn* the world; on the contrary, through the life, suffering, and death of His Son He fully *reconciled* the whole world of sinners unto Himself. Faith in this truth leaves no room for the fear that God might still harbor thoughts of wrath and damnation concerning us. [*If our faith wavers with such doubts, we do well to go back to Scripture to be reassured of God's grace, the salvation that is ours in Christ and the certainty of God's promises.*] Scripture inculcates that in **Rom. 8:32,33**: "He that spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Luther's pastoral advice is therefore in accord with Scripture: "Gaze upon the wounds of Christ and the blood shed for you; there predestination will shine forth." (St. Louis ed., II, 181; on **Gen. 26:9**) That the Christian obtains the personal assurance of his eternal election in this way is taught also by our Lutheran Confessions (Formula of Concord, *Triglot*, p. 1071, para. 26, M. 709): "Of this we should not judge according to our reason nor according to the Law or from any external appearance. [*We will fail if*

**See editorial notation (sidebar) p. 17



*we try to understand any part of our salvation by the Law or external appearance.] Neither should we attempt to investigate the secret, concealed abyss of divine predestination, but should give heed to the revealed will of God. For He has made known unto us the mystery of His will and made it manifest through *Christ* that it might be preached, Eph. 1:9ff.; 2 Tim. 1:9ff.”—In order to insure the proper method of viewing eternal election and the Christian’s assurance of it, the Lutheran Confessions set forth at length the principle that election is not to be considered in a bare manner (*nude*), as though God only held a muster, thus: ‘This one shall be saved, that one shall be damned’ (Formula of Concord, *Triglot*, p. 1065, Paragraph 9; M., p.*

706); but “the Scriptures teach this doctrine in no other way than to direct us thereby to the *Word*, Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 1:7; exhort to repentance, 2 Tim. 3:16; urge to godliness, Eph. 1:14; John 15:3; strengthen faith and assure us of our salvation, Eph. 1:13; John 10:27ff.; 2 Thess. 2:13ff.” (Formula of Concord, *Triglot*, p. 1067, Paragraph 12; M., p. 707). [*The doctrine of election doesn’t change anything regarding the way of salvation or what believing children of God will do in their lives of sanctification*]*—To sum up, just as God in time draws the Christian unto Himself through the Gospel, so He has already in His eternal election endowed them with sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, 2 Thess. 2:13. Therefore: If, by the grace of God, you believe in the Gospel of the forgiveness of your sins for Christ’s sake, you are to be certain that you also belong to the number of God’s elect [a tremendous comfort!], even as Scripture, 2 Thess. 2:13, addresses the believing Thessalonians as the chosen of God and gives thanks to God for their election.*

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt
Mankato, Minnesota



South-East Pastoral
Conference, October 9-11,
Immanuel Lutheran Church,
Winter Haven, Fla. (l-r)
M. Hanel, G. Oster,
L. Bernthal, D. Fleischer,
K. Stewart,
J. Schierenbeck (host pastor),
N. Mayhew, V. Fossum,
D. Rieken, R. Gurgel,
T. Ohlmann, P. Larsen

CLC EXPLORATORY SERVICES

Last revised: December, 2007

This is a list of "start-up" congregations who are being served by an off-site pastor. Some meet in homes, others in rented facilities. Visitors are warmly welcomed. Those who are considering a move, or are just traveling through the area, are encouraged to contact these groups and worship with them.

LOCATION	PASTORAL CONTACT	LAY CONTACT
Alaska, Fairbanks	Rev. Jay Hartmann 907-452-1236	
Alaska, Anchorage	Rev. David Fuerstenau 907-225-2842	
California, Pasadena (L.A. area)	Rev. Neal Radichel 650-964-5915	Mr. Mike Collins 818-883-1749
California, Modesto	Rev. Steven Karp 510-581-6637	Mr. Roy Cameron 209-772-0934
Florida, Orlando	Rev. John Schierenbeck 863-299-4084	Mr. Paul Kuehne 407-568-9213
Iowa, Sioux Center	Rev. James Albrecht 507-853-4417	Mr. Roger Ver Mulm 712-722-2805
Michigan, Cadillac	Rev. Tim Holland 616-532-0198	Mr. Bob Remus 231-832-2097
Minnesota, Chaska (SW Twin Cities area)	Rev. David Schierenbeck 651-454-1915	Mr. Adam McLaughlin 952-445-7317
Minnesota, Minnesota Lake	Rev. Wayne Eichstadt 507-344-0898	Mr. Brian Stearns 507-462-3123
Missouri, Missouri City	Rev. Todd Ohlmann 636-225-3458	Mr. Jim Priebe 816-781-4702
Missouri, Springfield	Rev. Todd Ohlmann 636-225-3458	
New Mexico, Albuquerque	Mr. Robin Vogsland 505-892-6934	
Ohio, Cleveland	Rev. Walter Schaller 248-457-0682	
Oklahoma, Oklahoma City	Rev. Matthew Hanel 973-733-4535	
Tennessee, Monterey	Rev. Nathanael Mayhew 866-962-9034	Mr. Wayne Everhart 270-618-4387
Texas, Austin	Rev. Luke Bernthal 281-353-2533	Chuck Kurth 512-794-8991
Virginia, Fairfax (Washington DC area)	Mr. Glenn Oster 803-926-0603	Mr. David Loop 703-250-2020
Washington, Withrow	Rev. Terrel Kesterson 509-327-4203	Mr. Ray Lillquist 509-683-1192
Wisconsin, Green Bay	Rev. Michael Schierenbeck 920-398-2778	



“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord... And Jesus said to Simon: Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men. So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him” (Luke 5:8ff).

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!

“God’s Word to the Young Women on Campus”

“That they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed” (Titus 2:4-5).

As is indicated in this message, Prof. Lau had spoken first to the young men (about entering the pastoral ministry); he followed up with this message to the young women. In our last month’s issue we printed the message addressed to the young men. We promised that this message to the young women would follow.—*Editor*

When I was up here a few weeks ago, my message was directed especially to the young men in the audience. I encouraged you young men to think about preparing yourselves for the pastoral ministry. We have a serious need for pre-theology students and for seminary students. The Lord Himself says that desiring to be in this ministry is a good thing, so we all should agree with God that desiring to do the work of a pastor is a good thing.

But I did not direct my words to the young women, because God Himself says through the apostle Paul that He does not want women teaching men in His Church, and He does not want women being in authority over men in His Church.

Today, however, I want to direct my words especially to the young women

in this group. Since God does not want you to serve as pastors in His Church, what does He want you to do? Our text for today does not mention all the possibilities, of course. There is nothing wrong for a young woman to consider the possibility of serving in the ministry of the Church—not as a pastor, but as a teacher of children.

Our college classes are not overflowing with young women preparing themselves to become teachers, and so there is a need. There are many other positions in life that a Christian young woman may properly take up as a calling. It is not necessary for every girl to get married. The apostle Paul himself was not married, and he thought that others who had the gift of self-control or chastity could well serve the Lord in an unmarried state, as he did.

But in our text for today we see that the apostle is presenting to young women as a goal the prospect of being a good Christian wife and mother. We dare not go along with the world in its false thinking about men and women. We know that God created both man



In the very center is the gold lamp, symbol of pure knowledge from the Word of God. The lamp is in the center of the red heart, which is ruled by the Word. The heart is fixed in the red and white rose of Christ, righteousness through His blood. The rose overshadows the black cross of our sins, for which He died. All this rests upon the shield of faith, tested pure silver. The lance directs our praise for these gifts of grace to their source, the Triune God—three gold rings containing the seal.

and woman in His own image, and that there are differences between them in many different ways, and that it is the woman in particular who makes a house a home.

Listen again to the apostle's words. He is speaking to the older women and instructing them "that they admonish the young women to love their husbands." Marriage is God's invention. He did not want the man to be alone, and so He provided for him a helper—not another man as a helper, but a woman as his companion.

What a blessing it is for both the man and the woman when a young woman loves her husband! This is something for all of you girls to pray about. You are never too young to ask God to give you a Christian husband, someone for you to love and respect all of your life. What is wrong with having this as your chief career goal? I suppose most young women can best serve their Lord by being such loving wives.

What else? The older women are to "admonish the young women to...love their children." So often nowadays children are depicted as obstacles and hindrances to a lucrative career. But it

is not right for us to think this way. Children are a blessing from God. What the psalmist wrote is still true: "Children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them" (Ps. 127:3-5).

It is good for young women to be well-instructed in the Word and will of God so that they can use this Word in the raising of their children. For if a mother loves her child, she will want to give that child from babyhood on an understanding of who God is and what God has done in love for all of His children: sending us a Savior from sin.

What else does Paul say? The older women are to "admonish the young women...to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."

If we look around at the young women in the entertainment world, we will not find much discretion or chastity or homemaking skills. We will find blatant examples of open sexual sin, young women presenting themselves



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN COLLEGE

as objects of sexual lust, and if they bother to get married, there is not much faithfulness to their husbands. Sad to say, in their talk and in their dress these become the examples for young girls, who begin to imitate them at a very young age.

It ought to be different among us Christians. The ones we look up to and imitate should not be the young women of the world, but Christian wives and mothers among us who “love their husbands, love their children, and are discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, and obedient to their own husbands.” When Christian young women live in this fashion, they bring glory to their Lord and Savior.

I know this instruction for wives to obey their husbands seems out of date for us today. But God’s Word is never out of date. We are told in the Bible that “Sarah obeyed Abraham,” and she is presented to us as a good example for our young women to follow.

Our text is something for all of you girls to think about and to pray about. There is no better career for most young women than to be a Christian wife and mother. That may very well be God’s plan for you.

—Prof. Em. David Lau,
Guest Speaker



Announcement Nominations Requested

The Board of Regents invites nominations for the office of ILC president, since the current term of Professor John Pfeiffer expires May 31, 2008.

All pastors, professors, male teachers, and voting members of the CLC are entitled to nominate a man from the faculty of Immanuel Lutheran College to serve a two-year term beginning June 1, 2008.

Nomination must be written or E-mailed no later than midnight March 1, 2008 to
Pastor Theodore Barthels
2200 16th St. SW
Austin, MN 55912
E-Mail: 6slehtrab@charter.net

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

On a slow day at conference West Central District pastors toured the city of Sioux Falls. The picture was taken at Falls Park downtown on the banks of the Big Sioux River at the place where the water falls (hence Sioux Falls). The attractive rock in the park, used to erect a number of ornate historic buildings in the city, is Sioux Quartzite.