

Lutheran Spokesman



*"For we have
seen His star
in the East and
have come to
worship Him."*

Matthew 2:2

PRAY FOR MORE EPIPHANIES

The season of the church year that follows Christmas is called “Epiphany,” which brings up a question: What does the word *epiphany* mean (because it’s a word we don’t often use in daily conversation, its meaning may be lost upon us)?

The word *epiphany* comes from a Greek word that means “to show” or “to bring to light.” A person is said to have had an “epiphany” who suddenly comes to see something in a totally new light or grasps something he didn’t understand previously. A couple examples: We may say to a friend: “Ah, so that’s what you were getting at when you told me that ____.” Or a student may say to a teacher: “Oh, now I get it! The right way to do this math problem is ____.”

There are also spiritual epiphanies which people may have. This happens when they come to understand the Truth about God and learn to know His Son Jesus by faith as Lord and Savior.

Bible examples of this abound.



Simeon had an epiphany when Joseph and Mary brought the Child Jesus into the temple; Simeon was led by the Spirit to know the identity of this Baby upon whom the salvation of the world depended—the light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel.

The Magi had an epiphany when they saw God’s unique star shining in

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the East and realized the King of the Jews had been born. The star inspired them to travel hundreds of miles to see this King and offer Him gifts as tokens of their love.

And who can forget the grand epiphany God granted Saul of Tarsus on Damascus road?! The Lord led Saul to understand that the One whom he had been persecuting was the promised Messiah who had suffered, died, and risen again for the salvation of the world.

Such epiphanies aren't limited to people living in Bible times. Aren't you and I, dear reader, among those to whom God has graciously revealed the Truth about Jesus? By the power of the Spirit He has enabled us to "get it": The Baby born at Bethlehem is the answer to the problem of our sin. All the transgressions we've added to our life's ledgerbook have been subtracted forever through the redeeming work of the little Lord Jesus. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.



A New Year's Devotion—

FOR CONFIDENCE OF THE FUTURE, LOOK TO THE PAST

As we stand at the threshold of each New Year, we customarily take a look backward.

No doubt the past year holds some fond memories—some personal achievements, a deed of kindness done to us, a visit with family—something we would relive if we could. There are also some things we no doubt prefer to for-

Let us ask God to grant more such epiphanies to those who still don't "get" the Truth about Jesus—that God would enable those who mistakenly view Jesus as just a famous religious teacher or a kind-hearted man or a helper of the poor may come to know Him aright as their heaven-sent Redeemer.

Petition God also to open our eyes to see opportunities for sharing this Good News with those we meet in our daily walk of life who still are in the dark spiritually.

Send to God's throne of grace repeated requests to bless the work of missionaries who go out in our name to shine the light of Christ into the hearts of those living in darkness in distant lands.

Let us pray:

God of mercy, God of grace,
Show the brightness of Thy face;
Shine upon us, Savior, shine,
Fill Thy church with light divine,
And Thy saving health extend
Unto earth's remotest end. (TLH #20:1)

*—Pastor Thomas Schuetze
Coloma, Michigan*

get—an illness, a loss of job—a myriad of things on both sides of the ledger.

And yes, we look back and recognize the failures which we call sin. An honest look backward cannot fail to acknowledge the sin in our lives.

Whatever the circumstances of our lives in the past, we acknowledge another reality. Our God has been gracious to us. He has seen us through the difficult times. He has in every moment of life been the steadfast God and Father, unchangeable in His nature and unchangeable in His grace and love. He has forgiven our sins for Jesus' sake. All His ways have been ways of mercy and truth. He has blessed us with moments of joy.

Appreciative children of God recognize the spiritual blessings with which they have been favored. Our God has preserved among us the Word of reconciliation—we are reconciled unto the Father by the death of His Son Jesus, whose birthday we have recently celebrated. We have enjoyed the blessings of the sacrament—forgiveness of sins and the assurance of salvation—through the body and blood of the Lord Jesus whose innocent suffering and death in our behalf is the foundation of our faith.

Surely we will not be like the unthinking and the unthankful who neither acknowledge the existence of God, much less His blessing, and who therefore do not thank Him; neither can they, for their hearts are dark!

Instead, faithful children of God look back, recognizing that the past is first and foremost an expression of God's love and faithfulness, His help and His goodness. We could well do as Samuel did at a point in Israel's history; when the Philistines had been defeated, Samuel set up a monument; he called it Ebenezer and said, "Thus far the Lord has helped us" (1 Sam. 7:12).

Each New Year—yes, each new day—opens with a certain degree of uncertainty, for we do not know what the future holds with respect to the cir-



cumstances of our physical and temporal life. In this regard nothing is guaranteed. For that reason we pray, "Lord, Thy will be done." We are perfectly willing to submit ourselves to His will, for "He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He" (Deut. 32:4).

An Assured Future!

Now consider the past. If we truly believe—"Ebenezer"—shall we doubt for a moment that the God who has guided, directed, and blessed us in the past will suddenly forget us? God's unchangeable Word assures us, and His manner of dealing with us in the past confirms that He will work all things for good as we call upon Him and trust in Him in the future.

While in one sense we do not know what the future holds, we nevertheless are confident of our future in another sense, and we know what it holds. First of all, our Lord has told us that in the midst of the trials, afflictions, and uncertainties of life He will not leave us nor forsake us. He will uphold us with the right hand of His righteousness (Psalm 63:8).

Further, we have His assurances concerning the Church. The Church in the world is under severe stress which

will most certainly increase, yet we have our Father's promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church (Matthew 16:18). Do what they will, Satan and his minions cannot destroy the Church.

Martin Luther so aptly said, "The Kingdom ours remaineth" (TLH #262). The Lord has supported His children and the Church through many attacks over the ages. The faithfulness and integrity of His promises are on the line. He will not fail us.

But even more confidently we look forward to an assured future. Our future is assured by something that was determined in the past—already in eternity before the world began.

What the Heavenly Father determined in eternity came to pass in space-time-history. According to promise the Father sent the Savior into the world. Jesus the Son of God in

space-time-history died upon the cross and was raised again.

Our future is assured beyond time because the Lord ascended and has reserved for us in heaven an inheritance that does not fade away. The Spirit of God who has created faith and preserves it through His Word is the guarantor of our future, as well as that of all who are kept by the power of God (1 Peter 1).

As we enter the New Year, let our memorial to God's love and grace for the year past be a steadfast faith and a faithful use of His precious Word and sacrament whereby we may live in confidence in the New Year. The Father in heaven has not, cannot, and will not forget His own but will remember them and deliver them—in time unto eternity!

For confidence of the future look to the past!

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer
Corpus Christi, Texas



The Tragedy of Abortion

This January marks thirty-five years since the United States Supreme Court issued its ruling on *Roe vs. Wade*. It was this decision which legalized abortion in our country. It is estimated that almost 49 million lives have been lost through abortive procedures in our country since that date (according to *National Right to Life*).

This very real holocaust goes against the very ideals that our nation was founded upon over 200 years ago. In the *Declaration of Independence* the founding fathers stated: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain

unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Everyone is described as having the "inalienable right" of Life. According to Webster, an "inalienable" right is one which cannot be taken away or transferred to another. Isn't it sadly ironic that the Supreme Court has done exactly that through its 1973 ruling?

God alone has the "right" to give or take a life. Hannah confessed this: "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up" (1 Sam. 2:6). This confession is even more telling when we remember that she was barren and unable to have



children. It was not until the LORD had heard her prayer and given her the ability to conceive that she bore Samuel.

The above confession of Hannah is included in her prayer to the LORD after He had blessed her with the ability to conceive. The right of life is given by God, our Creator, through His power, at conception.

There are many who would like to argue about the moment “life” first begins. Scripture is clear that life begins long before birth. King David describes God at work creating and forming life in the womb of the mother: “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth” (Ps. 139:13-15).

In addition, God put certain civil laws in place for His Old Testament people to govern parents and to protect the lives of unborn babies. The LORD commanded Moses: “If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life” (Ex. 21:22-23).

Since the fall into sin, we are all sinners from our very conception. David confessed: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51:5). As sinners we all deserve eternal death—yes, even unborn babies—yet God is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

The LORD wants all people to have an opportunity to come to know Jesus as their Savior from sin so they might spend an eternity with Him in heaven! The tragedy of abortion is that it denies many lost souls such an opportunity.

Clearly, human life is very important to God. It should be important to us also.

—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
Lawrenceville (Atlanta), Georgia



From the pastor’s column of a local newspaper—

Remembering the Way Home

In the Grimm’s fairy tale, Hansel and Gretel, a pair of siblings were abandoned in the woods; their parents

could not feed them because of a famine.

Clever Hansel, though, dropped a

pebble from his pocket every so often, so all they had to do was follow the trail of pebbles home. But the next time their sorrowful father led them into the forest, Hansel dropped bread crumbs for a trail. Of course, the birds ate the crumbs, and so the children were truly lost, without a clear path to lead them home again.

Can you always find your way home? That may seem like a silly question when, for most of us, the roads that lead to our own driveways are very familiar to us. Even from a distance getting home is rarely a problem, given our modern GPS devices or a good, old-fashioned map.

But as we head for our ultimate home, the life that lies beyond the grave, our steps may not be so confident. No one has a natural sense of direction for finding this home. Instead, we have to rely on the only true path that God Himself has given us. That is found in His Word, the Bible.

It can be a humbling thing to admit that you need to ask for directions, but this destination is just too important to have our pride send us on a detour.

One of Jesus' twelve disciples, Thomas, came to this conclusion when He asked Jesus, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn. 14:5-6).

Exactly how is Jesus "the way"?

Perhaps it's easiest to explain by first looking at every other way that people try to get to a heavenly home. Every other "map" to heaven says "Be a better person, and God will reward you...if you've been good enough."

The way home that Christ marks out for us is entirely different. It is only Jesus, God's true Son, who says "I kept the commandments so you can get the credit. I have already paid for all of your sins when I suffered and died in your place and rose again from the grave."

Finding our way home means we must have a perfect record of obedience to God—a spotless, pure, and holy life. Not one of us can ever achieve that, but ALL of us have the offer of God's free gift of Jesus' achievement, His goodness that now counts for us. This path is different from every other, for it is true and it works. That's why Jesus Himself said "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Finding your way back to your present, earthly home is generally quite easy—just retrace your steps! But getting to your eternal home means going forward, through this life, to a place you have never been before.

Let us be thankful that our dear Lord Jesus has already blazed the trail! He went before us, through death and resurrection, to eternal glory. He did all this to lead us to the best home ever.

So open a Bible, start with the Gospel of John, and look for the "pebbles" that will lead you home to God.

—Pastor Bruce Naumann
Sleepy Eye, Minnesota



Studies in First Timothy—

“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work...” (1 Tim. 3:1).

Chapter 3:8-16

Pillar and Ground of the Truth

“I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).

How is the Church “the pillar and ground of the truth”? We might expect that he would have put it the other way around and said that the truth is the pillar and ground of the Church. Isn’t it the truth, God’s Word, that supports and holds up the Church?

Yet here the Spirit through Paul presents us with another thought: the Church supports and upholds God’s truth in this world. The Church—and only the Church—has the truth from God in the Holy Scriptures. Only the Church has Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Church is God’s vehicle for conveying the truth of the gospel to the world.

It is because Christ has given His Church this essential role in the world that Paul gives instruction about how believers should conduct themselves in the Church. He says that he hopes to come and visit Timothy, but if his visit should be delayed, he wants Timothy to have the instruction about Christian conduct in the Church so that he can teach it in the congregations.

So in this letter Paul gives instruction about prayer in public worship

(2:1-8), women in public worship (2:9-15), qualifications of overseers (3:1-7), and here in the section before us, qualifications of deacons and their wives (3:8-13).

The word translated deacon simply means a servant, but here it is clearly an office with qualifications. Paul does not say what the deacons did in Christian congregations back then. We gather that they did not teach, since their qualifications do not include ability to teach as in the case of overseers. They may have served their congregations in various ways. (The seven men who were chosen to assist the apostles by overseeing the distribution of food to widows [Acts 6:1-6] may be examples of the office of deacon, though they are not called by that name.)

Good Examples

Those called to the office of deacon needed to be men who were good examples of Christian conduct. They should be men who were “reverent,” that is, serious-minded, not frivolous. They should not be “double-tongued,” talking out of both sides of the mouth, but honest. They should be self-controlled, not having a reputation for drunkenness or greed. They should be good examples as husbands and fathers. Their wives likewise should be exam-

ples of Christian conduct.

It was important that deacons and their wives be good examples, since the deacons were called to an office. They acted in the name of the congregation. They represented the Christian congregation to the members and to the community. Those who knew them should be able to see in them what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

For the same reason our congregations today are careful in choosing those who act in their name as elders and officers. It is no small thing to serve a congregation of Christians. The church is, as Paul teaches here, “the house of God,” “the church of the living God.” It is the community of believers who are God’s own family

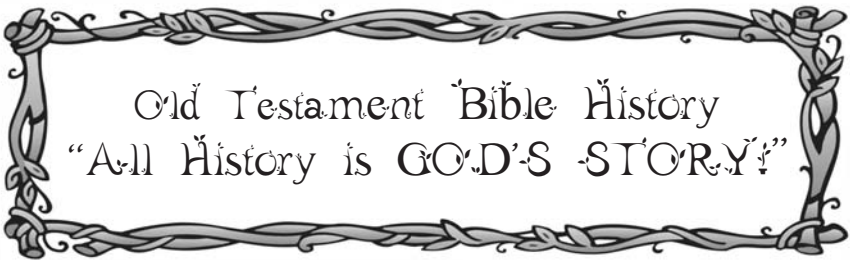
with whom God lives. It is the structure built by God the Holy Spirit that bears His truth in the world.

Paul closes this section with a summary of that truth: “God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.”

The truth that the Church carries as its pillar and ground is the truth of Jesus Christ, God’s Son who became a man and gave His life to save us all.

What a privilege it is to be a part of the Church and to be called to serve Christ in it!

—Pastor John Klatt
Rapid City, South Dakota



No. 8 in Series: Genesis 12:1-7

God's call of Abram

Any Bible reader soon discovers that Abram/Abraham is an important person, and any New Testament Bible student recognizes Abram as the exemplar of God’s justifying the ungodly via faith in Him, with no regard to the sinner’s lifestyle.

But what’s the point of going all the way back to this early event in Abram’s life—the event when God “called” Abram? Because the first step is the

most important step in any journey; because Abram’s journey was the journey of faith-living; because his pilgrimage was not only under God’s direction but the first step was also initiated by God Jehovah.

Abram’s experience validates true religion—namely, that the human must be in the right relationship with God. When we ask “How do I get right with God?”, God’s dealings with Abram pre-

sent us with His answer: It gets done by God doing it. Really!

The other choice—the human doing it—fails miserably. Here Christianity parts ways with the “other” religion, for all “other” is not God-initiated, God-operated, and heaven-bound but Satan-sponsored, human-manipulated, and hell-bound.

That’s why we go all the way back to square one: God called Abram out of his secular world, to leave behind his heathen family and his cultish religion in order to save Abram from sin, death, and devil—and to bring him safely to heaven via God’s own routing through depending on the Savior, Jesus, the Seed of Abraham, to get him there.

This is exactly parallel to our own lives!

Every baby born into the sinful and ungodly human family bears Satan’s thumb-print—but God beheld our wretched state, salvaged us from our inborn heathenism, our natural secularism, and our acquired cultism—calling us to be His own dear children for time and for eternity.

Where God and Abram met, we still meet; what God did with Abram, He still does with us!

And so the sacred writers use Abram/Abraham as the prime illustration of the awesome truth revealed to us by the Holy Spirit—that by His grace God chooses sinners to salvation (also called the doctrine of election or predestination).

This is worth a closer look.

Abraham’s story goes on for the next three chapters and is touched on in many another place in Scripture—notably by Jesus in John’s Gospel, ch. 8: “Before Abram was, I AM”; by the Apostle Paul in Romans 4: “Abraham

“... And so the sacred writers use Abram/Abraham as the prime illustration of the awesome truth revealed to us by the Holy Spirit—that by His grace God chooses sinners to salvation (also called the doctrine of election or predestination).”

believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness”; in Galatians 3: “So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham”; in Hebrews 11: “By faith Abraham obeyed”; he also appears in Jesus’ parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16; etc., etc.

God’s Program

You get the idea—understanding Abraham is pivotal for understanding God’s ways with humans, the story of God’s saving love and God’s redeeming grace. God’s program of redemption via faith in Him/His Word finds its initial focus in the first seven verses of Genesis 12.

Let’s pick up on some details of God’s considerate treatment of Abram.

Now Jehovah had directed Abram (when he was back in Ur, according to Acts 7:2) to leave behind his homeland with his clan of relatives and the protection of his parental home, to pack up his stuff for a long trip to a far country, a new homeland that Jehovah had been preparing for him (v. 1).

Now, how could God expect Abram to be willing to abandon his entire heritage, separating himself from all he held dear? He did it by encouraging Abram with the attractive features of a life orchestrated by Himself! When the

great I AM pledged to be Abram's support, Abram took God at His word, banking on it that He would not and could not renege. Abraham's heart was won over, and on that foundation he was enabled to go forward wherever and however God directed.

Verses two and three present the seven-fold blessing that God held out to encourage Abram to proceed from the stop-over at Haran (in the upper regions of modern Jordan) and to move on southward to the promised land, which we learned to know as Canaan.

"I will make you a great nation" Jehovah promised, to counterbalance all losses of kinfolk when Abram left his homeland and kindred. This came true in two steps—the first that made Abram the founder of the Hebrew race, and the second when God made Abram the forefather of the even greater nation of all believers, the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

"I will bless you" personally and individually. As Abram followed divine guidance in his life of faith, he would not lack for Jehovah's companionship and Lordship.

"And make your name great" as recompense for any passing renown Abram might have had as sheik of a desert clan. There is greater renown in being known as the friend of God (James 2:23), and God so elevated his name to the heavens that souls in heaven can be said to be "in Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22-23).

"And you shall be a blessing"—"not only to be blessed by God, but to become...the medium of blessing to others" (Keil-Delitzsch, *Pentateuch*, p. 193).

"And I will bless those who bless you" as the record of Genesis testifies

with the experiences of Pharaoh, Lot, Abimelech, the king of Sodom, etc.

"And I will curse him who curses you" because "Abram will be so closely identified with the good work of God, that to curse him comes to be almost the equivalent of cursing God" (Leupold, *Genesis*, p. 413).

And now the blessing of greatest value to us, dear reader—for this seventh blessing embraces all humanity: "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." This can be nothing less than the blessing which comes through Jesus, the Seed of Abraham, the Savior of sinful humanity.

The gospel came to Abram in this prediction, and in the wording of this blessing Abram came to see Jesus by faith, as Jesus Himself declared (John 8:56-58), and Abram had further reason to rejoice—for God promised that through Abram's Seed He intended to bless all humanity.

What a great God we have! What a wonderful preview God gave Abram of His plans for humanity! What great blessings we have to be children of Abraham and to be included with our great forefather in God's Kingdom of grace, power, and dominion!

Let us rejoice and be glad that Jehovah called Abram OUT of his past and INTO his future, supported by and fostered with all of God's great, loving, merciful care. Amen!

—Paul R. Koch
Eau Claire, Wisconsin



PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

#2 in series — The SON of MAN

A family portrait often reveals traits of each parent in the appearance of the children. In a similar but far superior way, the portrait of Jesus Christ reveals characteristics of both of His parental origins.

Jesus bears the heritage of His heavenly Father, and therefore His portrait reveals Him to be fully God's Son. The Son of God also became fully man to be the promised Christ and our Savior from sin. Therefore He also bears the heritage of His earthly lineage except that He had no sinfulness.

The human portrait of Christ carries tremendous significance because it shows that He is "one of us." When we see Christ revealed as fully human, we can take heart because that portrait reassures us that Jesus did indeed come as Immanuel—God with us.

Jesus' humanity means that He did indeed live under the same law as we do and, living under that law as our substitute, could fulfill God's expectation for us.

In this portrait of our Savior, our hope is refreshed anew because, as we face the temptations and troubles of each day, we know that we have "one of us" on our side who has already walked this same road and has been victorious. "We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus' first miracle is one of the



glimpses into His life and ministry which paints for us a portrait of the Christ who dwelt among us, lived for us, and continues to live and work for us.

Jesus did not come as an aloof rescuer lording His superiority over those whom He came to rescue, though many an earthly rescuer would do exactly that. Rather, Jesus was found "in appearance as a man" (cf. Philippians 2:8), living on the earth, socializing, and being part of the customs and celebrations as would anyone else.

So, when an invitation came for a wedding that was to be held in Cana of Galilee, Jesus accepted the invitation and attended with His disciples.

"One Of Us"

Jesus' participation in celebrations like the Cana wedding did not go unnoticed. The same enemies who had criticized John the Baptizer for not eating bread or drinking wine were quick to fault Jesus for being a glutton and a drunkard (cf. Luke 7:33f). In Jesus, we have seen an example of "one of us"

enjoying the blessings of God and celebrating His gifts, but doing so in a God-pleasing and sinless way.

When the wedding feast ran out of wine, Jesus' mother approached her son to assist with the need. Though Jesus' time for helping had not yet come, a little later He did provide for the need by changing six large stone jars of water into wine. Of itself, running out of wine at a wedding feast was not of enduring consequence or calamity. Nevertheless, it was the need of the moment, and Jesus filled that need and gave glory to God in the process.

This facet of the portrait demonstrates that Jesus is our Savior ready to hear every prayer that we offer for needs big and small. If it is a matter on your heart and a need you face, take it to Jesus in prayer—He's been here, He understands, He's one of us, and He will answer that prayer according to His will.

Though the wedding feast at Cana provides a portrait of Christ as the Son of Man, such a portrait is not painted without the knowledge of His divinity.

The miracle demonstrated that Jesus was more than just a man. He was the divine Son of Man, the promised Messiah. Jesus celebrated the wedding like everyone else did, but His miracle also served the purpose of advancement of His ministry.

This view of the portrait reminds us that God's name is witnessed from many more places than just the pulpit. Every one of us has opportunity to advance God's kingdom in every setting of life, each and every day.

The wedding day in Cana closed with Jesus' disciples believing in Him (John 2:10). They saw what we see: The Son of God become one of us to rescue us from our sin. A beautiful sight to behold!

—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt
Mankato, Minnesota



CROSS PURPOSES



HOW LONG, LORD?

In view of the status of this sinful, wicked, and self-serving world, those of us who care cannot begin to comprehend the grace, love, and patience of God in whose heart is determined the times before appointed. As He concluded the book of Revelation, He revealed his heart through the apostle (See Sidebar #1). In conclusion Jesus said, "Surely I am coming quickly." To this John responded, "Amen. Even so,

come, Lord Jesus!" (cf. Rev. 22:20).

Those who will not give up their evil way but continue in it impenitently are given over to it by God as His judgment upon them. It is a fearsome thing to cross the Lord and to ultimately fall into the hand of Him who judges!

On the other hand, our Lord Jesus Christ gives great and precious promises to all who repent of their sins, who at the same time in faith wash their

Sidebar #1: Revelation 22:10-19

And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" and let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (cf. Rev. 7:14). Believers in Christ are anxious for the fulfillment of Christ's promise to return soon.

Our anxiety for the fulfillment increases as we witness the downward spiral of our society—a spiral unfortunately and frighteningly abetted in the world by the external church which has lost respect for the Word of God.

How in the name of the God whom they profess to proclaim can any church tolerate the philosophy that any religion is acceptable unto God? A church that believes that or tolerates such ideas either does not know what it believes, believes anything or nothing, is hypocritical, or is too frightened to

tell the truth.

How can a church that professes to be Christian tolerate the lie that salvation is by works? How can any denomination claiming to be Christian confess the creed—if it still does—and yet deny the substance of that creed?

How can any church that claims to be serious about Christian witnessing approve or tolerate the sins of abortion, homosexuality, or same-sex "marriage"? The wages of any sin is death (Romans 6:23a), and to the extent that the worldly church tolerates or condones what God calls sin is to bring judgment upon it and those who are deceived by it.

Make no mistake! The deterioration of clear proclamation of law and gospel is rampant in the external church! To the extent that the church in society has traded the truth for a mess of pottage, it cannot escape the judgment of God!

Ultimately each individual will have to answer for his or her lack of faith and the actions born of such lack before God. While the unfaithful church has abetted the slide into the cesspool of evil, no one can say, "The church made me do it" anymore than he can say, "The devil made me do it." When sin entered the world, God's question was "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" (Gen. 3:11) The Father accepted no excuse and no evasion!

We Are Not Immune

If we think that professing Christians within our fellowship are immune, we are sadly mistaken. There is lack of appreciation for the Word, neglect of Word and Sacrament, confused priorities, and lack of respect for marriage.

More and more we witness people who are sex partners without being married—and who defend their sin. Vulgarity and abuse of the name of God is so commonplace in our society that people are unaware of and uncaring about this sin. Greed, slander, hatred, and incivility are staples of our dying society. Our young people are bombarded with the evil of the times and frequently are sucked into the black hole.

That sin happens hardly surprises us, for we are flesh and the natural heart is only evil continually (Genesis 6:5). But should we not be concerned when sin is laughed at, thought lightly of, defended, and practiced as a right?

Is our generation more wicked than the generations previous to us? No. The Lord said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them...” (Gen. 6:13). But this is our time. The souls of men and women, young and old, strangers, friends, and acquaintances—and yes, we ourselves—are in

the balance.

Pay close heed. We are living in a time and a society described by the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1-8 (See Sidebar #2).

In view of the warnings in both Revelation 20 and in 2 Timothy 3, we dare not be indifferent to the sin that so easily assails us, and the judgment that unrepented sin brings.

Sidebar #2: 2 Timothy 3:1-8

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith....



South-East Conference pastors met October 7-9, 2008, hosted by Word of God Ev. Lutheran Church, Pana, IL. Visiting the new Lincoln Museum, Springfield, were: Luke Bernthal, Dennis Rieken (host pastor), John Schierenbeck, Daniel Fleischer, Vance Fossum, Todd Ohlmann, Nathanael Mayhew.

But there is hope and comfort for the penitent and waiting Christian. Jesus, “the root and offspring of David, and the bright morning star,” commissioned the Church to proclaim the gospel which quenches the thirst of those who thirst for the water of life. He says, “I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts” (Rev. 21:6).

The Lord promises His people that He will deliver them from all evil. He will preserve His beset children unto His eternal kingdom and give them the gift of salvation, sealed to them through the atonement accomplished at His cross and empty tomb.

In the face of the evil world and in the time of tribulation we can rejoice in our future and, after the tribulation, enjoy the peace and blessing of heaven where former things will have passed

away. For that reason we find comfort in God’s assurance, “Surely, I come quickly.”

And so with longing anticipation, we say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Let us pray: “*Lord Jesus, our merciful Savior, forgive us our sins in thought, word, and deed. Preserve us by Thy grace from the wiles of the devil and the deceit of the world in which we live lest we identify with the world in our lives and actions and receive the same judgment. Lord, Shepherd and Keeper of our souls, come, come quickly and deliver us from the temptations of our own flesh and from the hands of those who hate us and would do us harm in body and soul. Come, and fulfill Thy promise to take us home. Come quickly. Amen.*”

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer
Corpus Christi, Texas



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!

“Jesus Invites Us to Advertise the Gospel”

(October 13, 2008, Chapel Address)

(Matthew 28:18-20) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

In the name of Jesus,

Did you know that the *Doritos* company has actually sent ads into outer space for extraterrestrials to buy its products? Is that, as they call it, “a bold

new venture,” or is it rather losing sight of reality and direction, deluding themselves with an absurd method that has no promise?

By contrast, when Jesus invites us

to advertise the gospel, to share the gospel, He gives a real direction, a real method, and a real promise.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” Jesus directs us: “Make disciples as you are going.” Jesus is not commanding that you go to China, you to India, and you to Ecuador. He is saying to all of us—wherever, whenever you are going!—make disciples by sharing the gospel.

That sharing Jesus’ love is also to involve our own life is demonstrated when He says, “observing what I have commanded you.” Bloom where you are planted. The direction for our going through life is to so reflect the unselfish love of Jesus that others will see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

Yet too easily we act as if we were trying to sneak into heaven without anyone recognizing that we are followers of Christ. “People may make fun of me.” “They’ll ignore me anyway ‘cause they’ll think I’m a hypocrite.” On the other hand, some people—reflecting the unconditional love of Jesus—will say, “Look, how they love Jesus.”

So don’t waste your efforts seeking some unknown thing in outer space. Show Jesus’ love to those around you.

But are we tempted to think, “I’m too battered and scarred with sin for anyone to listen to me”? Well, it’s never too late to improve the reflection of Jesus’ love in our lives.

But the method Jesus prescribes is finally not about me but about baptizing and teaching people what Jesus has done for them. There’s nothing absurd about His great works (like there is with beaming ads into empty outer space). It’s true that we often feel that we don’t know what to say or are

afraid to say anything. That is one reason we need to be continually renewed in the Word.

Jesus prepared His disciples for ministry by gathering them around God’s Word and teaching them. Just so, Jesus still gathers us together around His Word and promises, “I am with you.” He renews us so that by going forth we may tell what we have heard and seen—that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16).

The Great Things God Has Done!

Worship and sharing the gospel are thus inter-dependent.

We gather in worship to thank Jesus for His love. Renewed in His love, we want to tell others what great things Jesus has done for me. When others hear what great things Jesus has done for them they want to join in worship and thank Him for His love.

When your favorite group or vocalist comes out with a new melody you love, I’m sure each of you students invites your friends to listen to it. All the more, invite them to listen to the melody of Jesus’ love: reading the Bible together, sharing a Bible passage that touched you, giving an encouragement to walk with Jesus, or sharing the gospel message, for it is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

But are we tempted to say, “I just can’t do it”?

Moses was overwhelmed by the idea of delivering Israel from Egypt. No matter what he tried, things kept getting worse; but the LORD I AM—in His way and His time—brought them

out with such power that the Egyptians freely gave away their treasures, and the Red Sea opened before Israel.

Joshua was overwhelmed by the walls of Jericho; despite everything he could throw against them, those walls would surely still be insurmountable. But in His way and time the LORD I AM brought those walls tumbling down.

This is not the empty vanity of *Doritos* ads beaming into space. Jesus' invitation to share the gospel is sandwiched between Jesus' power and promise: "All authority is mine...I AM with you always."

BOOK REVIEW

Title: *Apologia*

Author: John Lau

Publisher: Self-published

Pages: 424

The days are dwindling during which the founding fathers of the CLC are still among us in the Church Militant. It is good that these men share with us their experiences during those years of struggle when the CLC was taking shape and developing an identity.

In the book *Apologia*, Professor emeritus John Lau presents a defense of his faith. This is done by means of "a collection of writings produced over the years of my academic work in two small colleges, my theological work in several congregations I have served as a parish pastor and the seminary at which I have taught, and chiefly in connection with my work as contributor and editor of a theological journal" (Foreword).

There's the promise that can open the sea and tear down the walls that we face. We won't always see all the results we'd like, but Jesus promises that His Word will not return void (Is. 55).

When we are gathered around Jesus' throne, won't it be wonderful to hear someone say something like: "It was you who invited me here"? "Your encouragement helped me stay on the path"?

So advertise the gospel. Show forth the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Amen. To God alone the glory.

—Prof. John Ude



NOTE: This Book Review first appeared in the CLC's theological magazine, the *Journal of Theology*. Permission has been received to reprint it here.

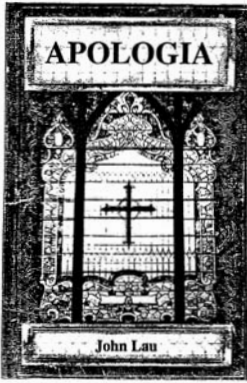
The reviewer is Prof. John Pfeiffer (currently serving as President of Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wis.) who was a faculty colleague of Prof. John Lau for a number of years. In his review Prof. Pfeiffer recommends the book to "all members of the CLC, as well as those outside of the CLC."

Our fond hope is that the interest of you, our *Spokesman* readers, would be piqued to obtain the book. Yours truly has the book and finds it to be everything said of it in the accompanying review.

Prof. Lau has written the following to pastors on the synod's webpage: "I am not going into the book business. After some thought and prayer, I decided to underwrite the entire cost of printing the book by not receiving any payment or reimbursement. I have donated the books entirely to the CLC Book House, to be sold there with the profits (after their expenses) to go entirely toward the construction of the ILC Academic Center. After consultation with the Book House manager, the price per book has been set by her at \$15.00 (post-paid). I agree with the manager that this is a reasonable price for a book of 424 pages."

Contact the CLC Book House at www.clc-bookhouse.org. Mailing address: 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701-7134; Ph: (715) 836-6623.

— Editor



The book is divided into six parts (A-F).

Part A: "Origin of the CLC."

Part B: "Journal of Theology: General Articles"

Part C: "Journal of Theology: Panorama"

Part D: "Lutheran Spokesman: 'Living Acre'"

Part E: "Sacred Verse"

Part F: "Academic Papers"

Throughout the book, Professor Lau performs an admirable service to the people of the CLC by presenting accounts of those events which were crucial to the formation of our church body. In some instances it may be the exegesis of a Scripture passage, such as Titus 3:10 (pp. 238ff). In some instances it may be a historical article on something pertinent to the formation of Lutheranism, such as "In Commemoration of Luther's Stand at Worms" (pp. 24ff). In other instances it may be a first-hand report on the ongoing relationship between the CLC and other Lutheran synods; this is particularly true in Part C, "Panorama." Such works as these should be of particular benefit to the new generation of pastors, teachers, and lay people who did not personally experience those turbu-

lent years that brought about the formation and development of the CLC. Furthermore, Professor Lau's personal observation of the history of the CLC clarifies and corrects the misrepresentations found in non-CLC writings regarding the reasons for the formation of our church body.

In addition to this, Professor Lau shares with us articles of a devotional nature, poetry, and essays of a more "secular" nature (e.g., "Joseph Addison: On the Pleasures of the Imagination"—pg. 395). In these writings the reader can find food for spiritual and mental growth and for simple delight.

Whereas this volume draws on writings that reach back as far as thirty years or more, the reader will find them to be interestingly current. For instance, just recently members of the CLC were debating CCM (Contemporary Christian Music). On page 244, Professor Lau shares with us an article published in the October 1970 issue of the *Journal of Theology* entitled "The Message or the Medium." In this article he analyzes comments of *The Lutheran Standard* regarding the 1970 convention of the ALC Luther League, at which contemporary music in a unionistic setting was a big drawing card for the youth.

Professor Lau comments regarding that use of CCM:

"There is always the kind of individual who feels that the Gospel can have no real effect in its simple presentation, and that the proclaimer must help it along by presenting it by means of the most acceptable media. While admitting the validity of the argument that the proclaimer of the Gospel should use the best available media in keeping with its glorious message, we

believe that it is emphatically the message and not the medium that creates believing and sanctified hearts. If the youth are to be reached and brought to the knowledge of salvation, then it is the Gospel, in whatever form, with its message of forgiveness of sins through the death of Jesus, that will reach them. And the believing young will not close their minds and hearts to the repetition of the message, no matter how often they hear it.”

The articles within this book cover the disciplines of exegesis, isagogics,

history, English, dogmatics, and apologetics. There is something for every taste. And since the articles are not long, the slow reader, such as yours truly, can take his time and still complete an entire article in one sitting.

I highly recommend *Apologia* to all members of the CLC, as well as to those outside of the CLC. The book can be obtained by contacting John Lau (johnlau@thelaus.com)

Thank you, John. Your labor was not in vain.



As the CLC's Fiftieth Anniversary Approaches...

As the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) gears up for an observance of its 50th anniversary (1960-2010), the *Lutheran Spokesman* has been encouraged to “survey the history” of the synod in some fashion. We have an idea or two of how to fulfill this happy assignment on these pages.

One is to reprint excerpts from the history of the synod which Pastor David Lau has been asked to prepare. (We have seen the early chapters of Pastor Lau’s book; it will be very informative and edifying for all!) Another is to have our staff-members interview CLC senior citizens who “lived through the break” and were CLC charter members.

Yet another is what you will find beginning in this month’s issue. We are reprinting bulletin inserts written by synod pastors on the occasion of its 25th anniversary in 1985; the good writings reviewed the past (founding of the



synod) and gave a Christian perspective of the future; they were subsequently compiled into a booklet under the title: *REFLECTIONS...PROJECTIONS*.

These articles are especially noteworthy since they were authored for the most part by those who had themselves “lived through the break.” These pastors had experienced first-hand the doctrinal controversies which led them and others to break fellowship for conscience reasons with their former synods. In some cases the congregations served by these pastors also disfellow-

(Passed at the 2008 Synod Convention)

50th Anniversary Theme:

**“Our Jubilee in Christ: Redemption for the past,
Hope for the future”**

Special Services:

Synodwide local celebrations: Sunday, May 16, 2010

Scripture texts:

Leviticus 25:1-17 (The Lord’s command for the year of Jubilee)

Romans 5:1-11 (Our cause for rejoicing is that we are saved from wrath through Christ)

Luke 10:13-20 (Proper rejoicing—not that we are the CLC, but that our names are written in heaven)

Synodical Celebration:

Wednesday evening (June 23rd) of the 2010 Convention

Scripture texts:

Isaiah 61:1-11 (The acceptable year of the Lord, or Jubilee, finds its fulfillment in Christ)

Ephesians 1:2-7 (That we are acceptable to the Lord is only due to Christ)

Luke 4:16-21 (Christ is our Jubilee)

Celebration Committee to arrange for special music

Jubilee Thankoffering - July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010

shipped themselves from a former affiliation and joined the CLC (again, many as charter members of the newly formed synod).

Below will be found portions of the introductory words to the 25th anniversary *REFLECTIONS...PROJECTIONS* booklet. The words are significant. They explain the holy aim and intent of the original articles. We pray that that aim and intent remains the same a generation later:

“...The Lord has blessed our church body from the beginning. We also appreciate the responsible position our Lord has granted us as a confessional

Lutheran church.

“Friends and inquirers are hereby invited to examine our history and the continuing purpose of our existence. We trust that they will see that we are ‘built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone’ (Ephesians 2:20). We are always eager to share the message of the Lord Jesus with others, and to join with all who are blest with us in our faith and confession drawn from and established unequivocally upon the inspired, inerrant Word of God.”

—Editor

———— SURVEYING CLC HISTORY ————
FROM THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET (1985)
“REFLECTIONS...PROJECTIONS”

Number One: OUR BACKGROUND

Since the formation of our Church of the Lutheran Confession in 1960, a whole new generation of pastors and laymen has arisen in our midst. It can only be of benefit to them and to us to recall the background from which we have come.

Most of us who found it necessary to organize a new church body had our roots in the Synodical Conference, whose constituent synods included the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS), the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). The Synodical Conference at one time confessed and upheld all the doctrines of Scripture, including the doctrine that for the establishment of church fellowship full agreement in doctrine and practice is necessary.

But in the late 1930's the LC-MS, the largest synod of the Synodical Conference, began to express a willingness to enter into fellowship with other Lutherans without first arriving at agreement in all doctrines of Scripture and in matters of practice. Human reason and emotions began to play a deciding role rather than clear statements of Scripture, such as 1 Cor. 1:10, Rom. 16:17-18, and 2 John 9-11.

The WELS and the ELS repeatedly pointed out to the LC-MS that this new course was unscriptural, but without success. Eventually however, the WELS and ELS themselves succumbed to error in this same doctrine of fellowship. Instead of heeding the clear directive of Scripture to avoid those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned as soon as these become apparent, as now was to be seen in the LC-MS, the WELS followed the course set forth in the statement: "Termination of church fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail." Thus termination of fellowship with an erring church body was made a matter of subjective human judgment rather than one prescribed by plain statements of Scripture.

We who founded the CLC regarded this as disobedience to the scriptural directives concerning the termination of fellowship with errorists. Since the synods to which we belonged at that time insisted on following this unscriptural course, we in conscience bound by the Word of God and out of concern for the preservation of the gospel were constrained by obedience to Rom. 16:17 and 2 John 9-11 to sever fellowship with our former synodical affiliations. These are the roots from which our church body sprang.

—Pastor Harold C. Duehlmeier (1913-1986)

Fall 2008 Trip to Africa



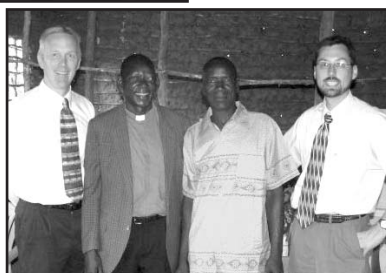
Showing the 25 men, pastors and evangelists, who attended our East Africa General Pastoral Conference in Nairobi. All four of our districts were represented along with Pastors Bruce Naumann and Nathanael Mayhew and Mission Helper Russell Schmitt from Mankato, Minnesota.

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21).

These words of our Savior’s prayer from Maundy Thursday night serve as a wonderful summary of my recent visitation to our East African brethren. Accompanied by Mission Helper Russell Schmitt and Mission Board Chairman Bruce Naumann, I spent five weeks in Kenya and Tanzania working with our churches there.

Here is a brief overview of our thirty-five-day trip—by the numbers:

We traveled over 3,000 miles (4,800 km) by car or bus from Nairobi, north to Nyahururu and back, southeast to Mombasa and back, and west to Kisii (Etago) and back. Then it was south to Arusha, Tanzania, east to Moshi, Tanzania (at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro), further southeast to Tanga, Tanzania, and then back again to Moshi. From there we visited Himo, Tanzania (where the seminary is located) almost daily during our final week before making the long trip back to



Pastors Naumann and Mayhew with Pastor Michael Gondwe and a church leader at the congregation at Mikinga near Tanga, Tanzania.



During the special graduation ceremony on November 4 in Himo, Tanzania, the two pastors again with Pastor Jesse Angowi, lead pastor, seminary principal and teacher of the LCEA

Nairobi, Kenya.

We visited eighteen congregations varying in size from eight to eighty-five members. Some owned their own wooden or metal church buildings, some worshiped in rented quarters, and one congregation worshiped under a



Russell Schmitt teaching a lesson on the catechism at our conference in Moshi, Tanzania. Pastor Andrea Shenkalekewa is translating.



The eight graduates at St Peter's Seminary: (top) Freddy, Geoffry, David, Jascar, Albert; (front) Heroic, Cliff, Ndesario.

metal awning which hung off the back of a member's home.

We participated in the two-day, annual East African General Pastoral Conference in Nairobi where twenty-five men (about four men from each district) studied six doctrinal essays presented by six different pastors.

We participated in a graduation ceremony for eight seminary graduates from the five-year seminary program (this was the first graduating class of St. Peter's seminary).

We conducted five seminars in Nyeri, Mombasa, Etago, Arusha, and Moshi, which were attended by seventy-eight pastors, evangelists, and Sunday school teachers, who heard twelve different studies (some were repeated).

We spent six days teaching the eighteen students currently enrolled in St. Peter's seminary in Himo, Tanzania, teaching twelve different classes.

What a blessing to be part of this work of strengthening the unity of the faith between our two synods and working together in the proclamation of the gospel so that many others may also come to know and believe in Jesus as the Christ!

—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
Lawrenceville (Atlanta), Georgia



Announcements

Installation

In accord with our usage and order, Paul Krause, who was called as pastor to Faith Lutheran Church & School, Markesan, Wisconsin, was installed on Sunday, November 23, 2008. Pastor David Lau preached the sermon.

—Pastor Michael Eichstadt



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