

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

"...THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN." — JOHN 10:35



Immanuel, God with us!

CREATION

THE AMAZING POWER OF GOD'S WORD

Pastor Theodore Barthels · Austin, Minnesota

“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”

HEBREWS 11:3

It is that time of year when we enjoy getting out in nature and looking at the beauty of God's creation.

Family trips taken to national or state parks often become treasured memories. We recall the wondrous vistas from a mountain-top or even just a bluff, the grandeur of the vastness of the sea, the mysteries of a cave, or the beauty of canyon formations.

Even watching the sun set over a lake can call forth a confession of faith from the child of God who marvels at how God called all this forth with the power of His Word.

Of course, visits to publicly-run parks may also mean that we encounter the evolutionist's view on the origins of the universe. What evolutionists see as a chance happening—that supposedly took place with countless millions of precisely accurate accidents occurring at the exactly necessary moments so that the world came into existence with all its wonders—we creationists see and know as the wonderful works of God!

The nature scenes which cause us to marvel as we make our way on our summer vacation trips are evidence of the majesty and power of God. With the power of His Word He called things as if they were—and indeed they were there in all their complexity, in all their beauty!

And so the world, the entire universe, came into being in six ordinary days, as the Bible tells us: “Then God saw all that He had made, and indeed it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).

Certainty!

How can we be so sure of what we know? Is it just that all the facts and scientific evidence points in this direction (surely they do, as do the laws of nature!)?

Yet that is not the foundation for our certainty. For generations many have debated these issues on the basis of science and the interpretations of the physical evidence. But that is not what has convinced us of the truth of creation.

Rather, it is as the Bible says: “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.” We simply take God at His Word. God the Holy Spirit opened our hearts to believe the truth, creating faith in our hearts to know God as our Creator and also as our Heavenly Father.

Even this faith is one of the amazing things which God has created by the power of His Word. This is as great a miracle as any God has performed, for “even when we were dead in trespasses (He) made us alive together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:5). God has made us alive by the power of His Word!

So this summer when we are out enjoying the wonders of God's creation, let us recall God's Word of grace as well as His Word of power.

When we are on that mountain peak or bluff top admiring the vista of God's creation, remember also this Word of God, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12).

And when we are standing on the seashore glorifying God for the beautiful sunset over the water, let us glorify His grace which assures us, “He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19).



I THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD; AND THE FIRMAMENT SHOWS HIS HANDIWORK. **2** DAY UNTO DAY UTTERS SPEECH, AND NIGHT UNTO NIGHT REVEALS KNOWLEDGE. **3** THERE IS NO SPEECH NOR LANGUAGE WHERE THEIR VOICE IS NOT HEARD. **4** THEIR LINE HAS GONE OUT THROUGH ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE END OF THE WORLD. IN THEM HE HAS SET A TABERNACLE FOR THE SUN, **5** WHICH IS LIKE A BRIDEGROOM COMING OUT OF HIS CHAMBER, AND REJOICES LIKE A STRONG MAN TO RUN ITS RACE. **6** ITS RISING IS FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN, AND ITS CIRCUIT TO THE OTHER END; AND THERE IS NOTHING HIDDEN FROM ITS HEAT.



Psalm 19:1-6

In the Beginning

Pastor Nathanael Mayhew · Lawrenceville (Atlanta), Georgia

On vacation in Washington D.C. last summer our family visited a number of the famed Smithsonian museums in that city. The one that struck me most was the National Museum of Natural History which was featuring an exhibit on human origins.

The director of the Museum, Cristián Samper, said this about the purpose of the 20.7 million dollar exhibit: “The hall offers the opportunity to explore the scientific finds that shed light on one of the really significant sparks to human curiosity—our own origins.”

What was discouraging—and yet depressingly expected—about this “scientific” exhibit on human origins was that there was not one single mention of God.

How can one explain human origins without referring to the God who created it? What has happened to “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” (Genesis 1:1)?

Have you noticed how many people in the sciences today have arbitrarily re-defined science to fit their own belief system? Though the word “science” comes from the Latin and means “knowledge,” this so-called science had nothing to do with God. Many “scientists” will only permit or advance “knowledge” which is in accord with their view of naturalism—the religion of atheism.

This same naturalism is being taught in the nation’s public schools already at the elementary level, causing our

children to become slowly indoctrinated into the religion of atheism!

Drifting Away!

If you don’t think this is a big deal, look around you. Look at how many young people are walking away from the Christian church. Look at how many churches are drifting away from their historic confessions to make room for “other” ways of interpreting Scripture.

The Biblical teaching of verbal inspiration has been compromised by the majority of those who call themselves Christians today. God tells us: “*No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Naturalism is not the private interpreter of Scripture! Yet many Christians are caving in to “Theistic evolution”—the notion that God created the world but used the process of evolution to carry it out.

Understand this: theism and evolution are mutually exclusive. In no way can these two ideas be reconciled. Those who hold to theistic evolution must give up either the claims of evolution or the truths of Scripture. God is being rejected in favor of the constantly changing uncertainty of naturalism.

As Christians we need to be on guard against such attacks by the religion of atheism through the supposed harmlessness of naturalism. We must defend against the reinterpretation of God’s

infallible Word on the basis of man’s fallible ideas and theories.

But don’t misunderstand—God is not losing! Every soul that is won to Christ through the Holy Spirit is another victory for God. And although His Word is rejected by many as “out of

date,” it remains forever true and will abide until the end of time: “*The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever*” (Isaiah 40:8).

All praise to our Creator God!



Editor’s note: Pastor Mayhew says he “tweaked” an article for us which he had prepared for a Creation-Evolution Seminar recently hosted by his congregation, Zion Ev. Lutheran Church. We thank him for sharing!

FROM THE EDITOR

Biology and Theology—At Odds?

Pastor Paul Fleischer · Cheyenne, Wyoming

We, our children and young people, need to know how our Christian faith is under attack from pro-evolutionist elements in the church (!) as well as in the secular, humanistic world outside of it.

How sad that the church—external Christianity—is more and more caving in to theistic evolution. This is happening in our day not so subtly (see footnote 1). Various aspects and assertions of evolution are more and more being accepted under the guise of science even in formerly conservative, Bible-believing circles.

Case in point: last fall a young thirty-something husband and wife, new arrivals in town, dropped by for worship at our CLC church (Redeemer, Cheyenne). After the worship service, in the process of telling us they were searching for a conservative Lutheran Church, they proceeded to inform us that both of them were instructors in the field of biology at the local junior college.

At a meeting with the husband the next week, it was soon discovered that “biology trumped theology” for this well-intentioned gentleman. One exchange went something like this:

Pastor: “With your field of expertise, surely you will grant that there is an Intelligent Designer behind the amazing world in which we live.”

Instructor: “To me that is just a subtle way Bible-believers are trying to insert ‘God’ into the subject of origins.”

After a 90-minute back-and-forth it became clear that the only way this college instructor could mesh the two “-ologies” was by holding to the idea that the Creator used evolution as a tool to create. Among other things, our biologist proffered the frequently heard “from the lesser to the greater” argument—evidences out there of “micro-evolution” (moths-adapting-to-their-surroundings) support “macro-evolution” (molecules-to-

man). It was also opined that “now useless” appendages in the human body are further evidence of molecules-to-man evolution over eons of time. Bottom line, Genesis chapters I & 2 were not to be taken literally but parabolically.

From our pastoral vantage point, we have always stood with the faith-full men and women mentioned in Hebrews chapter eleven. How significant that the holy writer begins his “by faith Abel... Enoch... Noah... Abraham... Sarah... Isaac... Jacob... Joseph... Moses... Rahab (and others ‘of whom the world was not worthy’)” chapter by stating, “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (II:3).

It’s as though the Holy Spirit knew the “debate about origins” was coming. And standing with the same Spirit today, we contend it is the devil’s lie that “science/biology proves” that the Creator used (uses—it must be on-going, right?) evolution as His means to create the world and everything in it, including mankind.

Satan’s sharpest arrows have always been reserved for the Bible itself. His question, put first to Adam and Eve (“Hath God said...?” see Genesis 3), is repeated interminably by unbelievers regarding holy truths recorded from

the very first to the very last chapter of God’s revealed truth. Specifically, the “Hath God said?” arrow verbally assaults a six-day creation via “fiat” (God simply speaking the words, “Let there be...” followed by “and there was...!”).

Is this dangerous? Look at it this way. The “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4) knows that the doctrinal-domino theory works in his favor, ultimately destroying the gospel (his aim and goal). If the First Article (“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth...”) is placed on the doctrinal scrap-heap, crumbling along with it is the Second Article (Jesus Christ “has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature...that I should be His own”) and the Third Article (“I cannot by my own reason or strength believe..., but the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel...”). Good bye, true Christianity—and heaven, too.

For Bible-believers (“...Your Word is truth”—John 17:17), biology (the ‘study of the origins and characteristics of plant and animal life’) and theology (the ‘study of God and His relations to the universe’) neither clash nor contradict. Far from being at odds, at every level the former (biology) supports/undergirds/screams out that the latter (the Bible-based theology of a young-earth, six-day creationism) is Truth!

Remember too that the Master Teacher (who taught, “*The Scripture cannot be broken...*” John 10:35) took Genesis at face value, when He answered His accusers: “*Have you not read [in Genesis 1:27] that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female...?*” (Matthew 19:4).

We continue to thank God for what science/biology has done and can do for mankind’s benefit (high-tech communications and medical technology, for example). Yet science is out of place when used to trump theology—contradicting/gainsaying the truths of God’s Word.

Before our visit with the local biology instructor came to a close, we recommended that he be in touch with a Bible-believing scientist such as Dr. David Menton, who could respond

far more knowledgably than we to his pro-evolutionary ideas and assertions (see footnote 2).

Be not deceived, dear readers. Darwinism’s God-less teachings are designed to exalt man and human wisdom (“contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge,” 1 Timothy 6:20), thus undermining God’s wisdom and God’s gospel, which alone can save.



- 1) Copied from a February 2011 issue of *Christian News*: “Did you know that on Sunday morning, February 13, about 350 pastors will be talking about creation vs. evolution? Believe it or not, though, these churches will have pastors actually speak in favor of evolution! This coincides with Charles Darwin’s birthday, February 12. For months, a web page has been promoting what’s called ‘Evolution Sunday.’ If you visit this site, not only will you discover that over 10,000 pastors have signed a statement in support of evolution, but hundreds of them have agreed to promote evolution in their churches on Sunday. Incredibly, the founder of this movement is an atheist!...”
- 2) The latest *Answers in Genesis* Newsletter reports that Dr. Menton has recently produced a set of DVD’s titled “Body of Evidence.” All eight of the 2-part DVD’s are said to be “great for anyone studying the human body, plus all who want to be able to show their skeptical friends some of the most amazing designs that point unmistakably to our Creator.”



Prof. John Ude with his college department graduates, sons David (left) and Christopher



Parade of graduates outside the auditorium

Hand-Picked

Teacher David Bernthal • Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

It has happened to most of us. The anticipation is rising. The line you are standing in is dwindling. Who will be next? Will I get picked at all? Ah, those moments on the playground before a recess game begins—a possible knock to the self-esteem if ever there was one!

I believe the way students choose each other for teammates has some lessons for us. It is not surprising that the biggest and fastest are often the first to be picked. If strength and size and speed are the advantage, why not go with it? And often some students are last on the line not so much for lack of ability to play the particular game, but for their lack of motivation or enthusiasm.

Isn't it rather entertaining to watch as the choosing is going on? The most gifted athletes stand around casually, knowing they will be selected in the first few drafts. Others, aware of their lack of size or skill, stand on tip-toe, maybe waving enthusiastically. And yes, there are those few who are simply waiting to be chosen last and don't really seem to care.

For centuries Christians have discussed and debated the doctrine of election. A frequent question is *Cur alii, non alii*? (Latin for, "Why are some saved and others not?")

There are those who think or believe they have been chosen or "called" for eternal life much as members are chosen for a team.

Perhaps it's the best or smartest that are chosen? However, the Holy Scriptures tell us clearly, "For you see your

calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Corinthians 1:26).

Or could it be that those chosen or "called" for heaven are at least the ones who are more compliant, better team players? Again God's Word tells us, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

It's starting to look pretty grim, isn't it? Could there be in us any reason at all why Christ chose us to be on His team of believers?

Was I Worthy?

In our playground scenario, if a younger child gets to be captain, he often will choose friends—even to the detriment of the team. On the spiritual side, though, the holy fact is that Christ chose or "called" us even though He found nothing making us worthy of His team. Each of us could bring only sin, unbelief, and enmity.

Christ didn't choose us because we were His friends; rather, His choosing made us His friends. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The Scriptures clearly teach that the reason anyone is saved is purely through God's divine grace: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

So what about each of us individually? We may wonder, "Am I one of God's chosen?" God's Word clearly assures us that we are saved *sola gratia* (by grace

alone)—before we had anything to do with it! "... (God) chose us in (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame...having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephesians 1:4-5).

Another question often arises when the doctrine of election comes up. If it is God doing the choosing as to who gets to heaven, it must also be His choice as to who is lost and condemned to hell, right?

Wrong! As one pastor put it, that may be good logic, but it is bad theology. God offers free salvation to all. Why some receive this gift and gladly rejoice in their salvation won by Christ while others reject it is a mystery of God's gospel.

We simply know this: it is God's will that all people have the opportunity to

come to Jesus as their Savior. "As I live' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live'" (Ezekiel 33:11).

On the one hand, all credit and glory is God's when a soul is brought to faith in Jesus and thus into His kingdom.

On the other hand, when the gospel of the Savior has been rejected—and hell is the just punishment—the unbelieving soul itself must bear all responsibility and shame.

Dear reader, it is our pleasurable duty to spread the gospel message of free salvation to all. Therefore let us be ready to "preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season...." (2 Timothy 4:2).

And further, rejoice because you've been hand-picked and "your names are written in heaven"! (Luke 10:20)



Graduates singing their class hymn

Expect a lot but don't claim too much

Professor Em. Paul R. Koch • Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Where were you on Saturday, May 21, 2011, the day the world did NOT end?

Another scholar got it wrong, deceived by his own intellect. We expect more from a Bible student, but things haven't changed much since the days of Moses (read Deuteronomy 18:22). While Mr. Camping claimed too much for himself (we claim only what the Bible allows us to claim), we lived May 21, 2011 as Commencement Day at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin—another day of His grace.

From the back row in Immanuel Lutheran College Field-House, we welcomed old and new friends before the faculty and graduates entered, dusting off the ceiling beams with

the glorious processional hymn "Immanuel, God with us!"

The ILC Chorus carried us forward with "Jesus is the living Stone" as introduction to Pres. John Pfeiffer's keynote address (GOALS) based on Philippians 3:13-21. While some new goals are opening for our graduates, God has set the greater and higher goal of our "upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Commencement is a good word. It means to proceed, to get going. Another school year has passed into history, and our graduates are commencing toward other goals, as Pres. Pfeiffer pointed out: "We are pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in

Christ Jesus." Hymns were selected to beseech His support toward that goal: "Father, let me dedicate All my life to Thee," and "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah."

Graduates:

David L. W. Pfeiffer received his diploma from the Seminary department and will begin his first tour of pastoral service at Ascension congregation of Batavia, Illinois.

Six students were graduated from the college department, three of whom intend to continue their studies in our Seminary department, and twenty-five young Christians completed their high school career.

We thank the Lord of the Church for these gifts: *"Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; Let Your glory be above all the Earth"* (Psalm 57).

On the evening before commencement, we enjoyed the 2011 Spring Concert of the choirs of Immanuel Lutheran College as they raised the roof of Messiah Lutheran Church with a medley of anthems, somber Lenten devotions, Easter chorales, and coronation praises—plus the synagogue melody "Hosanna to our King" and the powerful martial "Miriam dances at the Red Sea."

While May 21, 2011 was Armed Forces Day and Graduation Day at ILC, a happy day of rain and sunshine, tears and smiles—it wasn't, however, the end of the world. For that we are still waiting. We are leaning forward to greet Him and to find our stability at Jesus' feet.

Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!

AMEN!



Immanuel Lutheran High School graduates

THIRD IN A SERIES

Christian Apologetics

James Arndt • Member at Peace Thru Christ Lutheran Church and School - Middleton, Wisconsin

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...” 1 PETER 3:15

Worldviews in Conflict

“Whoever is not with me is against me” (Matthew 12:30a)

Because God is our Creator, because Christ is our Savior, and because as Christians we are new creations by the Holy Spirit, our worldview is dominated by God. There is no reason to budge even an inch from this.

If we were to do so, not only would we be betraying God but we would also be destroying the foundation for rationality, ethics, and science.

We dare never take a neutralist position or think, “Well, he has his beliefs and I have mine.” The Christian worldview dominates and will depose all others. Many have tried to stand up to God and do it their own way, but such a position will always lead to ruin.

A fierce antithesis exists between those who follow God and those that have rebelled.

The antithesis appeared in the Garden of Eden. Everything God had created was very good, but Adam and Eve wanted to be like God and rebelled. Ever since that fall into sin the natural inclination of man is to stop up his ears and run away from the voice of the Lord.

Although God promised to send His Son, there would always be an antithesis between the devil and Christ, the Seed of the woman (see Genesis, chapter 3).

In the first family, we see Cain’s hatred leading to the murder of his brother Abel. We see it again when the great wickedness of the world brought such sorrow to God that only one righteous man and his family were spared from the great flood.

Years later as the children of Israel were about to enter the *Continued on page 19*



Candidate for the Ministry, David Pfeiffer (who has accepted the call to Ascension Lutheran Church, Batavia (Chicago area), Ill., with his father, Prof. John Pfeiffer

OPENING DEVOTION

Professor John Pfeiffer at the opening of the CLC Coordinating Council, Spring 2011

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” 1 CORINTHIANS 15:19

Whenver I read this Word of God, I can’t help but shake my head at the striking example of hypocrisy.

Throughout this dying world, millions of people believe that Jesus Christ is dead. They may think that He was a real, historical figure or they may think that He never existed. In either case, the hope that people attach to Him is viewed as empty and meaningless. It is seen only as a crutch to get weak people through life. As Karl Marx put it: “Religion...is the opium of the people.”

For other religions, this is true. In their desperation to find some hope for a joyful afterlife, people have created

for themselves religions which give this promise. These religions acknowledge the existence of a divine being(s), but their make-believe gods are fashioned in the image of man. Only in this way can these people hope to find a standard to which they can attain. Set the standards low enough and anyone can get to heaven—paradise, nirvana, Shangri-la, Valhalla, Elysium, or some other after-life.

However, it is all in vain, and the adherents of such religions are to be pitied.

Or are we the ones to be pitied? We place all our hopes on one lowly Jew who

was put to death on a cross and buried in a tomb. We place our hopes on Him, because we believe that He rose from the dead, thus revealing that He achieved everything for which He came into this world. He achieved forgiveness of sins for everyone; He achieved justification for everyone; He achieved eternal life for everyone, although only those who trust in what He achieved actually receive eternal life.

But "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable."

Indeed, is our hope in Christ only a vain panacea for all our earthly sufferings and sorrows? Did He rise, or is His body still in an ancient tomb? The answer is simple, but its simplicity can be grasped only by those who have faith.

"But now Christ is risen from the dead..."

The religion that is taught and lived at Immanuel Lutheran College is not one of human origin. It is not one that "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things" (Romans 1:19). Rather, it is of divine origin. It is the religion that IS, not one which once was not and then was invented. It is the religion that rests on righteousness and holiness...the righteousness and holiness of God and which is also required of man. It is the religion that reveals that man of himself is unrighteous and unholy, and therefore incompatible with God. It is the religion that reveals the glory of God's grace which removed man's unrighteousness and replaced it with the God's own righteousness. This was all accomplished in the person and work of God's Son who was made "to be

The religion of Immanuel Lutheran College proclaims,

"But now Christ is risen from the dead...."

Therefore, our faculty, staff, and students are not to be pitied, but to be envied.

Our belief is not a crutch, but a springboard launching us into a life of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

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Our belief makes us the most beneficial of Earth's inhabitants. More than this, it gives us a citizenship in heaven. "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:21f).

O God, bless Immanuel Lutheran College for the sake of the risen Savior. Amen.



"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

(2 Timothy 2:15)

Guard the Precious Deposit

Pastor John Klatt • Rapid City, South Dakota

When our young people are confirmed, they vow to hold to what they have been taught from the Bible. They promise to "suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it." Recognizing this as a promise that can be kept only with divine help, they humbly answer, "I do so intend, with the help of God."

This solemn confirmation promise expresses the magnitude of what has been given to all who receive sound instruction in Christian doctrine. To have learned the teachings of God's Word is to have a trust committed to you. It is like having an item of great value given to you for safe-keeping. Recognizing its value, you guard it carefully, taking precautions against losing it or having it stolen.

Here St. Paul impresses on Timothy the value of what had been committed to him. What Timothy had was the gospel, the precious truth of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

This Paul had transmitted to Timothy with "sound words."

That word "sound" is noteworthy. Paul uses it several times in the epistles to Timothy and Titus to describe Christian teaching. It is sound in the sense of healthy—as we use the word when we say that someone is of sound mind.

The "sound words" which Paul had spoken to Timothy were words

with divine power to give and sustain spiritual health and life. They are words through which the Holy Spirit leads sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, gives forgiveness of sins, peace with God, and eternal life. To have these blessings is to be truly healthy.

To have the sound words of Christian teaching is to possess something of great value. Paul instructs Timothy to hold onto them and guard them. Yet he was not to keep them as one would keep gold or diamonds locked in a safety deposit box. Christian doctrine is not just something beautiful to be admired. The precious deposit of the gospel is to be used.

Timothy was to use the sound words that he learned for his own ministry as he preached to his congregation and instructed people in the Christian faith. He was not to use them in mechanical fashion the way one might apply mathematical formulas, but "in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."

Some Examples

Timothy's teaching should show that he believed the gospel that he taught to others. His preaching should show his love for the Lord Jesus whom he held up to others as the only Savior.

After this admonition to Timothy, Paul speaks of several individuals, mentioning them by name. They serve as examples, on one hand, of guarding

the precious deposit of the gospel and, on the other hand, of failing to do so.

Paul reports that "all those in Asia have turned away from me." We sense the great sadness in those words and in the mention of the names Phygellus and Hermogenes, people Paul loved. He had taught them the gospel, but now they were not holding to it.

But Paul does not dwell long on these sad thoughts. He recalls and mentions another name, one that gives him joy: Onesiphorus, a believer who had guarded the precious deposit of the gospel.

That gospel had brought blessings to the entire household of Onesiphorus and had produced beautiful fruit in his life. In many ways he had provided support for Paul's ministry in Ephesus. And Paul was especially moved and

refreshed when Onesiphorus visited him in his imprisonment in Rome. It was an act of love that required considerable effort and a measure of courage.

All of us who by the grace of God have received the sound words of Christian teaching have this as a precious deposit in our hearts.

Let us guard it with all care and zeal by continued hearing and study of the sound words of the gospel.

Let us not hide it but share it so that others may have it.

By it the Spirit will produce much good fruit in our lives.

By it the Spirit will give us joy and peace now and keep us as God's own forever.

Ω



High School graduate Mikel Marzofka

Jesus — Giver of the Holy Spirit



Pastor Andrew Schaller • Watertown, South Dakota

These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you. (John 16:1-15)

It was a tough night for the disciples full of tough news (humanly speaking). It was Maundy Thursday evening after the Passover supper. Judas Iscariot had gone out to do Satan's bidding. Jesus took the time to prepare His alarmed, confused, and saddened disciples.

The Lord warned them that difficult days lay ahead (vv. 2-3). They would be kicked out of the synagogue. People would kill some of them, thinking they were doing God a service (cf. Stephen, Acts 7-8).

The truth was that those who sought

to kill them would do so because they didn't know God (v. 3).

Jesus told them that He was leaving them. They didn't want Him to leave, nor did they fully understand why He was going. How could His leaving be a good thing? How could it be to their advantage if He left them? It was He who kept them together, who cleared up their confusion, who comforted them in their sorrow.

Yet it was necessary that He depart. He had to complete the mission given Him by the Father to redeem mankind. Then He would return to His native heaven — and send them another Helper!

Who was this Helper whom Jesus would send?

Has Jesus sent the same Helper to us? And if so, how can we know? How can we recognize Him and His work among us?

Jesus Previews His Gift!

There is a descriptive tag on this particular portrait. In fact, Jesus, the Giver of this gift, previews His Gift!

First, Jesus said that the Helper would guide His disciples in all truth. He would not offer new doctrines and new ideas. He would not offer subjective opinions but absolute truth.

This same Helper guides Jesus' modern-day disciples as well by the absolute truth of God's Word. It was Jesus Himself who defined absolute truth when He said, "Sanctify them by the Truth, Your Word is Truth" (John 17:17).

Second, Jesus said the Helper would not speak on His own authority, but would reveal only what the Highest Authority gave Him to reveal.

Plenty of folks in this world are willing to claim that they have been authorized by God to offer some new message. The Helper Jesus promised to send would not be like them. He would speak with God's authority. He would repeat and confirm God's own Word. Jesus' disciples today still judge truth from error according to the standard of God's Word.

Third – and this one is especially important – Jesus said that the Helper would glorify Him. We recognize the presence of the Helper when Jesus Himself and His doctrines are glorified, praised, and honored.

Moreover, those who set out to glorify themselves and not Christ call into question whether they are being guided by the Spirit of God. Those guided by this Helper are not all about "I", "Me," and "My"...but all about "HIM"!

Finally, Jesus said that the Helper would take of what belonged to Jesus and declare it to them. In fact, the Helper would help them to remember (John 14:26) what Jesus had said that they, in turn, might write it down for future generations.

The Helper is...the Holy Spirit!

He came with power, signs, and wonders on Pentecost. He still comes to convince, convert, and enlighten through the Word of God.

The Helper still comes on His mission today.

I once heard someone say, "I'm spiritual...but not religious." What does that mean? For us "spiritual" means "coming from and of the Holy Spirit." He is the Helper of whom Jesus speaks. He is the one sent by Christ for our benefit and who still works in and among those who continue in His Word.

Christian Apologetics

Continued from Page 12

Promised Land, God warned them not to intermarry with the heathen because to do so would surely lead them away from the true God and to their own destruction (Deuteronomy 7:4,6).

When the time had fully come, God sent His Son to repair the gap between God and men. Throughout Jesus' life we see the antithesis intensify. Herod tried to have Jesus killed. There were many cases of demonic possession. The Jewish leaders' hatred of Jesus culminated with His crucifixion.

The final antithesis will be on Judgment Day. Those who have called upon the true God will be ushered into paradise. All who have rejected God—even though they knew God and were blessed by His care—will finally get the separation for which they asked—namely, Hell.

As we are called to defend God's Word, we must always be aware of this antithesis. Even though the unbeliever will deny God with his mouth, he

(The apologetic method and organization for these articles is taken from the book *Pushing the Antithesis: The Apologetic Methodology of Greg L. Bahnsen*, American Vision, Powder Springs, Georgia, 2007.)



cannot help being God's creature and living in His creation. In his heart-of-hearts he knows that God exists, yet he will try to suppress this knowledge (Romans 1:18).

God has made His existence clearly known (Romans 1:19-20), and when God gets the point across, HE GETS THE POINT ACROSS. There is no valid excuse for unbelief.

So in our Christian witnessing we will not only be aware of the antithesis, but we must capitalize on it as well.

Confront the unbeliever with his inconsistencies. Show him that if he were true to his worldview, he would destroy rationality, ethics, and science. The point must be made that if a person has any success in any area of study, it can be possible only in the Christian worldview.

The proof of the Christian worldview is that without it, you couldn't prove anything.

"Portraits of Christ" in John's Gospel:

Ch. 1 The Son of God	Ch. 8 The Defender of the Weak	Ch. 15 The True Vine
Ch. 2 The Son of Man	Ch. 9 The Light of the World	Ch. 16 The Giver of the Holy Spirit
Ch. 3 The Divine Teacher	Ch. 10 The Good Shepherd	Ch. 17 The Great Intercessor
Ch. 4 The Soul-Winner	Ch. 11 The Prince of Life	Ch. 18 The Model Sufferer
Ch. 5 The Great Physician	Ch. 12 The King	Ch. 19 The Uplifted Savior
Ch. 6 The Bread of Life	Ch. 13 The Servant	Ch. 20 The Conqueror of Death
Ch. 7 The Water of Life	Ch. 14 The Consoler	Ch. 21 The Restorer of the Penitent

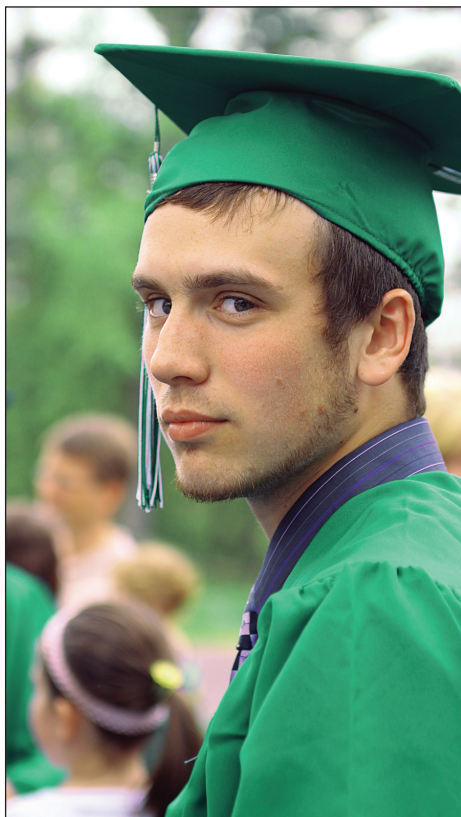
Announcements

50th Anniversary Observance

In thanks and praise to our Savior Jesus, all are invited to join us for worship and a celebration of the 50th anniversary of Grace Ev. Lutheran Church of Valentine, Nebraska, on Sunday, July 10th.

A special 50th anniversary worship service will be held at 9:30 a.m. A catered dinner will follow at 12 noon with a program thereafter. Later that evening (7:00 p.m.) there will be an evening gathering back at Grace (supper, games, fellowship, etc.).

Those hoping to attend are asked to RSVP to 50th anniversary committee member Ruth Ahrens: 402-376-1832 or ruthahrens@yahoo.com —Pastor Luke Bernthal



High School graduate Noah Meyer

About this month's Lutheran Spokesman Cover and photos

The photos in this issue were taken by Scott Wuerch (except for page 6 photo, photographer unknown)

The cover was art directed and designed by Matt Schaser.

Send your photos and art (in digital format) to mschaser@sbcglobal.net and we'll consider them for use in future editions of the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

Lutheran Spokesman

"...THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN." — JOHN 10:35

Postmaster: Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN 55113 and additional offices (825-580). ISSN#0024-7537. Send address corrections (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford Street North, Roseville MN 55113

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Website address: www.clclutheran.org. Editor: Paul Fleischer, 1741 E. 22nd Street, Cheyenne, WY 82001-4138, E-Mail to paulgf@qwestoffice.net; Assistant Editor: Paul R. Koch; Art Director/Designer: Matthew Schaser; Staff Artist: John Fox, Staff: Theodore Barthels, David Bernthal, Wayne Eichstadt, Warren Fanning, Daniel Fleischer, David Fuerstenau, Mark Gullerud, John Klatt, Paul Krause, Joseph Lau, Nathanael Mayhew, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Andrew Schaller, Thomas Schuetze. Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Fleischer six weeks before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Fleischer. Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. E-Mail to BennoSydow@yahoo.com. Individual subscriptions {foreign-U.S. currency only}: \$18.00 {\$22.00} for one year; \$34.00 {\$42.00} for two years; \$50.00 {\$62.00} for three years; sent in bulk to congregations: \$15.00. Cover Art: Nathan Ude • Spokesman Online Version at: www.lutheranspokesman.org Printed in U.S.A.