

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



**Dr. Martin Luther's seal expresses his theology and his faith.  
Luther designed it himself.**

In the center is a black cross indicative of Christ's dreadful sacrifice on the cross for every sinner who ever lived.

The cross is in the center of a red heart, to show that faith causes love, joy, and peace to grow in the human heart.

The red heart is on a white rose (Luther's favorite flower) because white is the color of angels and blessed spirits.

The white rose is against a blue-sky background to symbolize the Christian's hope for the coming joys of heaven.

The seal is enclosed in a gold ring, showing that the bliss of heaven is unending.

# REFORMERS (ALWAYS) NEEDED

Teacher David Bernthal • Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

**re-form** vt. 1. to make better by removing faults and defects; correct 2. to make better by putting a stop to abuses or malpractices or by introducing better procedures, etc.

**re-for-ma-tion** n. 2. [R] the 16th century religious movement that aimed at reforming the Roman Catholic Church and resulted in establishing the Protestant churches\*

There is little doubt that the visible church of Luther's time (the Roman Catholic Church) needed reforming. As most man-made institutions go, the church had become more liberal the further it got from teaching the pure Word of God. Man's declarations became law—traditions became commandments, and as a result the pure gospel message was muddied and choked in the stagnant waters of man's theological inventions.

The people of Luther's day had gotten too comfortable with the way things had been running in the church. The clergy were in charge; the congregational members weren't expected to worry themselves about such things as doctrine.

Luther's goal was to return the clergy as well as the general population of the church to the pure Word of God—to encourage each individual to a personal relationship with God and His Word.

Luther, however, was not the first nor would or should he be the last of the reformers! In fact, since Adam's Fall into sin all mankind has needed "reforming" and as long as this world has sinful humans living in it, there will be a need to reform the heart as well as the institutions of man.

Throughout the time of the Old Testament God had continually sent reformers to His people. Whether they came in the form of prophets, priests, judges, or kings, the goal was always the same—to return God's people to a true worship of the Lord. Kings like Josiah and Hezekiah and a judge like Gideon had the altars of pagan religions literally torn down, thus endeavoring to restore

*"...It was not easy for these pastors and congregations and individual members to take a stand against the prevailing opinions of the majority... The present members of the CLC should never forget the difficulties these men... and others with like convictions faced..."*

Quote from *OUT OF NECESSITY* by Pastor David Lau

true worship among the people. A prophet like Jeremiah worked in the face of constant trouble, attempting to reform the hearts and lives of his hearers with warning words from the Almighty.

These and many others worked hard to reform the religious institutions of man, striving to make them more in-tune with the Word of God. Their reforms provide examples and encouragement to all generations to follow, including our own!

In addition, prior to Luther's time, attempts at reform in the church by men such as Peter de Bruys, John Wycliffe, and John Huss led to their suffering and dying for their beliefs rather than compromising their beliefs.

As time marched on, the need for reformation in the church never waned or went away, it simply moved. Just prior to World War II, Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer stood firm against Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party which attempted to hijack the Christian church in Germany and turn it into a Christ-less organization—having no resemblance to Luther's church other than form. Bonhoeffer wrote, *"Confirmands today are like soldiers marching to war, the war of Jesus Christ against the gods of this world. It is a war that demands the commitment of one's whole life. Is not God, our Lord, worthy of this struggle?"* (If true in 1938, how much more so today?!) True to his word, Pastor Bonhoeffer was willing to give his life for his convictions.

In the early days of the 19th century, many Christians, grounded firmly in the Scriptures, came to the United States to establish orthodox, Bible-honoring, God-fearing synods. Yet as time went on, problems developed; if it wasn't attacks from outside the church, it was complacency and controversy from within it.

Soon the time for Reformers was here again. Our own Church

\*Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition; Wm. Collins Publishers, Inc.; 1980

of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) was born “out of necessity” (as the book title of our most recent written history declares). The book’s author, Pastor David Lau, writes:

*“...It was not easy for these pastors and congregations and individual members to take a stand against the prevailing opinions of the majority. In many cases it meant separation from family members and close friends...The present members of the CLC should never forget the difficulties these men (the pastors who left their former fellowships) and others with like convictions faced, the sacrifices they made for the sake of obedience to God’s Word. Nor should we forget the efforts of the men and women in the congregations they served, efforts to support the cause of God’s truth regardless of cost.”*

One thing we know for sure from studying Biblical and church history throughout the ages is that there will always be a need for Reformers.

Another thing we can be assured of: Jesus Christ, the Savior/Reformer of sinners, will always provide pious, faithful, and God-fearing men and women willing to risk all to stand on His Word of truth.

May the Holy Spirit keep each one of us in God’s grace that we may be found faithful followers of His holy Word!



Faculty of Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wis. in 1969. (l-r) R. Roehl, R. Gurgel, J. Lau, E. Schaller, A. Schaller (see article, p. 23!), R. Dommer, P. R. Koch, G. Radtke, C.M. Gullerud, E. Reim

# Did Not Our Hearts Burn Within Us?

Prof. Joseph Lau • Eau Claire, Wisconsin

**H**ow many of us recognize the words of the title?.

I have often wondered what it must have been like for those who heard Jesus preach directly to them. Their hearts must have burned within them as the Holy Spirit used the Savior’s own words to create and sustain faith.

As the risen Savior joined them on a walk to Emmaus, Cleopas and a friend had this amazing opportunity. Jesus asked them what made them sad. They told Him that “He who was to redeem Israel” had been crucified.

They were disillusioned because Jesus had yet to be seen after three days in the grave. Jesus rebuked them as “foolish” and “slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets had spoken.” He then went on to chronicle how the prophecies of the Old Testament had been fulfilled in Him.

Imagine God Himself as your teacher! Surely there was power in Jesus’ preaching!

Are we jealous of such an op-

portunity to hear our Savior speak? We have no need to be, for Jesus speaks directly to us too. His words to the Emmaus disciples are no more powerful and effective than the other words recorded in Holy Scripture are for us today. “Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). Likewise, St. Paul points out to the Corinthians: “...We also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches” (1 Corinthians 2:1)!

There are those who would have us believe that direct revelation in Biblical times is in some way more authentic and powerful than what is recorded in Holy Scripture. Others suggest that direct revelation today supersedes anything recorded in the Bible.

God’s Word does not teach that! God’s Word and the gospel remain “the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16)!

Jesus is in our living room when His Word is spoken. “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I

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am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

Jesus is in the church pulpit when the pastor proclaims God’s holy Word, for Jesus said, “He who hears you hears Me...” (Luke 10:16).

It is also important for us to remember that Jesus and His Word were rejected by the majority of the people to whom He spoke. So it will be with us when we proclaim His truth. “For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it” (Matthew 7:13). “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14).

It is tempting to tell people what they want to hear—if only to avoid confrontation; but if it is only man’s wisdom being presented and not God’s, it will do them no spiritual good. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word

of God” (Romans 10:17).


As this month we again celebrate the Lutheran Reformation, it is important that God’s Word “burned in the heart” of Martin Luther, for he relied on the Bible alone (*Sola Scriptura!*) as the source of truth.

The Roman church at Luther’s time—and still today!—believes that religious truth can be found outside of Scripture; the Roman church teaches that the pope and church councils could establish doctrine in addition to or even contrary to Scripture.

May God grant that the Word of God ever “burn in our hearts.” Through His Spirit may He give us the courage to confess with Luther: “Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen!”



Preserve Thy Word and preaching,  
 The truth that makes us whole,  
 The mirror of Thy glory,  
 The power that saves the soul.  
 Oh, may this living water,  
 This dew of heavenly grace,  
 Sustain us while here living  
 Until we see Thy face!  
 (TLH #264:5)



**From the Editor:** The Minnesota Conference of the CLC held its annual Joint Reformation Service on October 31, 2010, at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato. Three sermonettes discussed the Reformation as well as the 50th anniversary of the CLC from different angles. The overall theme was “Treasuring Our Heritage of Truth.” We thank the speakers for sharing their thoughtful and inspiring devotions with our *Spokesman* readers.



“TREASURING OUR HERITAGE OF TRUTH”

*First of Three...*

*Testimony of Our Forefathers*

Pastor David Lau • Eau Claire, Wisconsin

**“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” Hebrews 13:7**

In our service today we are trying to do what God is telling us to do in this text. We are trying to remember those individuals who have spoken the Word of God to us. Since we are celebrating both the Lutheran Reformation and the anniversary of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, we are trying to remember particularly those from the sixteenth century who spoke the Word of God to us, and those in the middle of the 20th century who spoke the Word of God to us in connection with the founding of our church body.

Of course, the key question is this: Did Martin Luther speak the Word of God? After all, he was teaching things that had not been taught for many years. His opponents kept on asking him: How can you be right

since you disagree with so many of the church fathers and the church authorities? What makes you think you are right and they are wrong?

These questions troubled Martin Luther very much, but the fact that sustained him was his conviction that the Bible was the very Word of God, and that he was simply teaching what the Bible says, and therefore he could not be wrong.

In the year 1528, in the midst of the conflict over the Lord’s Supper, Luther wrote his detailed confession, summarizing all the various articles of the Christian faith. These are his words: “By the grace of God I have most diligently traced all these articles through the Scriptures, have examined them again and again in the light thereof. ...We would rather cling to the naked,

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bare text which God Himself has spoken than to...glosses devised by men."

Thus Luther confessed his faith in the Triune God, in the person and work of Jesus, in salvation by faith in Jesus, and all the other articles of faith that we know from our Lutheran Confessions. He concluded with these words: "This is my faith, for so all true Christians believe and so the Holy Scriptures teach us."

Of course, Martin Luther was a sinner like us, and he freely confessed his sins. He considered his greatest sin to be that he taught false doctrine for so many years as a Roman Catholic monk and priest, before God led him by means of Scripture to a right understanding of justification by faith in Christ, and by faith alone.

As we remember Martin Luther for having spoken the Word of God to us, so we remember the founding fathers of our church body. They also had to contend with the fact that the vast majority of professing Christians did not agree with their position or confession on church fellowship. How could the few of them be right, and all the many others be wrong? Surely the many others knew their Bibles, didn't they? Weren't the many others faithful teachers of all the other teachings of God's Word? How could they go wrong on this one matter?

So what did these fathers do? Leaders like Edmund Reim, Norman Madson, C. M. Gullerud, M. J. Witt, Paul G. Albrecht, Egbert Schaller, Otto J. Eckert and others diligently studied the Scriptures so that they would know and be certain of what the Word of God actually says.

Over a period of many years they worked on a confession concerning church fellowship based entirely on God's Word. They wanted to follow in the footsteps of Martin Luther in tracing God's teaching on this subject through the Scriptures and examining this again and again. In this way they gained certainty that they were teaching the Word of God, and in this certainty they took the bold step of leaving their former church bodies and establishing the CLC.

We are assembled fifty years later to thank and praise our Lord for having given us faithful teachers like Martin Luther in the 16th century and the founders of our church body in the 20th century, who have spoken the Word of God to us. How can we follow their faith? By diligently studying the Scriptures, where we will find our Savior Jesus Christ and all His blessings and where we will find certainty and truth in the midst of all the uncertainty and false teaching of our times.

May our God preserve us in this faith!

## "TREASURING OUR HERITAGE OF TRUTH"

*Second of Three...*

### *Christian Education*

Teacher Chad Seybt • Okabena, Minnesota

**"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!  
You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul,  
and with all your strength. And these words which  
I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them  
diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit  
in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down,  
and when you rise up...." Deuteronomy 6:4-7**

**O**ur theme for this worship service is Treasuring Our Heritage of Truth. In order to keep a heritage, there really needs to be someone to whom it is passed down. That is where the role of Christian education comes into play. Through His Word may God teach us how we might pass down this heritage of truth, even as it has been passed down to us!

**"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"** This verse of our text establishes the importance of Christian education. There is only one true God. There is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. And there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

THROUGH HIS WORD GOD ENABLED Martin Luther to understand this importance. Luther wrote: "[Satan] sees that he can not have his way in our times, he thinks

to accomplish his purpose with our descendants, whom before our eyes he seeks to withhold from learning and knowledge. And thus, when we are dead, he will have a naked and defenseless people before him, with whom he can do as he pleases."

THROUGH HIS WORD GOD ENABLED our CLC forefathers to also understand the great importance of Christian education. Through His Word God moved the voters of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota, to draw up and approve plans of starting a school for higher Christian education—even though there was no budget, no faculty, and no CLC yet to support it!

*"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children."*

Before parents can instruct their children, they are

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to have God's Word in their own hearts; therefore, these verses establish the fact that Christian education is a cradle-to-grave process. There is no graduate from Christian education this side of heaven!

THROUGH HIS WORD GOD ENABLED Martin Luther to write not only the *Small Catechism* (to be used in instructing children) but also the *Large Catechism*. The latter was designed as a means to further assist and teach those teachers of the children. "According to Luther, it [was] the duty of every Christian to learn constantly, in order also to be able to teach others in turn." (From *Historical Introduction to the Book of Concord*, F. Bente)

THROUGH HIS WORD GOD ENABLED our CLC forefathers to establish institutions that would aid in the cradle-to-grave process. As congregations were established, so also were Christian day schools, Christian high schools, a seminary, Sunday schools, Sunday Bible classes, mid-week Bible classes, confirmation classes, adult instruction classes, as well as two periodicals: the *Lutheran Spokesman* and the *Journal of Theology*.

"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

The final verses of this text remind us that Christian education takes work. We are to teach our children diligently at all times and concerning every facet of their lives. This may often require sacrifice on the part of the teacher and parent—and yet it is a most wonderful sacrifice, for it is a most wonderful work!

THROUGH HIS WORD GOD ENABLED Martin Luther to labor and sacrifice throughout his life, as is evident from the great number of Biblical sermons and teaching materials he left behind.

THROUGH HIS WORD GOD ENABLED our forefathers to labor and sacrifice greatly for the soul-saving work of Christian education. When our sister congregation of Luther Memorial in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin was established, they had a Christian day school of 64 students in grades one through eight and two teachers; certainly such a high student-to-teacher ratio required much labor, and surely sacrifices had to be made. Many pastors also served as the Christian day school teachers. Members sacrificed well-paying jobs in order to remain close to the truth. Parents made sacrifices both in hard-earned money as well as in time spent so that their children might have a thorough Christian education. Yes, our CLC forefathers knew both hard work and sacrifice.

THROUGH HIS WORD GOD ENABLED! Through that same Word may He also enable us to recognize the importance of Christian education for our own spiritual

benefit, to realize that it is a life-long process, and to endure in this blessed hard work as He uses us to pass on our heritage of Truth to sinners in need of Jesus. Amen.



## “TREASURING OUR HERITAGE OF TRUTH”

*Third of Three...*

### *The Testimony Of Confidence*

Pastor David Schierenbeck • Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota

**T**he divinely inspired letter to the Ephesians is all about the Church of Jesus Christ — of which we are members by the grace of God, redeemed and forgiven by the blood of Christ, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the Head and chief Cornerstone. In Ephesians chapter 4 we are given the marvelous Master-plan for the edification (building up) of His Church.

Our ascended Lord would bless His Church with people-leader gifts. These gifts would then equip faithful saints for the work of the gospel ministry so that, in turn, all would grow in faith and love for Christ, so that all might possess strong Scriptural convictions, so that—as we sail across the sea of life and face the storms of life—we would not be like small rudderless, anchorless, pilot-

less boats, tossed back and forth and adrift with every wind of human teaching that is blowing; rather, we would be people of God anchored to the sure foundation of Jesus and His Word so that we would boldly speak His Truth.

I am one among a shrinking group who has vivid memories not only of much that has happened in the fifty years of our synod's existence, but also of the days prior to the birth of the CLC. I have never ceased to marvel at the people-gifts with which the Lord has blessed us—pastors, teachers, missionaries, professors, Christian men and women in the pews who were and are truly anchored to their heritage of Truth in the face of intense pressure to do otherwise. Clay pots they were and we are, each with our own sins and weaknesses—yet vessels upon whom and through whom the Lord has

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## OUR GOD—A SURE STRONGHOLD

Pastor John Schierenbeck • Winter Haven, Florida

poured out His grace and strength, so that there can be no doubts either from where the spiritual power has come or to Whom all the glory belongs!

Given the strong personalities and independent spirits involved in those earliest days, it was and is no small miracle of grace that the Lord molded and melded these gifts and personalities into a new church He would use to herald His gospel in a spirit of unity and peace. Throughout our CLC's history, hearts grounded in the Word and moved by the gospel have humbly bowed before the Word.

Without that unity of faith in Christ and His Truth, there can be no spiritual peace and confidence — only uncertainty, confusion, unrest and vulnerability. *With* that blessed faith and unity, however, comes a Spirit-produced peace and confidence that will not waver.

And so we who have been called to faith—and to doctrinal faithfulness and firmness for the sake of the gospel—have also been called to speak the Truth in love.

Speaking God's Truth is in itself the highest act of love toward God, toward His Word, and toward precious souls. We are also to speak that Truth in love—in a spirit of humility and gentleness. For

Martin Luther and the Reformers, and for our CLC forefathers, a bold stand on Christ and the Word was often at the cost of personal sacrifice and loss. The temptation to discouragement and self-pity, even to anger and bitterness, were very real.

The same temptations remain for us who often feel like lone voices in the wilderness of these dark and decadent last times. Yet our forgiveness, strength, confidence, and hope remain that of Luther and our forefathers — Christ and the Truth of His Word alone, the power and effectiveness of His victorious gospel!

Every stanza of Luther's battle-hymn is filled with references to the difficulties of his struggles and the might of his enemies, yet rising above all that is a mighty victory cry, "The Kingdom ours remaineth!"

Our Mighty Fortress God—His Son and His Word and His Truth and therefore His Church!—shall ever prevail.

In that faith and spirit Luther and our CLC fathers went forward joyfully and confidently. Our prayer is that we may do the same, ever treasuring and speaking God's Truth in love. Amen.



On "Hallowed Eve" in the year 1517, the evening before All Saints Day, a Roman Catholic monk named Martin Luther nailed 95 theses (sentences or propositions for debate) onto the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany.

According to God's eternal plan, that event set in motion what we today know as the Reformation. God accomplished mighty things through His servant Martin Luther.

As heirs of the heritage of the Reformation principles of *by Scripture alone, by grace alone, and by faith alone*, we use special services and celebrations to observe the restoration of the gospel. Reformation Day is a day of triumph.

However, for Luther and his followers the Reformation was not all bravery and triumph. The forces of the Roman Catholic Church and the rulers of Germany combined in an attempt to stop this monk and his followers.

In 1521 it appeared that the Reformation would come to the same end as previous attempts at reforming the excesses of the Catholic Church—martyrdom. Luther and his followers were summoned to a "diet" or congress at the German

city of Worms. The morning before the diet opened, Luther expressed his needs and fears in a prayer: "*My God, stand by me*, against all the world's wisdom and reason.... Not mine but yours is the cause.... I would prefer to have peaceful days, and to be out of turmoil. But yours, Lord, is this cause; it is righteous and eternal. *Stand by me*, you Eternal God! In no man do I trust... *Stand by me*, O God, in the name of your dear Son Jesus Christ, who shall be my Defense and Shelter, yes, *my Mighty Fortress*, through the might and strength of your Holy Spirit. Amen."

Luther was excommunicated from the Roman church in 1521 and declared to be an outlaw with a price on his head.

In the years following, Luther was buffeted by physical illness and troubled with depression. In the so-called Peasant Rebellion, he saw his followers use their new freedom not to serve Christ but to do their own thing. He was appalled.

When he took a stand against this rebellion—which defied God's authority of government—many of Luther's own followers rejected him. False teachers arose from within his inner circle of friends and colleagues. He

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also was troubled with what today would be diagnosed as depression. In the mid 1527's Luther wrote, "Completely abandoned by Christ, I labored under the vacillations and storms of desperation and blasphemy against God."

Against this background, Luther drew on his earlier study of the Psalms—studies which he had prepared for his early lectures at the University of Wittenberg. The Psalms expressed his faith-life and were always precious to him. He used the Psalms in his music.

Music was also precious to Luther. He wrote thirty-seven hymns; these perhaps did more to spread the Reformation than did his sermons. One writer said that "Luther translated the Bible into German so God could speak directly to the people; and provided the hymns so that people could answer God in their songs."

The most recognizable and precious hymn of Luther is **"A Mighty Fortress is Our God."**

*A mighty fortress is our God,  
A trusty shield and weapon;  
He helps us free from ev'ry need  
That has us now o'ertaken.  
The old evil foe Now means deadly woe;  
Deep guile and great might  
Are his dread arms in fight;  
On earth is not his equal.*

This hymn, based on Psalm 46, is dated about 1527-29. At the

time Luther and his followers were going through a rough patch of opposition from Emperor Charles V, who was determined to suppress this Lutheran religious and political movement. Luther went back to the comfort of the Psalms with the bold declaration, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott."

This hymn became popular immediately with the common people of Germany. It was sung in the churches and on the streets; it was chanted by martyrs as they awaited their fate. The music was most likely composed by Luther too. A hundred years later J.S. Bach used this tune as the setting for one of his chorales.

This same musical setting of the 46th psalm touches our hearts and counteracts our fears and depression today. This battle hymn of the Reformation turns our eyes and hearts away from the sufferings of this present age, from the opposition of Satanic hosts, and from our weaknesses. The hymn fixes our eyes on the power of our Savior-God and on the person of our Lord Jesus Christ who "holds the field forever."

With might of ours can naught be done; Soon were our loss effected.

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## A Conference Opening Devotion

Pastor Mark Gullerud • Bowdle, South Dakota

*"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers... So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people." Acts 2:42, 46-47*

NOTE: A meditation presented to the West Central District Delegate Conference Grace Lutheran Church, CLC, Valentine, Nebraska (May 24, 2011)

**D**uring the course of our Delegate Conference we have the joyous opportunity to join in various acts of Christian fellowship in the worship of our Savior God. Together we raise our voices in songs of praise and thanksgiving and offer up our prayers and petitions to the throne of God in Jesus' name.

What is so very special about these acts of fellowship is that by the grace and mercies of God we are able to do so sharing the same confession of faith, being like-minded in the teachings of God revealed in Holy Scripture.

One of the reasons these acts of fellowship are so special is that

it is not very common in this day and age of false ecumenism. The uncommonness is not the act of worshiping, but worshiping with those who share the same understanding, beliefs, and confession of the words and teachings of our Savior God.

Unfortunately, what is more common in Christendom today is that professing Christians worship together with those who hold to differing, conflicting, and contradictory beliefs and confessions.

We hear it said that it is simply impossible for those who confess a faith in Jesus Christ to be in total

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Pastors and lay-delegates at the Valentine Conference



agreement in the teachings of God. When that is said, the impression is given that the Word of God is unclear, ambiguous, and even contradictory.

This flies in the face of Holy Scripture's claim concerning the clarity of God's Word. The psalmist gives testimony to the clarity of God's Word as he says to the Lord, "How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path" (Psalm 119:103-105).

Holy Scripture is so clear in regard to those blessed truths that even children are able to understand them. Paul writes in his letter to Timothy that "From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

When doubters and scoffers (concerning the need for spiritual unity in acts of fellowship) worship together with those of differing beliefs, they are sending a message that not all the teachings in the Bible are important.

However, in the same letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul declared concerning all the Scriptures that they are "profitable for doctrine,

for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). Also, when Jesus gave the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, He stressed the importance of faithfully imparting all the teachings of God's Word ("teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" Matthew 28:20).

Those who overlook and tolerate differing teachings in their midst—and worship on the basis of spiritual dis-unity—fail to realize that their spiritual immune system has broken down and is compromised. The spiritual cancer of false teaching can spread and grow until finally the saving gospel of Christ is lost.

What a great blessing it is then to worship together in true spiritual unity! Such worship is a testimony to the clarity of God's Word and the great importance of every single teaching in Holy Scripture. And when we worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, we give honor and glory to our Savior God.

The fact that the early Christians (spoken of in our text) and Christians in our day are able to worship together on the basis of being like-minded is not due to any of us being more intelligent or more spiritually perceptive than others in Christendom. Rather, it is due alone to the enlightening

work of the Holy Spirit. Working through the powerful Word of God, the Spirit gives us minds to perceive, eyes to behold, and hearts to embrace in faith the wonderful teachings of our Lord and God.

When Luke wrote in our Scripture text concerning the early Christians that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers," he was not indicating that they all had a full and complete understanding of the teachings of Christ. Most certainly there were different levels of understanding concerning God's Word—just as there are different levels of understanding in our Christian fellowship today. Still, by the working of the Holy Spirit Christians then and now are blessed with a ready mind and receptive spirit which submits to

and accepts the teachings of our God in ever-increasing measure.

The more we grow in our knowledge of the gracious saving truths of God, the more our hearts are filled with joy and thanksgiving. Are we not gathered here in conference for the purpose of edifying—that is, for spiritually building one another up in Christian knowledge, faith, and love? And as that takes place, in oneness of mind and spirit we glorify and praise our Savior God.

Praise be to God for enabling us to be of the same mind and the same judgment so that with one voice we can join in acts of Christian fellowship, worshipping the Lord who made us, redeemed us, sanctified us, and will finally glorify us through our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

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**THE FOLLOWING PRAYER ACCOMPANIED THIS DEVOTION:**

*Dear Jesus, our Redeemer and the Shepherd of our souls, we thank You that through Holy Baptism You have made us members of Your body, the Church. We entreat You to bless most richly the congregation of saints of which You have called us to be a part. May Your Word always be purely preached and taught among us, and may we gladly hear and learn it, growing in knowledge of and love for You. May Your Sacraments be administered according to Your command, and may we always value most highly the forgiveness of sins and eternal life You give us through them. Enable us to be of the same mind and same judgment so that we all speak the same thing concerning Your words and teachings, and in spiritual unity lift up our voices together in the worship of Your holy name. This we pray in Your name.*

*Amen.*

MEDITATIONS ON JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT—  
MATTHEW CHAPTERS FIVE THROUGH SEVEN

**“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”**

Matthew 5:13-16

# Jesus' Disciples Are Salt and Light

Pastor Thomas Schuetze • Coloma, Michigan

In the course of His public ministry Jesus often used word pictures to present the teachings of God's Word.

Jesus was a master at using things that people saw or used on a daily basis to make vivid in their minds important, heavenly truths. In His Sermon on the Mount, for example, Jesus used two commonly used items—salt and light—for purposes of illustration.

Salt is generally considered an ingredient which, when sprinkled on, makes food taste better. To the people of Jesus' day salt was even more valuable as a preservative.

In a time when there were no refrigerators, salt was added to food to slow down the deterioration process.

What heavenly truth was Jesus presenting when He pictured His disciples as “the salt of the earth”? In the same way that salt, when added to food, helps to keep it from spoiling, so also when disciples of Jesus are “sprinkled” here and there, they help prevent the world from becoming totally corrupt.

The world is plenty evil and will be to the end of time. However, were it not for believers in Jesus, things would be much worse.

The Savior uses this illustration to bring home to our hearts the great love He has shown in making us holy people through faith in His blood—and to exhort us to live as His holy people in the midst a spiritually corrupt and dying world. As we believers lead lives of loving service and devotion to our Lord, He promises to use our Christian life and witness to check the evil around us in the world and to win souls for His eternal kingdom.

### In Actions, Words, and Attitudes

Jesus also describes His disciples as “the light of the world.”

When we were brought to faith through the gospel, Jesus called us to shine the light of His Savior-love to those who still living in the dark night of unbelief. How may we function as light-bearers for Jesus?

We do this by letting our glorious status as God's blood-bought children be seen in our actions, words, and attitudes.

When we show patience and love for others, when we treat them with kindness, when we strive to lead

holy lives and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world—in short, when we make it our life's aim to walk with Jesus, following His example pure, fleeing the world which would deceive us and allure our souls to sin—then our Lord promises to use our godly works to draw people to Himself that they may learn to praise the heavenly Father just as we do.

How is it possible for disciples of Jesus living in a wicked world to remain the salt and the light of the world? This is something that cannot be done in our own strength.

Praise be to God who promises to use His holy Word and Sacrament to preserve us in the faith. Through the message of His love for poor sinners that we hear and learn about faithfully, He enables us to retain our salt-nature. He keeps our faith-lamp burning brightly. He equips us for a life of good works that serves for the spiritual good of others and for a life that redounds to the glory of His saving name.

### SO WE PRAY:

**O Holy Spirit, enter in And in our hearts Your work begin,  
Your dwelling place now make us. Sun of the soul, O Light  
divine, Around and in us brightly shine, To joy and gladness  
wake us That we may be Truly living, To You giving Prayer  
unceasing, And in love be still increasing.**

(LUTHERAN SERVICE BOOK, #913:1)

**“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)**

## “Vessels... Useful for the Master”

Pastor Em. Daniel Fleischer • Oakdale, Minnesota

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: **“The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.**

2 Timothy 2:19–26

**T**he apostle Paul, whose faith and hope was in Christ Jesus, wrote his final epistle to Timothy from prison.

While he had been in prison for some time and had no expectation of a quick release, this letter is not a “woe is me” lament. He wrote, “For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him” (v. 11). Given the circumstances, Paul wrote things that a true servant of the Lord would want to lay on Timothy, his “beloved son” (1:2), whose responsibility and privilege it was to perpetuate the apostle’s faithful ministry.

Paul suffered trouble as an

evildoer; Timothy should expect no less.

Paul is speaking to us also. As people of God preach the truth, they can expect to be rejected, railed upon, and suffer trouble. Yet Timothy—as well as God’s faithful people today—had reason to proceed with confidence because “the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His...’” (v. 19).

The Lord God will protect His own, and in His time He will vindicate both His message and His servant(s). Indeed, the Lord of the Church will guard and keep His Church of believers in spite of such

as Hymenaeus and Philetus who overthrew the faith of some people through their “profane and idle babblings” (v. 16f).

In God’s time judgment will come to those who, like Korah, rebelled against Moses. Korah was told, “Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him” (Numbers 16:5). Korah was not that chosen one, for the earth opened and swallowed him.

Even so, judgment will come to all who stand against the Lord’s chosen and who, by their lies, seek to draw people after them. The example of judgment upon Korah is good reason behind the advice of Paul: “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (v. 19).

Anyone who names the name of Christ—that is, professes to be a believer in Him—puts himself under obligation to serve the Lord in word and deed. He commits himself to do so faithfully and honorably. He who in repentance and faith is cleansed of pride and conceit is set apart and useful in the service of the Lord.

Such a servant is to “flee... youthful lusts.” The context suggests that the apostle refers not to the avoidance of illicit passions—though a Christ-believer is also to flee from such!—but rather is referring to the selfish

pursuit of a name for oneself that is gained through argumentation and intellectual pride.

### Avoiding Foolish Disputes

While it is true of any child of God, it is most certainly true of a servant of the LORD that he is to avoid generating “foolish and ignorant disputes” (v. 23) to satisfy a pride in his intellect. He should avoid engaging in such argumentation generated by others.

Not infrequently it happens that discussions of religion degenerate into useless arguments and meaningless debates which—if they don’t deny Scripture truth—at very least serve no useful purpose. In this regard we might mention questions such as, “How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?” or “What is the real date of Christmas and/or Easter?” (The latter question is advanced practically every holiday season by those whose desire is to besmirch Christianity.)

Interesting questions possibly, but useless. The devil uses such questions—as well as the desire to “win” such arguments—to steer attention away from more genuine matters of faith and salvation.

On our part, we will always want to be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15), but we will want to do so in a manner that demonstrates gentleness, ability to teach, and patience.

In Colossians 4:6 *Continued on next page*

# THANK YOU, LORD!

Prof. Em. Robert Rehm reporting

On July 28, 2011, an hors d’ouvres potluck was held at the Immanuel Lutheran College Commons building (Eau Claire, Wis.) to honor Adelgunde Schaller. A group of past and present faculty, staff, and spouses gathered to thank the Lord for His hundred years of blessings to our dear friend, Gunde.



The family had prepared an interesting DVD with pictures of Gunde’s life from little on, and it was being played for all so that they could get better acquainted with her early life and her family history.

ILC President John Pfeiffer introduced his reading of Psalm 71 with a few questions. He asked for a show of hands from those who were alive at the time of the War in Viet-Nam and was greeted with all of the hands up. He then asked for a show of hands from those who were alive at the time of World War II and there were still quite a few hands raised. He then asked for a show of hands from those who were alive and could remember World War I, and that thinned the responses rather markedly—down to one holdout.

Prof. Pfeiffer called attention to the many parallels between the life of the Psalmist and that of Gunde. “O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.”

A bit later in the festivities, a handful of Gunde’s fellow faculty members from her days as an instructor at ILC serenaded her with the old favorite that was customarily sung for the ladies after they had served a meal to Convention delegates in the early days of the CLC, “Sie leben hoch...” (German for “Give a cheer for...!” – Ed.)

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your many years of grace and blessing to Gunde, and for allowing her to work for You as a humble, caring Christian at ILC for so many years.



**From the Editor:**

We add a few particulars gleaned from other sources, including from *Throughout All Generations*, a history of ILC (from 1959-2008) by Eunice Roehl.

*Continued on next page*

Only through hearing the Word of God can those who are ignorant of the truth or who gainsay it “come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil” (v. 26).

The power of God unto salvation lies in the Word—the wonderful message of grace in Christ Jesus—not in the intellectual prowess of the one doing the witnessing. It lies in sticking to the Word, not in striving “about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers” (v. 14).

So, may the Word of God dwell in us richly, and then let us speak it to the glory of God. Such witness will benefit those who ask a reason for the hope that is in us and—by the power of the Spirit, we pray—even those who don’t ask.



Paul speaks of letting one’s speech “always be with grace, seasoned with salt.” The desire of the servant of God is not to win an argument or debate, but to speak the law and the gospel, “if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth” (v. 25).

Our calling is to speak of the wonderful works of God rather than to engage in useless speculation and idle questions. The Lord is served when His servants speak the truth in love.

There is something self-satisfying to the flesh about winning an argument, one-upping another in a debate. However, when it comes to serving as servants and witnesses of God, the purpose is not to win an argument but to win the soul!

## STRONGHOLD

*Continued from Page 14*

But for us fights the valiant One Whom God Himself elected.

You ask, “Who is this?” Jesus Christ it is,

The almighty Lord. And there’s no other God;

He holds the field forever. (WS2000, #774:1-2)

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into

the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling” (Psalm 46:1-3, ESV).



Mrs. Schaller with one-time fellow-faculty friends John Lau, Ronald Roehl, Robert Rehm

On p. 122, where it is reported that the 2001 Lance (the school's Yearbook) was dedicated to Mrs. Schaller, this is said:

"...Mrs. Adelgunde Schaller has been with our school from the days of its inception in Mankato [fall of 1959]. She was a member of the first faculty, and over the years has taught English, German, History, and Biology."

During the 1990's her teaching hours in the classroom were gradually replaced with responsibilities as ILC librarian, from which post she retired in 2001—her public service to her Lord and to ILC spanning 42 years!



Pastors Caleb Schaller, David Schierenbeck, Delwyn Maas (June Pastoral Conference essayists) (The wrong picture appeared in our September issue)

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## Lutheran Spokesman

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

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