



LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



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



"Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever."

Psalm 136:26

One reason many people fail to give thanks is that they don't take time to reflect on the many blessings they receive from the hand of the Lord. Listed on page 3 of this issue is a small sampling of benefits of body and soul which He has provided for our enjoyment. Truly, we have many reasons to say:

"Thank You, good Lord!"

*Oh, may we ne'er with thankless heart Forget from whom our blessings flow!
Still, Lord, Thy heavenly grace impart; Still teach us what to Thee we owe.
Lord, may our lives with fruit divine Return Thy care and prove us Thine.*

TLH, #567:2

UNFAIR TREATMENT?!

Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer · Spokane, Washington

“But that’s not fair!!!” You can almost hear the whining voice of a four-year-old complaining about not receiving the treatment he thinks he deserves. To the child’s young mind, it doesn’t seem fair that older brothers and sisters get to stay up later than he does to watch TV because that’s unwarranted favoritism.

But how many young children voice objections about fairness when they receive something BETTER than they deserve? As a twelve-year-old, did you complain that your four-year-old sibling did not get to stay up as late as you?

Jacob had left Canaan on less than good terms. He had tricked his aged and blind father Isaac into giving him the blessing that belonged to his older twin brother, Esau—not fair!! For this, Esau hated Jacob to the point of wanting to kill him. Jacob had to flee Canaan with only the clothes on his back and a staff in his hand. He would spend the next twenty years working in a foreign country.

In Genesis chapter 32, Jacob is standing on the eastern banks of the Jordan River. About to cross back into Canaan, he realized something was not fair. Having left Canaan with only a staff for his possessions, he now returned with two wives, over a dozen children, a large number of livestock, and numerous servants.

Jacob did not complain about receiving God’s favoritism. Rather,

he praised the LORD God for having treated him better than he deserved, saying, *“I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies”* (Genesis 32:10).

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

Better than We Deserve!

Jacob recognized that the unequal treatment he received from the LORD went beyond the material blessings showered on him during the twenty years he had been gone. He speaks of all the “mercies” and all the “truth” which the LORD showed him. The God of all creation promised to be his God. The promises which the LORD had made to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac were now extended to him as well. For instance, Jacob’s descendants would inherit the land of Canaan as their possession.

But the greatest blessing extended to Jacob was the fact

that from his lineage the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, would eventually come.

As we once again approach the national festival of Thanksgiving, cannot we also echo the words of praise uttered by Jacob? God did not treat us fairly—that is, He did not give us what we deserved—namely, eternal wrath as punishment for our countless sins, for we deserve the fires of hell.

But instead of giving us what we deserve, the Father gave us His own beloved Son. While we deserve punishment. God showered His

grace, His undeserved love, upon us as St. Paul teaches, *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

Do we think or say, *“But it’s not fair”* that Jesus should die that we might live?! Indeed, it is not fair to Jesus, but more than generous to us. Look at it this way—we sinners have reason to give thanks to the LORD through whose amazing grace we are treated so “unfairly”—given better than we deserve, even eternal life in Christ Jesus! **Hallelujah!** ✝

COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS, NAME THEM ONE BY ONE Continued from cover

- | | |
|--|--|
| A apples, agriculture, absolution | P prayer, peace, pets, pianos, progress, patience |
| B books, beauty, Bible Class, Holy Baptism | Q spiritual questions and God's answers in Holy Scripture |
| C children, church | R romance, resurrection, retirement, rain |
| D dawns, doctors, dads | S sorrow, strength to endure trials, sacrifice, sunsets, Sacrament of the Altar |
| E electricity, education (especially Christian education), eternal life | T truth, tongues to tell about Jesus, tomorrow |
| F friends, flowers, fire, freedom, fun, faith and fellowship in Christ | U umbrellas, unity in the Holy Christian Church |
| G God and His saving gospel | V victories, velcro |
| H hope, home, humor, hinges, heaven | W worship opportunities, work, wages, waiting rooms, wheels, water |
| I immortality, incarnation, intellect, infinity | X all the extra blessings God gives me that I can't remember |
| J Jesus my Savior, Jehovah, jets, joy | Y yesterday, you |
| K knowledge of the true God revealed in Holy Scripture | Z zeal (of the Christian kind) |
| L life, love, light, law and order, labor, lungs, laughter | |
| M mother, memories, music, medicine | |
| O opportunities for sharing the gospel | |

From the Editor: Around Thanksgiving time last year this article appeared as a daily devotion provided by some of our CLC pastors in Michigan. One way our local Bible Class used the devotion was by seeking to add to the listings after each alphabet letter. (To subscribe to these free devotions, go to: www.redeemerclc.info/devotional.html.)



THE LONG WAIT

Pastor John Klatt, • Rapid City, South Dakota

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)

It seems that we spend much of our life waiting.

Waiting started when we were children. We waited for holidays and outings. We waited for that next birthday.

And the time we spent waiting passed so slowly; it seemed as if the anticipated day would never arrive.

As adults we may no longer want time to pass so quickly. If anything, we would probably like it to slow down a bit because we never seem to have enough time.

But still we find ourselves waiting: we wait in line at the store; at work we wait for a raise or

promotion; we wait for a vacation or retirement. We wait for troubles to pass, for pain to subside, for injuries to heal, for burdens to be lifted.

As we wait, we also pray. And the help for which we pray can seem to be a long time in coming. To help us endure the wait and not give up, Jesus has given us the parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8).

The woman in the parable was waiting for justice. She had an adversary who was taking advantage of her. Her wait for justice must have been a long and difficult one. She had to make visit after

“...pray and not lose heart.”

visit to a judge who was not at all sympathetic. He considered her a nuisance and turned a deaf ear to her appeals. He would not grant her petition for justice “for a while.” Yet he finally acted on her behalf—just to rid himself of her annoying presence in his courtroom.

By this parable the Lord would encourage us “to pray and not lose heart.”

In our waiting and praying we are not dealing with an unjust judge who does not care about us but we are coming to a heavenly Father to whom we are most dear for the sake of His Son Jesus who shed His blood for us. He will surely give us the help we need, even though He “bears long” with us.

Jesus ends this encouraging parable with a question: “When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” He reminds us that our waiting is not just for some desired blessing or for relief from some vexing trouble.

What we are really waiting for is Christ’s promised Second Coming. That is when we will finally experience the fullness of the blessings of our redemption and fully enjoy our standing as God’s children. That is when we will finally have every burden lifted and

be freed forever from all pain and sorrow.

It is the wait for His coming that is the long one. It has been a long wait for the Church; two thousand years have passed since Jesus told His disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2,3).

And it is a hard wait, for we have to endure the taunts of scoffers who say, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation” (2 Peter 3:4).

The wait for Jesus’ coming is so long and so hard that He asks whether at His return He will find any at all still waiting for Him.

The answer to Jesus’ question is surely “yes.” The wait will be long, but Jesus has given us the means of grace, the gospel in word and sacrament. Through these the Holy Spirit sustains our faith so that we do not lose heart but continue to look for Jesus’ coming.

And knowing that Jesus lives and reigns at the Father’s right hand, we also continue to pray and wait confidently for His help.



“Are we ready yet?”

Pastor Paul Krause • Markesan, Wisconsin

Our family has never been good about leaving home—not to mention starting on time!

It is certainly not for lack of practice. Living some 1,500 miles from “family” in the Midwest meant an almost-annual cross-country pilgrimage.

But practice never did make perfect. When we had high hopes of leaving by 7:00 a.m., maybe 8:00 at the latest, we usually had the last things stowed and the last child buckled in closer to 10:00 or 11:00 a.m.

But now, when it comes to the most momentous trip any of us will ever take, what a relief to consider that there is nothing we need to do to get ready!

That might seem like a contradiction. You would think that the farther and longer the trip, the more work, effort, and planning would be involved.

But the greatest trip ahead has as its destination the mansions of heaven above—where our real family lives!

Recently there has been talk and planning for a spring-time cruise for members of our synodical church family. Such trips are attractive, for one thing because there is so little planning the individual traveler needs to make. Meals and rooms are taken care of for you. The

cruise line arranges stops at various ports, even making various activities available along the way.

Yet with such a trip, some things still need planning – getting time off from work, procuring airline tickets, rental vehicles, obtaining cruise insurance, and so on.

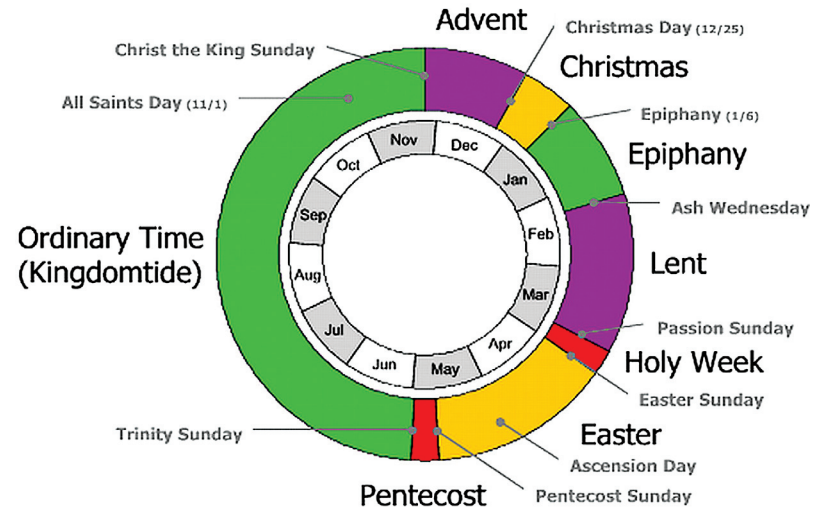
Not so, Christian friends, with regard to our trip to heaven! The “ticket” has already been punched by our Lord and Host! Yes, the journey has been completely pre-paid by our Savior and Brother, Jesus Christ!

To be sure, the devil is always trying to fill our minds with “buts” and “what abouts” and “what ifs.” He will try to get us to think that there is something we need to do to prepare ourselves for this one great and final trip.

For example, the devil may suggest, “Isn’t it true that you need faith to be prepared?” When the petrified Philippian jailer asked the apostle Paul, “*What must I do to be saved?*”, Paul answered, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ...*” (See Acts chapter 16) So isn’t “believing” something each of us needs to do himself?

In the face of such a question, we can calm our hearts with Paul’s reassuring words: “*By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of*

Continued on page 19



The Christian Calendar

Pastor Nathanael Mayhew • Lawrenceville, Georgia

Did you know that God’s people in the Old Testament followed two calendars—a civil calendar and a religious calendar?

The Lord instituted the Jewish religious New Year when He delivered them from Egypt (Exodus 12:2). The rest of the festivals and events of the religious calendar are laid out by the LORD for His people at Mt. Sinai (see the books of Exodus and Leviticus).

These festivals drew the people’s attention to the problem of sin and the LORD’s promised deliverance from that sin through the coming Savior.

This was a source of comfort and hope for God’s Old Testament believers.

We are no longer bound by those same Old Testament festivals and customs which were a “*shadow of things to come*” – namely, Jesus the Christ (Colossians 2:16-17).

The Church Year Calendar and the New Testament festivals used in our churches today also serve to draw the attention of God’s people to the problem of sin and to the LORD’s promised deliverance through the Savior who has come. This New Testament Calendar should

“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)

“Go to it!”

Warren Fanning, Pastor Emeritus • Sun City, Arizona

“1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 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, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.” (2 Timothy 3:1-9)

Of all the things you can say and see about our church—we are on a mission!

Under the Great Commission of Matthew 28, our work is threefold: reach out to people, invite people to come in, and explain things to people. All the impetus and information is in the Word of God.

This mission is exercised on the inside within the congregation among professed believers and on the outside among professed unbelievers. The latter may have tried many religions, even many branches of Christianity, but may never have come close to the truth.

The epistles of St. Paul as well as the four Gospels often remind

us that insiders can fall away from Christ. They may go through all the proper motions, but seem to have lost the vigor.

And the epistles are full of encouragement to retain the insiders, as well as to bring in new people. Pastors and elders are seen as primarily responsible for the first category (those inside)—stated positively as striving for “membership retention.” On the other hand, the lay-people are seen as primarily responsible for the second—the inclusion of new people.

All of this is nothing new to you, dear reader. What seems to be new these days is that both

be a source of comfort and hope for God’s believing children, just as it was for God’s Old Testament people.

✦ We begin with the “month” of Advent in which we anticipate the coming of our promised Savior.

✦ We move to the shorter “month” of Christmas when we give “glory to God in the highest” (Luke 2:14) at the fulfillment of God’s promise in the Babe born to Mary.

✦ In the “month” of Epiphany we see the Messiah’s glory revealed in His powerful works and words, culminating at His Transfiguration.

✦ In the reflective “month” of Lent Jesus’ purpose is clearly seen as He makes His way to Jerusalem where He would be “delivered up for our trespasses” and “raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25).

✦ The bitter days of Lent bring us to the joyous “month” of Easter where life is seen once again – our hope of eternal life assured by the resurrection of our Savior from the dead. Jesus’ promise gives lasting comfort: “Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19).

✦ After Easter we come to the short “month” of Pentecost where the work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized and brought to our minds. Surely, “no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3b).

✦ Finally we come to the lengthy “month” of Trinity. Here we grow in our knowledge of our Triune God and the great things the LORD God has done for sinners like us!

As we near the end of another church year, how fitting that we often close it out with a “national” day of Thanksgiving! This year—between the last Sunday in Trinity and the first Sunday in Advent—we have the opportunity to celebrate and thank God for His many gifts of body and soul!

How appropriate to gather with like-minded Christ-believers to thank God for all the blessings of the past church year and to look ahead to a new church year, confident that He will continue to bless us through His Word.

“Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 107:1).



tasks—retention and inclusion—are getting harder (especially the latter!). The apostle Paul has something to say about this in these opening verses of 2 Timothy 3.

Take a careful look—and find there about twenty types of people and problems that make things really tough.

It makes one wonder how Timothy kept on going to work. We know that he was somewhat timid, had health problems, and suffered afflictions. But he kept at it!

The Bright Side

If times were tough and terrible for outreach in St. Paul's day—perilous, grievous, hard, violent, evil, dangerous, even vicious and stressful (to expand that one Greek word here in verse 1)—what do you think it is like now? Have you noticed? Take a look, and talk to someone on the outside! There are still people who follow vain babblers, fables, the latest religious fads, and people who have itching ears and try to turn believers away from Christ.

On the bright side—using regular, un-gimmicky, sound and sober, biblically winsome approaches to the outsider, it is still possible, under God, to bring souls in for indoctrination (a good word!), as well as to full communicant membership.

...using regular, un-gimmicky, sound and sober, biblically winsome approaches to the outsider, it is still possible, under God, to bring souls in...

These new people can be taught from the Bible to understand and accept the full position of a synod like ours, including the hard sayings and stances we have, and also to accept the teachings of the Catechism together with liturgical, creedal Lutheran worship.

People invited to our churches may have many of the characteristics which St. Paul mentions in 2 Timothy 3:2-4. Some don't follow through, and the loss rate may be high. And yet, just as it was with the work of Saints Paul and Timothy, the "gain rate" is still there, by God's grace.

Otherwise, the CLC would not be here today!

It sure looks like the world is not getting any better. Hence our gospel work will not be getting easier. But we would all agree that it has to be done, and it can be done—for Jesus' sake—inside and out.

Christian friend, **GO TO IT!** †

"ALL HISTORY IS GOD'S STORY!"

Who's in charge here?

Exodus Chapters 13-15 (with your Bible in hand)

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

Pharaoh lost control but wouldn't admit it; enslaved Israel never was in charge of its destiny. However, since the LORD God has control over the Universe, over emperors, over history, and over His people, "The LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt" (12:51). Freed after four centuries of enslavement, Israel was fashioned into a divine theocracy, which made them different from every other nation that ever existed. They were in good hands with the Almighty, and in His charge the Exodus became a golden success.

When God removed them from idolatrous Egypt, He started them off with a new calendar that was ecclesiastical, the Unleavened Bread Festival being its star attraction: "Remember this day . . . in the month Abib. . . that you shall keep this service in this month" (13:3-5). God was not going to let Israel forget who He was and who they were.

That meant training—with religious education in the home to enlighten the next generation: "And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This [Passover] is done because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from

Egypt" (13:8). He also directed that everyone's daily activities be filtered through personal remembrance of the Passover. "It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth..." (13:9-10).

And it meant personal sacrifice—such as surrendering their first-born to the LORD to use as He saw fit (13:11-16). Since the first-born boys of Israelite homes had been selectively spared from the Tenth Plague, they belonged to the LORD in a special sense, and so He claimed them for special service to Him. Mary and Joseph observed this regulation with their first boy-baby, Jesus, as you remember from Luke 2:21-24.

Being in charge meant also that the LORD looked ahead. The route for His Exodus would avoid Philistia in favor of a longer route—in order to demonstrate that He was in charge via the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea (13:17-22).

If you are looking for a watershed event in Old Testament times, this is it!

After three days' travel the Israelites halted at the shoreline of

the Red Sea, the precise locale of which is not identifiable; but we are not as interested in geography and geology as we are in theology, for **the Exodus is theological first and foremost.**

Idolatrous Pharaoh was going to be taught some practical theology, too, for the Master of the Universe had enclosed the Israelites in His embrace. It wasn't superior armament or war tactics that bolstered Israel, but God Himself, personally and visibly present, who gave them reassurance and courage: *"Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever"* (14:13).

How good of God to bear with their frailties—as He does with us also:

**"Fear not, I am with thee;
oh, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still
give thee aid...."** TLH #427:3

When the stage was set at the shoreline, the Angel of God moved into action, repositioning the Cloud from front to rear of the encampment, thus forming a dark barrier facing the hostiles but giving bright illumination for Israel, keeping the two apart all night (vv. 19-20). Next, since atoms and molecules are God's

servants, they obeyed Him in a windy way, shoving the waters of the Red Sea aside both upstream and downstream so that a broad fording avenue opened up all the way across the Straits (vv. 21-22) for His people.

But why be so dramatic? Because drama made Egypt pay attention to God's reality behind the event: *"Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh..."* (v. 18).

The LORD took charge!

Just picture it to yourself: "The waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left," as they marched on sea-bed that the LORD had turned to pavement! Two million Israelites walked down into the lake bed, each step taking them deeper into the canyon of water towering over them. Their march into the valley and up the other side went on for hours until everyone had safely reached the far shoreline under God's protection.

Then the Egyptians, stymied all night by the LORD's intervening Cloud, made the tactical blunder of chasing after the refugees, now safe on the far shore. As Pharaoh sent his heavy cavalry surging pell-mell down the canyon *"into the midst of the sea, ...the LORD troubled the army of the Egyptians. And He took off their chariot wheels"* (probably by ordering gravity

to pull out the cotter pins). In the melee some poor souls caught on: *"Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them..."* (v. 25), but it was too late. God ordered that *"the sea return to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.... Not so much as one of them remained"* (vv. 27-28). What a total, fatal disaster for God's enemies!

Dear reader, that's a little preview of the Final Judgment, when it will be too late to reverse course, even while folks realize what's happening to them. Too late!

It was a powerful lesson for God's people, too: *"Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses"* (14:31).

That glorious day for the LORD and for His people deserved a memorial—which comes in chapter 15—with its bright theme of praise to the LORD, "I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously.... He is my God, and I will praise Him...." and closes with predictions that the LORD will deal with future enemies, too, for "The LORD shall reign forever and ever."


Finally, being in charge means control over each day's problems, such as the one that soon troubled the Israelites, who *"went three days in the wilderness and found no water"* (15:22).

The LORD of nature took charge again, fixing Marah's bitter waters with a divinely selected tree that was cast *"into the waters, and the waters were made sweet."*

That was a test, we are told, to keep this saving formula front and center: *"If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you"* (15:26).

Reminds us of Jesus, who cast Himself into the sea of humanity, making His Kingdom waters sweet to save. The test formula fits us, too—that we ought heed the voice of our Savior-God, who with Word and Spirit delivers us from the moral/spiritual enemies that chase us through the sea of life. We depend on being rescued out of every earthly bondage, for our rescue has been guaranteed by our Savior Himself.

And when the time of our pilgrimage here below is ending, we shall rely on Jesus to bring us safely across the great divide into His eternal rest, where we shall regroup with all the saints who have already safely arrived on the far shore.

All together now: *"Sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! . . . The LORD shall reign forever and ever"* (Exodus 15:21,18). 

Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin
August 22, 2011 - Prof. John Pfeiffer, President

The Bible Text for our consideration is:

"Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior." (Titus 3:1-3)

"...The last best hope of earth."

In Christ Jesus, our living Hope, fellow redeemed,

In Abraham Lincoln's 1862 address to the Congress, he concluded with the following:

"Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We—even we here—hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall

nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth."

"...The last best hope of earth." This is how the president saw the United States of America. There is a history textbook with these words in its title.

I assume that Lincoln was talking about earthly governments and political movements. He saw the Union as the one and only remaining nation on Earth where freedom can be preserved for the common man.

But is it true? Can the statement stand that America is "the last best hope of earth"? On a political level, who knows? God does, and history will reveal it.

God does. Doesn't this knowledge make you think? Was not America forged because of God's plans for the world? Throughout history God has always found a refuge

for the gospel, a place where the gospel is preached openly for the salvation of souls. And when that place begins to despise the gospel, God sends it elsewhere. The Jews had it, and when they despised and crucified the Lord of glory, God sent it elsewhere. The Mediterranean world had it and, when they despised it, God sent it elsewhere. Ireland had it and, when they despised it, God sent it elsewhere. Northern Europe had it and, when they despised it, God sent it elsewhere. America had it, and, when they despise it, ...what then?

Finally, when *"...this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, ...then the end will come"* (Matthew 24:14).

So you see, America is not the last best hope of Earth. Rather, Christ and His gospel is the last—no rather, He is the ONLY—hope of Earth, and always has been the only hope! *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

After his conversion the apostle Paul's whole life was lived "in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior." Even so,

throughout time, this has been the one and only hope for every believer.

Before time began, this hope was created by God. In the fullness of time this hope was established through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the very Son of God. Afterward, this hope was manifested through the preaching of the Word of our Lord. *"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"* (Romans 15:4).

All other attempts at offering hope to the world have proven to be futile. *"The hope of the righteous will be gladness, But the expectation of the wicked will perish"* (Proverbs 10:28). Osiris, Zeus, Jupiter, Allah, Krishna, Buddha, and *"... all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but Jehovah made the heavens"* (Psalm 96:5).

However, we *"... have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast"* (Hebrews 6:18f). Jesus, our Hope, is the solid rock in which every believer has anchored his soul.

And today you come to ILC. Here we will continue to hold before you not only the last, best hope of Earth, but the first and last and only Hope! Wander where you will in the world and you will find few places where this hope is proclaimed. Ask the youth of

our synod who went to Nepal this summer. In many places, they and our Nepalese brethren were the only ones holding out hope. In many parts of the world, you could travel for hundreds and thousands of miles and not find anyone proclaiming the gospel message.

Who then are we that we should be so privileged? I can say only this: we have not deserved this, not in the least. We are all sinners, born in sin like everyone else... destined for hell like everyone else. We were not even able—nor did we want to—approach the throne of God. We wanted only to cast Him aside and walk in the ways of unrighteousness.

Yet in the abundance of His grace, He rescued us from our death of sin, washed away all our wickedness, covered us with the righteousness of Christ, and filled us with the certain hope of heaven.

ILC is a body of God's people

who live in this hope. We are not perfect and we regularly confess our failures to the Lord, who continues to cleanse us in the blood of Christ. *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure"* (1 John 3:2f).

Thus, purified in the blood of Christ, we continue to have hope... not in ourselves, but in Him.

God grant that this school year will be a year of hope for every one of us. God grant that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope this year and throughout our lives.

"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13).



Trinity, Watertown, S.Dak. hosted the West Central Pastoral Conference: Back: Paul Fleischer, Mark Gurath, Scott Schiermeister, Luke Bernthal, Mark Gullerud, James Sandeen; Front: Matthew Gurath, Andrew Schaller, James Naumann, Frank Gantt, Michael Roehl, John Klatt

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, with meekness and fear..." 1 PETER 3:15

Logic

"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable." Acts 26:25

"You Christians are so illogical!
All religion is just a leap of faith. Human reason and logic are how we find truth."

Remember, when defending the Christian faith we will always do an internal critique of the other person's presuppositions. Because your opponent is not starting with God as the ultimate authority, there will and must be inconsistencies in what he says versus how he lives. These need to be brought to light.

Of all the articles in this series, this one is probably the most conceptual in nature, yet it is extremely important. How does the Christian respond to challenges for being rational and logical?

First of all, we need to understand what the laws of logic are, and then see which specific worldview can account for them.

Without getting too deep into this, laws of logic are the rules that govern coherent thinking. To break these rules means to be thinking illogically.

One of the three basic laws of logic is the Law of Non-Contradiction which states that "A is not not-A". That is to say, no statement can be both true and false at the same time and in the same way. For example, a square cannot be both a square and a circle at the same time and in the same way. Allowing such contradictions would be irrational.

But what is the nature of these laws of logic? Since these laws are not made of material things, we can't point some place and say, "Look, that's logic over there." We would say that laws of logic are immaterial in nature, for they are not extended into space.

It can also be said that the laws of logic are universal. This means that they apply to all people and in all places. No matter how much a person may hate being logical and how much he may fight against it, these laws still apply. They are unchanging and govern human thinking.

The question becomes, "Which worldview can make sense out of the immaterial, universal, and unchangeable laws of logic?"

In the Christian worldview, God is an immaterial and unchangeable Being whose influence is felt everywhere. God's creation and man's mind reflect God's orderliness, so the laws of logic are seen as expressions of God's thinking. God's nature is unchangeable, so these laws which reflect His way of thinking are unchangeable as well.

If God does not exist, what becomes of the laws of logic? In connection with a materialist worldview ("all that we are is matter in motion"), what does one do with an immaterial law?

Some say that the laws of logic are just the way the brain works, but that doesn't tell us anything at all. If the human brain is the source of logic, how would it make sense to call someone illogical? Wouldn't they just be following their brain? Why would people take courses in logic when all they would have to do

is listen to their brain?

How, then, would an unbeliever account for these laws being universal? He does not have universal experience about anything (God does, but He's ruled out from the beginning!), so would these laws just be what humans have made up?

If they have just been made them up, could we change the rules and turn the irrational into rational just by a majority vote? One philosopher has said that people who deny the law of non-contradiction should be beaten and burned until they realize that to be beaten and burned is not the same as to not be beaten and not be burned.

Faith and Reason

Much has been written about faith and reason, and it bears some repeating here. Because of man's fallen condition (and while in that unconverted condition), he is completely under the influence of sin and the devil. While his reasoning powers have remained intact, they too have been tainted by sin.

Luther battled against the Roman Catholic scholastic theologians of his day who believed that man's nature is corrupt but man's reason has remained undamaged. While the existence of God is known and obvious to all, man's natural inclination is to suppress this

knowledge of God. This is why, as Luther puts it in the Third Article of his *Small Catechism*, we admit that we cannot by our "own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him."

Instead, Luther says, "The Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel and enlightened me with His gifts." One of those gifts is a renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2), a mind that will strive to think God's thoughts after Him and emulate His rationality. So, calling for the Christian to be rational is a good thing that we are to embrace.

Now, can non-Christians be

(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.)

rational? Of course. Sometimes they may reason better than Christians. But how do they account for laws of logic?

A random and irrational universe cannot create lawful orderliness. In fact, attempts to order what is disorderly would be like trying to put beads on a string with no holes in the beads!

If a non-Christian was true to his worldview, all logic and coherence would be destroyed. That he can be reasonable or logical at all is because he is borrowing from the Christian worldview!



"Are we ready yet?"

Continued from Page 6

works..." (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Not only did our heavenly Father see our problem of sin and go about taking care of it; not only did Jesus Christ come to Earth to pay the redemption price of His holy, precious blood and His innocent sufferings and death; but also, dear reader, the Holy Spirit has successfully worked faith in your heart and mine through that word of the gospel in the Means of Grace. "...Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

"Are we ready yet?" There is not a thing we believers need to do on our own to get ready for this trip. Everything necessary has been done!

When I say, "That's my kind of trip," I'm sure you would agree! Thanks to what Jesus has done, I am completely ready, completely prepared!

And so are you! Each believer is prepared to leave this Earth when God determines it is time to go! Hallelujah and Amen!



Announcement

Installation

In accord with our usage and order, Mrs. Carolyn Reim, who was called by Messiah Lutheran Congregation, Eau Claire, Wis. to be teacher in its school for first grade (all day) and second grade (afternoons) was installed on August 20 and 21, 2011.

--Pastor Paul Tiefel, Jr.

2012 CLC Mission Helper Trip East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania) July 2012

The CLC Mission Helper Program is taking applications and making preparations for the 2012 Mission Trip. The number one priority of this trip will be spreading the Good News of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life through the life, death, and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. In July of 2012 Mission Helpers will travel to East Africa to teach child evangelism lessons to thousands of member and non-member children in village congregations of the CLC-Tanzania and CLC-Kenya.

For More Information Contact:

Pastor Todd Ohlmann

toddohlmann@clclutheran.com

www.mht.lutheranmissions.org

(application deadline: January 10th, 2012)



*Hark the Voice of Jesus Crying,
Who Will Go and Work Today?*

To see a video of the 2011 Mission Helper Trip to Nepal and other mission trips go to:
www.mht.lutheranmissions.org/videos/

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Lutheran Spokesman

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

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