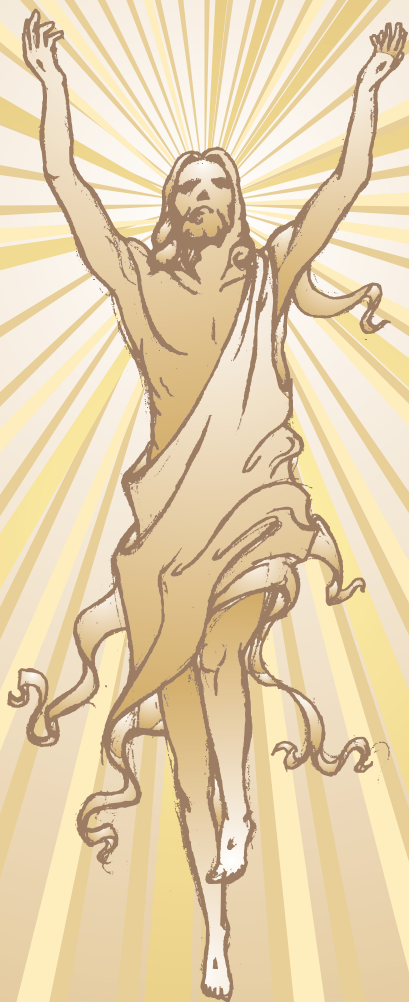


LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

“...THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN.” — JOHN 10:35



“We are His witnesses” (Acts 1:8)

On Being a Convention Delegate...

A PRIVILEGE AND A JOY?

A District Visitor of the CLC recently circulated an encouraging word to his fellow pastors to talk up the benefits of being a congregational representative at this summer's convention. Adding weight to the words was a list of benefits an experienced lay-delegate had given his pastor about serving in this way. Below is an abbreviated version of the pastor's letter. - Editor

A layman of our congregation who has served as delegate to a number of our CLC conventions would like to communicate that (far from being just another Christian duty) attendance is, in fact, a privilege and a joy. The following is a list of benefits he feels could be pointed out to our members:

- Spiritual growth—the essays are highlights of every convention.
- An improved understanding of the inner workings of our synod—there is no better way to understand the workings of the various boards than to participate in a convention floor committee.
- An increased zeal for mission work—some of the best information we receive on what is being done here and abroad is communicated at conventions.
- Christian camaraderie—meeting other delegates from around the country strengthens our synodical bonds.
- Mutual edification—there is great benefit in sharing the struggles that are common to confessional Christians; what attendee hasn't felt the power of a couple hundred voices joining with gusto in one of our favorite hymns?
- A reaffirmation of the high regard we hold for the Word of God—delegates as well as visitors from other church bodies have commented on the high regard for the Word of God demonstrated at our conventions.
- By design laymen run our synod—for good reason our founders determined that there should, in most cases, be two delegates for every one pastor.
- An unscripted synodical convention format—in many other church bodies a convention is little more than a rubber stamp of what has already been decided by synodical officials; ours is still a convention where questions and problems are discussed, and unscripted actions are taken.
- An increased understanding of doctrinal questions—hear the discussion and care that goes into addressing such questions.

YES, BEING A CONVENTION DELEGATE IS A PRIVILEGE AND A JOY!

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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2012 Convention Church of the Lutheran Confession

Monday, June 18 – Thursday, June 21

Immanuel Lutheran College,
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Theme:

Thanks Be To God,
Who Gives Us The Victory
Through Our Lord Jesus Christ!
(1 Corinthians 15:57)

Essays:

1. Be steadfast and immovable!
2. Be always abounding in the work of the Lord!



May the Lord of the Church bless our Convention!

Christ's Going-away Presents

Pastor Nathanael Mayhew • Lawrenceville (Atlanta), Georgia

Jesus knew what was ahead for His followers. When He gave them the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, to baptize and to teach them all things (Matthew 28:18-20), He did not leave them powerless. He gave them the gifts necessary to carry out that task, and He promised them that He would be with them!

Christ's ascension could have been a very discouraging event for the disciples, just as His death was at first. But the Lord Jesus did not forsake them, for He gave gifts to them and to every believer—gifts which are meant for the spiritual unity and growth of His Holy Christian Church on Earth.

When Christ ascended into heaven, He left His Church with going-away presents. These gifts were not given just to the apostles or the disciples of Jesus' day. St. Paul writes, "*But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men'*" (Ephesians 4:7-8).

The apostle was writing to the believers in the city of Ephesus close to thirty years after Jesus ascended into heaven. Yet it was still true. And two thousand years later, it is still true! Each one of us has been given unique gifts from Christ Himself. We are all able to fulfill that Great Commission in our own special way.

This is important to remember for several reasons.

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

MATTHEW 28:18-20

First of all, we should remember that not all have the same gifts and abilities. The gifts we have are ours because the Lord has chosen to give them to us.

Secondly, no one should become discouraged that he or she does not have the gifts that others have been given. Instead each of us should realize that Christ has given us certain gifts, and He would have us use them in the work of His kingdom.

For every job that has to be done, certain tools are needed. For example, we wouldn't tear out the old plumbing in our house unless we had a torch and solder, or a cleaner and glue to put everything back together again. Every job is different and specific tools are needed to equip us for those jobs.

As saints—that is, as Christian believers—each one of us has a part to play in the work of ministry, and our tools for this work are not the same as we might use at our places of secular employment.

The equipment we use in the work of the ministry comes from the Word of God. We are equipped with the tools for this work every time we attend worship services and/or Bible Classes and whenever we read our Bibles at home. The equipment—the tools—are given us as the Holy Spirit works through the divinely inspired words of the apostles, the prophets, and the evangelists.

We could say that the Spirit gives us all that we need as going-away presents from our Savior!

And what wonderful going-away presents they are!

First and foremost He has given His Holy Word to guide us and strengthen us in this life.

Through the same Word we are brought together into the unity of the faith and strengthened in that same faith.

But He has also given individual gifts to each believer for the work of ministry!

Thanks be to our ascended Lord for His grace!



... each of us should realize that Christ has given us certain gifts, and He can and will have us use them in the work of His kingdom.

ASCENSION JOY!

Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer • Spokane, Washington

“PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW.”

So says Juliet to her love, Romeo, as they part ways for the evening. It was a sorrow for Juliet to part with her loved one for a time, but it was made sweet for her when she realized she would be able to see him in the morning.

None of us particularly enjoys parting ways with loved ones—whether it be at the end of the day or the end of one’s life. Parting means separation, having to be apart from those whose company and presence we cherish.

Forty days after God had announced to the world that He accepted Jesus’ payment on the cross for our sins by raising Him from the dead, Jesus “parted” with this world as He visibly and physically ascended into heaven.

The sorrow of this parting is sweetened by the promise of the Ascension angels that we will see Jesus again: *“This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11).

But do we still have sorrow that Jesus did not remain with us? After all, wouldn’t life in this world be so much better if Jesus were here with us today? How many times haven’t we thought that the Church—and our Christian faith!—would be in better shape if Jesus were still visibly present with us?

Listen to what Jesus told His disciples about His departure: *“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”* (John 16:7).

The Savior says that His ascension was to our advantage! This is so because Jesus promises to send the third person of the Holy Trinity—God the Holy Spirit—as our Helper to dwell with us and in us.

Sending the Helper to us is certainly a good enough reason to rejoice at Jesus’ “parting” on Ascension Day. But the blessings do not end there!

The Apostle Paul writes that when Jesus ascended into heaven, God the Father “*put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*” (Ephesians 1:22–23).

Jesus is right where the Church needs Him to be! Everything—every nation, every ruler, every earthly power—is under Jesus' feet and under His control. He is ruling over history for the good of His Church—for the good of every one of His believers!

The fact that Jesus now fills all things means that He is not limited to one physical location at one time. Now He can be with us always, just as He promised (see Matthew 28:20).

Because He ascended, where two or three are gathered in His name He is right there, present with them—also when His people are worshipping at different locations at the same time (Matthew 18:20)!

Because He fills all things, He is able to give His very body and blood in the Lord's Supper to every communicant wherever they may be—from Nebraska to Nepal.

But wait, there's more!

The fact that Jesus ascended into heaven means each of us has one of our own—a Brother with flesh and blood just like us—who represents us before the throne of the Almighty! He is our Intercessor who speaks to God in our behalf (Romans 8:34). He is our Mediator—our Bridge whereby we can go to the throne of Almighty God with our every need (1 Timothy 2:5). And His ascension means that He will come again to take His believers to be with Him forever (John 14:3)!

So you see, dear Christian, our Savior and Brother, Jesus, may have “parted” from His believing children, but there is no reason to sorrow—be it sweet or otherwise! Ascension Day is a day to rejoice!

*Ascended to His throne on high,
Hid from our sight, yet always nigh;
He rules and reigns at God's right hand
And has all pow'r at His command.
Hallelujah!*

(TLH #223:2)



More Faithful than a Mother!

Pastor Paul Krause • Markesan, Wisconsin

Arguably, no image illustrates the essence of motherhood better than that of a mother and her newborn baby—for it is the birth of that child which marks a woman as a mother.

From the perspective of the newborn, this image is one of complete dependency. The child relies entirely on its parents, especially the mother (when nursing is involved). But while the infant counts on others to fulfill its every need, that child is well able to let it be known when its needs are not being met!

From a mother's perspective it is almost impossible to forget that there is a nursing newborn in the house. Not only do the demanding cries at all hours of the day and night "remind" her of her baby, but also her own body—as it produces milk—"reminds" her that her baby needs to eat.

The Lord uses—and honors!—this picture of a mother as an astonishing contrast to Himself and His relationship to those who are His own. *"Can a woman forget her nursing child...? Surely, they may forget, yet I will not forget you"* (Isaiah 49:15).

Amazing! Just the thought of a nursing mother "forgetting" her newborn leaves one at a loss for words! "No way," we think. "That could never happen!"

So it is that God gives us a glimpse into the greatness of His grace. We may think it is nigh impossible for a mother to forget her nursing child. Infinitely more impossible is the thought that God could forget you and me!

And His never-forgetting love comes through in the pages of Holy Scripture. Not even once do we find the Lord forgetting His people. In the period of the Old Testament, time and again we find the Lord coming to their aid with miraculous deliverances. In New Testament times we see how He rescues us from sin with that ultimate deliverance of His Son's own suffering and death on the cross.

The same gracious deliverance continues today; never does He forget us! *"See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me"* (Isaiah 49:16).

As we celebrate a national Mother's Day, we are reminded to cherish, treasure, and show appreciation for the dedication, care, and compassion that our mothers have shown us.

But let us also use the opportunity this special day presents to give thanks to the Lord for the faithful way in which He never forgets us and all those who are His!



The 2011-2012 Immanuel Lutheran College Tour Choir



This group of ambassadors of Christ enjoys carrying the Word of God in music to CLC congregations around the country. This spring twelve sacred concerts were conducted at sites in Michigan, Missouri, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Prof. John Reim is conductor.

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

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell." MATTHEW 5:27-30 (NIV)

It's the Heart that Matters

Pastor Thomas Schuetze • Coloma, Michigan

In the book of First Samuel we read the divinely inspired account of God's sending Samuel to Bethlehem to make known which of Jesse's sons He had chosen to serve as Israel's new king.

The selection process went as follows. When Samuel arrived at Bethlehem, he invited Jesse and his sons to participate in a sacrifice to the Lord. When he saw Jesse's oldest son—a tall, good-looking young man named Eliab—he thought to himself: "Surely, this one must be the Lord's choice." But the Lord, in effect, told Samuel: "Don't consider the physical attributes of Jesse's boys. People judge by outward appearance. I look at the heart" (see I Samuel 16:7).

It turned out that neither Eliab nor any of Jesse's next six sons was the Lord's selection. The one chosen to be Israel's new king was Jesse's eighth and youngest, a shepherd boy named David.

What did the Lord see in David that made him His choice? David had been blessed by God with a heart that looked to Him in humble, childlike trust as his Savior from sin, death, and hell. Later, when David committed the sins of murder and adultery, he was led to sorrowfully confess his sins and repent. Psalm 51, authored by David, helps us see why the Bible describes him as a man after God's own heart (See I Samuel 13:14).

In the portion of the Sermon on the Mount before us, Jesus teaches the same heavenly truth. He reminds that what He is looking for in His disciples' daily walk of faith is not mere outward

compliance to the precepts of His law but rather inward, spiritual obedience of the heart which flows from faith and love for Him, the Savior. He reveals the broad scope of the sixth commandment and its depth of meaning. In effect, He says, "When I died on the cross to redeem sinners, I atoned for all sins of breaking God's Law, including outward acts of adultery and all sinful lusting of the heart."

Crucify the Sinful Nature

Jesus is not advocating the practice of bodily mutilation. Rather, He is impressing upon His disciples that all sins against the majesty of God (whether of thought, word, or deed) are equally harmful to the soul and potentially damning. He is reminding God's believing children of the great need to crucify the sinful nature through daily contrition (accepting the truth that our sins deserve God's punishment) and repentance (believing He has forgiven us for Jesus' sake).

He is counseling us (as St. Paul says) to "*put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*" (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Left to ourselves and our own strength, it would be impossible to combat the sins of hand, tongue, and heart. Thankfully, the Savior has placed a powerful means at our disposal: the Holy Spirit that empowers His Word. As we make that Word our daily delight (Psalm 1), taking it as a lamp for our feet along our heavenward way (Psalm 119:105), and wielding it as a weapon against the enemy's attacks (Ephesians 6:17), He graciously enables us to ward off temptation.

And when in weakness we stumble, He uses the same Word to lead us to repentance, to help us find refuge in His forgiving love, and to preserve us in faith so that (as Luther puts it in the Sixth Petition in the Catechism) "we win in the end and keep the victory."

As blood-bought children of God who know the love showed us in His giving His Son to die on the cross, we will make the prayer of David, the man after God's own heart, our own: "*Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer*" (Psalm 19:13-14, NIV).



"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

Paul, Being Dead, Yet Speaks!

Pastor Em. Daniel Fleischer • Oakdale, Minnesota

2 TIMOTHY 4:6-16

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. 9 Be diligent to come to me quickly; 10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. 12 And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. 15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. 16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

The Apostle Paul's departure was at hand. He was about to be “poured out as a drink offering,” giving his life as a sacrificial offering to the Lord of his life.

The same illustration (used in Philippians 2:17) was a reference to the libation of wine that was poured in connection with the daily burnt offering in the Old Testament (Exodus 29, Numbers 28). Paul knew that it was by the grace of God that he was what he was—a believer in Christ as well as a minister of Christ. He knew that of himself he could do nothing, but that in Christ he could do all things (Philippians 4:13).

Throughout his ministry Paul kept his eyes on the goal, and now it was within reach. His post-conversion life and ministry were witnesses to the power of the Spirit who worked mightily in him:

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (4:7). “Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day...” (4:8).

Paul was confident in faith that he would don the crown of righteousness, the gift of God who *“justifies him who has faith in Jesus”* (Romans 3:26). The same crown awaits all who endure the fight and reach the heavenly goal, for Paul adds, *“and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*

May God be merciful, giving us the faith, the strength, the commitment, and the focus to hold fast to the crown that awaits us at the end of our earthly sojourn in this present evil world!

As we observe Paul’s ministry and are privileged to read his final testament, we learn we can be confessional and yet evangelical. We can be firm and unyielding in the faith and still compassionate. We can be polemical—a nasty word to many—yet personable and loving toward others. Paul was all of these!

We are told that when our Lord Jesus was in the upper room with His disciples and knowing that His hour had come to depart this world to the Father—*“having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end”* (John 13:1). The apostle Paul wrote, *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...”* (Philippians 2:5).

A Pastoral Heart!

As a man of God Paul lived what he preached, as is evident from his last will and testament in the 4th chapter of Philippians. Paul recognized that his ministry was drawing to a close and that, like the Savior whose servant he was, he was about to go to the Father. Yet he was a no-nonsense preacher. He maintained a human tenderness as well as a pastoral heart. He lamented the departure of Demas who *“has forsaken me, having loved this present world”* (4:10) and of Alexander who in some fashion had done much harm to Paul.

One with a pastoral heart grieves over those who have forsaken the faith and fallen in with the world. It hurts, not as an indictment against one’s ministry but as a concern for the spiritual and eternal welfare of the fallen. Paul prayed for the forgiveness of those who had forsaken him (may it not be charged against them), and thus he reflected the heart of Christ (4:16).

At the same time Paul yearned for the companionship of friends in his circumstance. In a very personal way he urged Timothy to come to Him. Twice he said with a sense of urgency, “Come to me soon,” (4:9), and “Come before winter” (4:21). The latter exhortation may have been out of personal necessity, “Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come” (4:13). It was cold in the cell where Paul was imprisoned for the gospel's sake.

Since Timothy might not arrive before Paul's demise, the apostle wrote what he still hoped he could convey in person. “Preach the Word... the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (4:2-5).

Those among us who observe the conditions in the world as well as in the church today will listen attentively to Paul's final will and testament to his beloved friend, spiritual son, and hereafter torchbearer. We can say it no better than this: “Paul bids Timothy preserve the apostolic gospel pure and unchanged, guard it against the increasingly vicious attacks of false teachers, train men to transmit it faithfully, and be ready to take his own share of suffering in the propagation and defense of it” (M. Franzmann, *Concordia Bible with Notes*, p. 416).

“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).

Paul, being dead, yet speaks!

100th Anniversary

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Clarkston, Wash., is planning a 100th Anniversary celebration on May 27, 2012. A 2:00 p.m. worship service will be followed by a dinner and a special program. All are welcome to attend this joyful and thankful day of praise to our gracious God.

—Pastor David Naumann



Comfort For All Penitent Sinners

Pastor John Klatt • Rapid City, South Dakota

Comfort was surely what Peter needed on the eve of Good Friday when he left the courtyard of the high priest's palace. He was overwhelmed with guilt and shame at what he had done. Three times he had been identified as a disciple of Jesus and three times he had responded by denying that he even knew Him. Peter wept bitterly.

Imagine Peter's misery. We know the feeling of guilt that follows the realization that we have offended our Lord. The damage has been done and it cannot be undone.

Peter suffered the pain of a guilty conscience, but Christ was already at work to lift him up from his misery and restore him.

Christ was not physically present that night to comfort Peter with the assurance of forgiveness, but His Word remained in Peter's mind and on his heart. Christ had not only foretold Peter's denials but had also given him in advance the

promise of restoration, saying to Peter, *"I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren"* (Luke 22:32).

"...When you have returned to Me"—how those words must have kept Peter from despair and comforted him!

Again on the morning of His resurrection, Christ extended a hand to Peter to comfort him. Even before He appeared to the disciples, Christ sent them a message through His angels that they were to meet Him in Galilee. The invitation was for all of them, but Peter was included by name (Mark 16:7). He needed to know that he was welcome.

Peter knew that he was forgiven, but he needed to know also that Christ still counted him among the apostles. Peter had been chosen to be one of Christ's chosen representatives who would communicate His gospel to the world. But Peter had denied his

connection with Jesus; he had renounced his apostleship.

Christ gave Peter what he longed for. He came to Peter and personally restored him as an apostle.

It was the third time Christ had appeared to the disciples after His resurrection. He identified Himself as the risen and living Lord by repeating the miracle of the catch of fish. Then He singled out Peter and spoke to him. Peter was grieved when Christ asked him three times whether he loved Him.

Peter answered humbly. He did not boast of his love for Jesus but appealed to Jesus' divine knowledge of his heart. Each time that Peter answered in this way Jesus re-committed to him the ministry of the gospel: "*Feed My lambs...Tend My sheep...Feed My sheep.*"

In this act of divine grace we truly see Christ as the Restorer. We see Him as the Savior who

gave Himself for us to atone for our sins and who is eager to give the comfort of forgiveness to penitent sinners.

Christ is there to comfort all who suffer the misery of guilt and shame that Peter felt. To all who fear that by their sins they have forfeited their place among Jesus' disciples He offers His hand to lift them up and restore them.



SERIES CONCLUDED:

An editorial introducing our *Portraits of Christ* series said this (in part): "The Evangelist John wrote his Gospel so that people 'may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name' (20:31).... Our writers will expand on *Portraits of Christ* in the Gospel of John. May we be encouraged to turn often to this Gospel to read the wonderful word-pictures the Spirit uses to portray our 'Beautiful Savior.'"

With the series concluding in this issue, we heartily thank our staff writers for their heart-stirring portraits of the Savior!

— Editor

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 |

WHAT IS TRULY LUTHERAN?

Pastor Daniel Fleischer, Em. • Oakdale, Minnesota

In concluding our second article on the topic "What is Truly Lutheran?", we summarized the contents of the *Augsburg Confession* [cf. April 2012 *Lutheran Spokesman*, p. 15ff].

The *Augsburg Confession*—the classic confession of the Lutheran Church—was read publicly in June of 1530. One of the Catholic bishops who heard it said, "All of this is exact truth. We cannot deny that" (*Living with Luther*, J. M. Weidenschilling, p. 38).

The three ecumenical Creeds (the *Apostolic*, the *Nicene*, and the *Athanasian*) together with the *Augsburg Confession* and five other specific Lutheran confessions—the *Apology* [defense] of the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Small Catechism* and the *Large Catechism* of Martin Luther, the *Smalcald Articles*, and (after Luther's death) the *Formula of Concord*—are all drawn directly from the Scriptures!

Each is a faithful confession of the Scriptures and, individually and collectively, declare the doctrine to which true Lutherans subscribe. Because these confessions are true to God's Word, they cannot be denied or changed by any who would

still justifiably claim to be truly Lutheran!

The *Augsburg Confession* addressed issues of doctrine that separated what is called evangelical Lutheranism from Roman Catholicism. Consequently, not all doctrinal matters that concern us in our day were addressed.

The total body of confessional statements of genuine Lutheranism are found in the *Book of Concord* of 1580.

Many people in the world profess to be Christian. Many churches identify themselves as Christian. The implication is that they are built upon the foundation of the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20).

The foundation of the Christian Church is Christ and His Word. Yet many churches have departed from that narrow but firm foundation—adding to and/or subtracting from it—so that their use of the name of Christ to describe themselves is at best suspect and at worst a lie!

The same is true of the name Lutheran. "We do not say that

any man shall believe that the Confession of our Church is Scriptural. We only contend that he should neither say nor seem to say so, if he does not believe it” (Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, Augsburg. Publ. House, Mpls., Minn., 1963 ed., p. 171).

The descendants of Krauth in the church world today are, for the most part, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

There is no unanimity of doctrine in the ELCA today, or for that matter in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LC–MS). Krauth, who today would not be at home in his own church, also wrote, “Could the day ever come, in which we imagined that the Evangelical Lutheran Church had abused her right of private judgment, so as to reach error, and not truth by it, we should, as honest men, cease to bear her name... On the other hand, should the Evangelical Lutheran Church ever have evidence, that we have abused our right of private judgment into the wrong private misjudgment, so as to have reached error, and not truth by it, then as a faithful Church, after due admonition and opportunity for repentance have been given us in vain, she is bound to cast us forth, to purify

her own communion, and to make it impossible for us, in her name, to injure others” (ibid., pp. 169–170).

The testing of the faithfulness of a church must be done first of all in the light of the Holy Scriptures and, inasmuch as it is Lutheran, in the light of the Lutheran Confessions! When it is manifest that error is being taught, promoted, and defended, what is called for is action, not compromise! Krauth again says, “You must show to my private judgment, that God’s word teaches it [what another’s private judgment holds—DF] before I dare recognize you as in the unity of faith. If you cannot, we have not the same faith, and ought not to be of the same communion; for the communion is properly one of persons of the same faith” (p. 172). Again, “Men must be honest in their difference, if they are ever to be honest in their agreement” (ibid., p. 290).

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Romans 16:17–18).

Thus the Lord speaks to us so that His Word might be glorified among us, our faith might remain

unshaken, and our witness before the world might be faithful and true.

God help us of the Church of the Lutheran Confession to be true to Scripture and to the name

whereby we call ourselves!

May the spirit of compromise find no place among us!

May He keep us faithful Christians and honest Lutherans!



Announcements

Great Lakes Delegate Conference, Peace Thru Christ Lutheran Church, Middleton, Wisconsin — June 4-5, 2012 – Agenda:

1. Addressing the numerical decline in our CLC Schools — Norm Mackensen
 2. Discussion and definition of 'regular church attendance' as it relates to the 3rd commandment and Hebrews 10:25 — Pastor Joel Fleischer
 3. Devotional study (essayist's choice) — Pastor Neal Radichel
 4. Review of Convention Prospectus; Report from Missionary David Koenig
- **Conference Chaplain** — Prof. John Ude
 - **Communion Service Speaker** — Pastor David Pfeiffer / *Pastor Michael Eichstadt, Reporter*

West Central Delegate Conference, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Bismarck, North Dakota — May 29-30, 2012 – Agenda:

1. More messages and exhortations for today's Christians from the Minor Prophets — Pastor Scott Schiermeister
 2. How do we involve our younger members (ages 14-40)? — Lay Delegate
 3. Scripture passages/references which we can give our members concerning the use/misuse/dangers of social media, Facebook, Twitter, etc. — Lay Delegate
 4. Emphasizing the means of grace in our ministries — Pastor Andrew Schaller
 5. "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draws nigh" Maintaining sober and joyful attitudes in the midst of so much turmoil. — Pastor Luke Bernthal
 6. Equipping the saints for Mission work/personal evangelism (practical examples) — Pastor Matthew Gurath
 7. Maintaining a proper distinction between objective and subjective justification and the importance thereof — Pastor George Dummann
 8. The distinction between an oath and a vow — Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
- **Conference Chaplain** — Pastor Frank Gantt
 - **Communion Service Speaker** — Pastor John Klatt / *Pastor Mark Gullerud, Reporter*

The Minnesota Delegate Conference

is scheduled for 3:00 p.m., June 10, 2012, at Berea Lutheran Church, Inver Grove Heights. Discussion will center on the Prospectus of the upcoming CLC Convention.

“...The Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel.” (Luther, SA, Part II, Art. II)

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE *SMALCALD ARTICLES* (SA) (Last of Three)

God’s Word Alone the Rule of Faith

Pastor Paul Fleischer

The following statement is helpful to understand where Luther was coming from in this straight-forward, hard-hitting Confession:

The Smalcald Articles [1537] reveal Luther, the bold, mature confessor testifying to God’s revealed truth in the Scripture, twenty years after the young Luther, then an obedient son of the Roman Church, had nailed the ninety-five theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg [1517]. So, the study of the contents of the Smalcald Articles should be most profitable for our understanding and appreciation of our Lutheran heritage....” 1)

Yes, the mature Luther was far more bold than the young Luther in his theological assertions. Luther freely admitted this in the same year that he penned the *Smalcald Articles*:

...Twenty years ago...when I was a young master at Erfurt, I was always beset by the temptation of sadness. Therefore I applied myself diligently to reading the Bible, and so, from the bare text of the Bible, I soon saw many errors in the papacy. But thoughts like this came to me there in the library at Erfurt: See how great the authority of the pope and the church is. Should you alone

Planned series on the *Smalcald Articles*:

- #1 Of The Divine Majesty/Redemption/Salvation by Grace
- #2 Of The Mass (in this issue)**
- #3 Of Cloisters/Papacy
- #4 Of Sin and the Law
- #5 Of Repentance
- #6 Of The Gospel and Sacraments
- #7 Of Keys and Confession
- #8 Of Ordination/Traditions/Conclusion

be considered wise? Indeed, you may be in error. I gave place to these thoughts and was completely hindered in my Bible reading....But later, when I saw the gross abuses of the indulgences and refuted them and they wanted utterly to destroy me, then things began to happen, though very feebly....So God carried on this affair in a marvelous way and drove me into it without my intention, and He alone has advanced it so far that a reconciliation between the pope and us is impossible. For the pope will not agree to yield the least error; and we dare not yield to him in any—even the smallest—article. Therefore may God help this cause. It is completely out of human hands....” 2)

It’s clear that Luther undertook God’s cause with fear and trepidation. It’s also clear that he never intended to start a new

church (as an innovator), but rather to renew or reform the Roman church (as a renovator), calling it back to faithfulness to the teachings of God's pure Word alone.

Yes, it was all about faithfulness to the Word of God, as Luther explained: "*I, Doctor Martin, was called and compelled to become a doctor [at Wittenberg] out of pure obedience, without my will. So I had to assume the office of a teacher and swear and promise my most beloved Holy Scripture that I would preach and teach it faithfully and purely. In the course of this teaching the papacy blocked my way and wanted to keep me from doing so....*" 3)

The words of our subtitle have been called Luther's "most pointed and popular statement on the Lutheran position" regarding church doctrine. They may otherwise be called his "rule of faith." The words are an obvious reference to Galatians 1:8: "*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.*"

The same rule of faith holds for any who claim to be true heirs of the 16th century conservative Reformation which includes the Smalcald Articles: "*We stand upon the everlasting foundation—the Word of God:... Not any word of man, no creed, commentary, theological system, nor decisions of Fathers or of councils, no doctrine of Churches, or of the whole*

Church, no results or judgments of reason, however strong, matured, and well informed, no one of these and not all of these together, but God's Word alone is the rule of faith." 4)

All true heirs of the Lutheran Reformation make the Reformer's prayer their own when they sing from the heart:

*Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy
Word; Curb those who fain by
craft and sword Would wrest the
Kingdom from Thy Son And set at
naught all He hath done.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, Thy pow'r make
known, For Thou art Lord of lords
alone; Defend Thy Christendom
that we May evermore sing praise
to Thee.*

*O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth.
Support us in our final strife And
lead us out of death to life.*

(TLH #261:1-3)



- 1) B. Teigen, *I BELIEVE, a Study of the Smalcald Articles*, Luth. Syn. Book Co., 1978, p. 1
- 2) *What Luther Says*, Vol. III, p. 1174
- 3) *Ibid.* p. 1175
- 4) C. P. Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, Augsburg Pub. House, Mpls., 1899, p. 165

This We Believe

A REVIEW OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S *SMALCALD ARTICLES*

2. Of The Mass

Pastor Wayne Eichstadt • Mankato, Minnesota

The faithfulness of an individual's or a church's doctrinal confession depends on its foundation. A set of beliefs that begins with false premises and man-made ideas is sure to end up in error.

For this reason Martin Luther clearly established the scriptural foundation of the Christian faith in Article I, in which he treated the doctrine of justification by faith.

In Article II Luther began to use the light of Scripture and the foundational truth of justification by faith to expose the error of the Roman Catholic Church and its teaching which did not flow from "the first and chief article" and therefore was not built on the foundation of Holy Scripture.

When exposing the errors of the church, why did Luther begin with the Mass?

To expose the errors of the Roman Catholic Church, Luther began with the Mass because so much could be traced to this fundamental though erroneous aspect of the church's worship

and teaching.

From outward appearance the Mass may seem to be simply a worship service with Holy Communion, and the casual observer might wonder what all the fuss is about. However, what is taught and believed regarding what is taking place in the Mass reveals that there is much more at work.

The Roman Catholic Mass is celebrated as—and taught to be—an unbloody re-sacrifice of Christ. This not only conflicts with the declaration of Holy Scripture that Christ's sacrifice was complete once for all (see John 19:30, Hebrews 9:28) but it also ends up making the celebration of the Mass something that a sinner does to earn favor with God! The latter clearly conflicts with the scriptural doctrine of justification and sets the stage for many other religious errors in teaching and practice.

What doctrinal error is Luther specifically addressing?

The essential error in the Mass is work-righteousness.

The supposed "sacrifice of the mass" and the "good work" of participating in a Mass are thought to free people from their sins. This work-righteousness in the Mass obscures the blessed truth of the forgiveness of sins offered freely in the Sacrament of the Altar.

Luther goes on to explain that the work-righteousness of the Mass leads to other false teachings, requirements, customs, and practices which supposedly promote forgiveness of sins and salvation by what the sinner does. Among these subsequent errors—which obscure Christ's once-and-for-all, complete sacrifice for sins!—are the teachings concerning purgatory, spirits, encouraging believers in work-righteousness, pilgrimages, monastic societies, worship of relics, indulgences, and praying to the saints.

What truth does Luther set forth?

Luther exposes the error of work-righteousness and shows its futility toward salvation. At the same time he affirms and gives glory to the truth of justification (article 1). He also indirectly demonstrates that "*a little leaven leavens the whole lump*" (Galatians 5:9), for the errors of the Mass were not and are not isolated.

Rather, as yeast inevitably spreads, even so does that fundamental error of the Mass grow to infiltrate a large and significant part of the church's teaching!

How does this apply to us today?

We are reminded of just how important the teaching of justification by faith is to our standing firm in the truth and resisting temptation and error. Luther leads us to consider how easily work-righteousness can grow out of that initial misstep and how, in turn, the simple truth of justification by faith answers so much false teaching.

As we seek to "*tell the generations to come*" of God's love and mercy (cf. Psalm 78:4), we are reminded of the importance of firmly setting the scriptural foundation to avoid slipping into work-righteousness.

As we seek to establish and strengthen our faith personally and in our congregations, we dare not lose sight of how easily work-righteousness can creep into the conversation and how it can spread.

In a world full of people whose itching ears lead them to want to "do something" and who become bored with justification by faith, we are able to show how that precious truth stands in

sharp contrast to the prevalent ideas of accomplishing one's own salvation; thus we are able to offer the gospel and life. As Luther put it: "...The merits of Christ are obtained by grace,

through faith, without our work or pennies. They are offered to us without our money or merit... by the preaching of God's Word" (Article II, #24).



The Book of Concord

The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church [Tappert Edition]

Part II, Article II. Of the Mass

- *The Mass in the papacy must be regarded as the greatest and most horrible abomination because it runs into direct and violent conflict with this ...fundamental article [justification by faith].... it is held that this sacrifice or work of the Mass (even when offered by an evil scoundrel) delivers men from their sins, both here in this life and yonder in purgatory, although in reality this can and must be done by the Lamb of God alone, as has been stated above. There is to be no concession or compromise in this article either, for the first article does not permit it. (#1)*
- *The Mass...has brought forth a brood of vermin and the poison of manifold idolatries. (#11)*
- *The first is purgatory...purgatory, too, is contrary to the fundamental article that Christ alone, and not the work of man, can help souls. Besides, nothing has been commanded or enjoined upon us with reference to the dead....The papists here adduce passages from...some of the Fathers who are said to have written about purgatory....It will not do to make articles of faith out of the holy Fathers' words or works. Otherwise what they ate, how they dressed, and what kind of houses they lived in would have to become articles of faith—as has happened in the case of relics. This means that the Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel. [This last sentence is the setting of our theme verse and a classic quote of the Reformer from the Smalcald Articles—Ed.] (#'s 12-15)*
- *The second is a consequence of this: evil spirits have introduced the knavery of appearing as spirits of the departed and, with unspeakable lies and cunning, of demanding Masses, vigils, pilgrimages, and other alms. We had to accept all these as articles of faith....Here too there can be no concession or compromise. (#'s 16-17a)*
- *The third are pilgrimages. Masses, forgiveness of sins, and God's grace were sought here, too, for Masses dominated everything. (#20)*
- *The fourth are [monastic orders, which are] utterly unnecessary and without command.... (#21)*
- *The fifth are relics. In this connection so many manifest lies and so much nonsense has been invented...relics are neither commanded nor commended. They are utterly unnecessary and useless. Worst of all, however, is the claim that relics effect...the forgiveness of sin.... (#'s 22-23)*
- *The sixth place belongs to the precious indulgences which are granted to the living and the dead (for money) and by which the pope sells the merits of Christ together with the superabundant merits of the saints and the entire church. These are not to be tolerated...they are also contrary to the first article.... (#24)*
- *The invocation of saints is also one of the abuses... It is in conflict with the first, chief article and undermines knowledge of Christ... Even if the invocation of saints were a precious practice (which it is not), we have everything a thousand-fold better in Christ. (#25)*
- *In short, we cannot allow but must condemn the Mass, its implications, and its consequences in order that we may retain the holy sacrament in its purity and certainty according to the institution of Christ and may use and receive it in faith. (#29)*



Announcement

**Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference
St. John's Lutheran Church
Clarkston, Washington
May 1-3, 2012**

Agenda:

1. What does it mean that the gospel must predominate in our preaching and teaching, and in the care of our members? (from Walther's *Law and Gospel*)
— Pastor Delwyn Maas
 2. Word study of *porneia* and related terms, especially in regard to the breaking of a marriage
— Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
 3. Summary and study of the second quarter (beginning with par. 25) of *Concerning Church Fellowship*
— Pastor Steven Karp
 4. Continuing Pastor David Reim's summary of J. P. Koehler's article
— "Legalism Among Us"
 5. Isagogics (writer's choice)
— Pastor David Fuerstenau
 6. Old Testament Exegesis (essayist's choice)
— Pastor Caleb Schaller
 7. New Testament Exegesis (essayist's choice)
— Pastor Douglas Priestap
- **Conference Chaplain**
— Pastor Paul Naumann
 - **Communion Service Speaker**
— Pastor David Reim
- Pastor Terrel Kesterson, Secretary*

Correction:

Our April 2012 issue, p. 19, had Luther's birthdate incorrect. It should read November 10, 1483. - Ed.

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

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