

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



THEME OF THIRTIETH CONVENTION OF THE CLC, JUNE 18-21, 2012

**"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

1 CORINTHIANS 15:57

IN THIS ISSUE:

The Pentecost devotions remind us of the crucial role of God the Holy Spirit in our individual Christian lives. The same Spirit is wonderfully active in our wider work as a synod, as explained in the following words in the Board of Missions report to the June Convention.

OUR AMAZING GOD...

What an amazing thing it is that instead of choosing angels, who are holy, vast in number, and supernaturally swift in moving about to serve as His messengers in a worldwide mission effort, the Lord chose sinful human beings who were few in number and slow of foot to carry out this critical role. Equally amazing is the fact that God made it possible for them to spread the gospel so far and so wide in such a relatively brief amount of time.

Fast forward to our times wherein we continue to be amazed at how God makes it possible for the good news of salvation to be spread across the globe. Similar to the times of the apostles, the Lord has established the English language as the universal language. To speed the travel of Christian witnesses across the world, God has given us jet planes. In order to disseminate the truths of His Word of truth to total strangers in different countries of the world, the Lord has blessed us with the worldwide web of the internet. And still to our amazement God continues to use imperfect Christians who are relatively few in number to serve as His messengers.

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In view of all that God has made possible for our little synod in world missions, we thank Him for the opportunity to have a part in sharing the gospel in countries other than the United States, such as India, Nepal, Myanmar, Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Canada, and Australia.

God be praised for all that He does in making it possible for the gospel of salvation to be spread both far and wide throughout the world!



2010 Convention Communion Service, Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Seized By The Spirit

Pastor David Fuerstenau · Ketchikan, Alaska



When I was around twelve years old, I was walking home on a dusty Dakota road because the family tractor had quit on me. A neighbor stopped to give me a ride.

Not much later he started gesticulating and speaking gibberish. I crowded the door, ready to bail out if necessary. Then suddenly he stopped the unusual actions and noises. Looking at me, he smiled and told me not to be afraid. He explained that he had been grabbed by the Spirit and was just speaking in tongues!

Though we conservative Lutherans are not of the gibberish branch of Christendom (at the time of the Reformation Luther called them "enthusiasts"), yet we do believe in and confess the Holy Spirit; we even live in the reality that He does indeed 'grab' people.

When such a thing occurs, it's a miracle of power and grace. The people whom the Spirit seizes and fills are generally not those whom either the unbelieving world or we ourselves might expect—not the wise or mighty but rather those whom He wishes to grasp securely—namely, the weak, the sick of heart, the poor, and the humble.

Thus on a certain Pentecost Day it was fishermen and tax collectors who were filled with the Spirit, speaking the wonderful works of God—and three thousand souls were brought to faith (Acts 2:41ff)!

In Old Testament times the prophet Samuel tells of another who was seized by the Spirit. The person was Saul, the first king of Israel. In view of his later disobedience, unbelief, and suicide, we consider this with sadness.

In outward appearance Saul was quite impressive: tall and handsome, looking the part of a king. Samuel, in fact, reports that Saul was '*the desire of Israel*' (I Samuel 9:20).

But Saul was also timid and lacking in confidence. Despite the Lord's assurances—even at his inauguration—Saul was found hiding among the donkeys. This called for a dramatic seizure of the spiritual kind. Thus God took hold of Saul and "*gave him another heart*" (that is, changed his heart; I Samuel 10:9).

Saul obviously had not been inclined toward God and spiritual matters, yet by the power of the Spirit he was made ready to trust God and to serve Him and his own people as their king.

Furthermore, we are told that the Spirit of God came upon Saul in power, and he began to prophesy with other prophets (1 Samuel 10:10). This was indeed shocking, for Saul had never had any theological training.

It was so amazing, so out-of-character, so unexpected that questions came flooding in: 'What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?' Nobody—but nobody—expected Saul to begin preaching like a prophet!

But this is the result when one is seized by the Spirit and given power. This was Saul's personal Pentecost day!

Centuries later on the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were likewise filled with the Spirit, speaking of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Rather than talking in gibberish, they spoke in foreign languages understood by many. The people marveled and were amazed. They also had questions such as: 'Are these men not Galileans? What does this mean? Are they drunk?'

Have you and I been seized by the Spirit? If we trust in Christ Jesus as our Savior, we have—"For no one can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3)! To believe in Jesus and His offered forgiveness and serve faithfully in His kingdom as royal priests requires a 'heart-transplant,' a washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (see Titus 3:5).

But, dear Christian, take care! Heart transplants can be rejected by our sinful flesh—which obviously happened in Saul's case. Celebrate Pentecost by daily taking your anti-rejection medicine—the humbling, healing, strengthening, preserving Word of God!

Have you been seized by the Spirit? One evidence that you have is a desire to prophecy—to proclaim your Christian faith, your spiritual hope and joy and the amazing mercy of our Savior-God.

Celebrate Pentecost by joining the prophets, using your tongue to speak—not gibberish or worldly wisdom but—the gospel of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, some may ask doubting questions, 'What has happened to him/her? Is he/she now a prophet? A kook? Is he/she dangerous?'

By God's grace the 'three thousand' even today will ask, "What shall we do?" And because we have been seized, we know what to say: "*Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38).



The Miracle of Pentecost Continues

Pastor Theodore Barthels • Austin, Minnesota

If I were to ask you what the greatest miracle of Pentecost is, what comes to mind?

The sound coming from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind? Probably not so much.

The tongues appearing to be fire that sat upon each of the disciples on that Pentecost morning? It's likely more of us think of that miraculous sign since it happened only on that special Day.

Many may think of how the apostles (whose mother-tongue was Aramaic) were enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit to speak in the different languages of the people assembled around them that day. We know that wondrous miracle impressed those who heard them. They declared, "*We hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God*" (Acts 2:11).

In a single moment the Holy Spirit broke the language barrier between Jews and the rest of the world. Pentecost also authenticated the apostles' message as being from God and carried the gospel forward to the Gentiles.

However, even this is not the greatest miracle of that first Pentecost day.

Consider this miracle: "*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them*" (Acts 2:41). What a great miracle!

Indeed, this is not just a single miracle, for *three thousand miracles* happened on that one day! Peter and the apostles proclaimed the gospel of the remission of sins and promised the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit worked the miracle of faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior in each one of those hearts that day, bringing life, spiritual and eternal, to three thousand souls!

This particular miracle of Pentecost continues yet today! The record of that first Pentecost event concludes with this divinely inspired

**"Then those who
gladly received his
word were baptized;
and that day about
three thousand souls
were added to them"**

Acts 2:41

comment: “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).

As the call of the gospel went out into the world, eventually it came to our ears, and the Spirit worked a miracle in our hearts, turning our cold and stony hearts to hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26–27). We were led to repent and believe the gospel. We have received the gift of the Holy Spirit so that we confess with lips and heart that Jesus is the Savior who has redeemed all mankind from sin and death.

Here we must recognize our own weakness and how important it is for us to continue to pray for the Spirit’s blessing and power. It is tempting to question the power of the Spirit working through the Word and instead give credit to programs or entertaining gimmicks that appeal to our human nature.

But remember that it is a miracle of God the Holy Spirit when anyone comes to faith, and that happens only through the message of the gospel that is preached.

And so let us do what the Spirit led the disciples to do—speak the truth of God’s Word with boldness and confidence.

The Pentecost miracle is continuing throughout the world whenever and wherever the gospel is proclaimed, and it continues among us also: the Lord **keeps on adding** to the church (the assembly of saints) daily those who **are being saved**.



Pacific Coast Conference pastors met May 1-3 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Clarkston, Wash. (L-R) top, Paul Naumann, Nathan Pfeiffer, Robert List, Douglas Priestap, David Reim; bot, David Naumann, Terrel Kesterson, Steven Karp, Caleb Schaller, Michael Gurath

"...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 28:19–20

THE HOLY TRINITY

Pastor Andrew Schaller • Watertown, South Dakota

We learned from our pastors in Confirmation Class that God is triune. We also learned that the word *triune* means 'three in one.'

We believe that God is triune because He has revealed that to us in His Word, the Bible—not because we can comprehend this truth or fit it into our little heads.

We would do well to remember that God doesn't ask us to comprehend Him, but only that we take Him at His Word and trust Him.

The triune nature of God is a truth that can be appropriated only by faith. Jesus describes God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is God (2 Corinthians 1:3); the Son is God (John 1:1, 14; Colossians 2:8–9); and the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3–4).

At the same time, the Bible defiantly states that there is only one God (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4, 1 Corinthians 8:6, 1 Timothy 2:5). As those who tremble at God's Word and accept its teachings without reservation, we conclude and teach that God is triune, and we celebrate the fact that God has revealed Himself to be a Holy Trinity.

Moreover, we try to help one another begin to understand the nature of God by using symbols like the triangle. Since a triangle has three sides and three corners to make the unit, the triangle has long been used as a symbol of the Holy Trinity.

Sad to sad, the cults and some Reformed churches claim that the Holy Trinity is not taught in the Bible. Among the reasons offered are the following.

1) It is said "The word *trinity* is not used in the Bible."

Answer: It is true that the word is not used in the Bible... and neither is the word *theocracy*. We Americans are proud of the fact that the USA is a democracy, a nation governed by the people and for the people, whereas a theocracy is a nation governed by God. Anyone who reads

the Old Testament can easily see that Israel was a theocracy, a nation governed by God. So...shall we deny this reality because the word *theocracy* is not used in the Bible? That would be foolishness... and a quibbling over words.

2) It is said, "God would not ask us to accept something we can't understand."

Answer: Really?! There are many things I don't understand yet still believe. For example, I don't understand how a dead body can come to life again, but I do know that Jesus rose from death. My human reason tells me that it is impossible for a woman to become pregnant without a man, but I know that is exactly what happened to the Virgin Mary. God Himself accomplished what is impossible in nature...because "*with God nothing will be impossible*" (Luke 1:37). God has plainly declared in His Word that the Savior was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. That is true whether or not we can understand or comprehend it with our minds.

Finally, God doesn't promise that we sinful mortals will always understand and comprehend all His ways. In fact, He indicates that we probably won't, because His ways and thoughts are higher than ours (cf. Isaiah 55:8-9).

So what then can we learn from the words of the risen Christ quoted at the beginning of this article?

With these words the living and exalted Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gives us our 'marching orders' and lays our mission before us—to "*make disciples of all the nations.*" He also indicates how that mission is to be carried out—by baptizing and teaching.

Jesus' disciples are to baptize "*in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*" It is evident that these are three different persons and that they are equals... because of how Jesus uses the word *and*! The three Persons are placed together because they are co-equal and united in majesty and power.*

These words do not require our assent to be true... they are themselves true and accurate. They are the words of our Savior Jesus, and they describe our God as triune—as the Holy Trinity.



* The fifth century Athanasian Creed is accepted among us as one of the universal statements of Christian belief. It has much good to say regarding the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It's found on page 53 in the forepart of *The Lutheran Hymnal*, but I suppose you can 'google' it.

– Editor.

Children of God By Grace Alone!

Pastor Paul Krause · Markesan, Wisconsin

As we read in the Gospel of Luke chapter I, when the eighth day came for Zacharias and Elizabeth's new baby boy to be circumcised, it was assumed that he would be given his father's name, according to the custom of the times.

Such was not the case here—not even close! When Zacharias had been struck speechless for his unbelief regarding his fathering a son in his advanced age, we are told, *"They all marveled"* when Zacharias wrote: *"His name is John"* (Luke 1:63).

Granted, this isn't your typical Father's Day Scripture passage, yet what John's father Zacharias did on that day is a wonderful reminder of the type of Father we have in God Himself!

It was certainly understandable that all those who came to the eighth-day ceremony would expect Zacharias' son to be given his earthly father's name.

Turning to our own experience in the human family, we too are born *"in our father's image"* (Genesis 5:3). From our earthly fathers comes that inherited sinful nature passed down from one generation to the next. That is the natural way of things—we have no one among our relatives who is called by any other name, for not one of those born into the human race can be called anything other than "sinful."

John, son of Zacharias, was sinful too—but God wanted him to be called John, meaning 'Jehovah has been gracious.' And just as John was given that special name, so it is that our heavenly Father gives us a special name—calling us *"children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:26).

What a marvelous surprise of grace that is! Not a one of us would dare to expect that such an adoption would take place!

But that is the love of God for us through His Son! *"But when the*

fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" (Galatians 4:4-5)

We earthly fathers have not had an angel come to us with a special God-given earthly name for our children. But we have had our heavenly Father give us His own name which He would have us pass on to the next generation—a name which is (as God Himself proclaimed it to Moses): "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth..." (Exodus 34:6).

God help us as Christian fathers to give our children His name—so that both we and our children will remain among those who "call upon the name of the Lord and [are] saved!" (Joel 2:32)

GOD'S SACRED INSTITUTION

Holy Wedlock

Pastor Thomas Schuetze • Coloma, Michigan

It happened one hundred years ago on April 15, 1912.

The newly commissioned steamer, the RMS *Titanic*, struck an iceberg and foundered in the north Atlantic Ocean.

Among the passengers was an elderly couple, Isidor and Ida Straus, who had been married forty-one years. As the doomed ship sank slowly but surely into the sea, Isidor and Ida were seen standing near a lifeboat. The officer in charge urged them to climb on board, but Isidor refused to do so as long as there were women and children still remaining on the ship.

Isidor urged his wife to get into the lifeboat, but she declined. "We have lived together for many years," she said. "Where you go, I go." They were among the drowning victims of the *Titanic* disaster.

The story of Isidor and Ida is one of abiding marital love that continued strong and true "till death us do part." Such love is a rare commodity in our day. A high percentage of marriage relationships, once begun in earnest and with great promise, end up foundering "on the rocks" and sinking into divorce.

The question may be asked: How may couples find strength to remain true to their marriage vows in the middle of the stiff challenges they are bound to encounter while traversing life's tempestuous sea?

Christian couples will want to keep before them the truth of Holy Scripture that marriage is a sacred institution which God designed from the beginning for their blessing (see Genesis chapter 2).

Since marriage is God's institution (and not man's idea), throughout their life-voyage together the couple will want to look to God's Word for the heavenly counsel it offers. They will seek the Bible's counsel on a regular basis, and especially during periods of marital stress.

Promised Blessings

Christian couples will also remember with gratitude to God three great blessings He has in mind for them through His sacred institution.

- 1) God created Eve to be the companion and helper which Adam was not able to find among the other creatures God had created (see Genesis 2:18). Still today God confers on married couples the blessings of mutual support and companionship throughout their time together on Earth.
- 2) The creation account in the book of Genesis records how God made Adam and Eve sexual creatures—"male and female." He instituted marriage as the means by which He might bestow sexual happiness on husband and wife. Marriage is also intended to serve as a means to avoid immorality in this sinful world (see Genesis 3, 1 Corinthians 7:2).
- 3) Another blessing God bestows through the holy estate of marriage is the gift of children. Children aren't mere accidents of nature, as the unbelieving world would have it, but they are special treasures from the Lord graciously awarded to couples as He sees fit (see Psalm 127:3). At the same time He grants them the privilege of training up little ones to trust in Him as their Savior, to serve Him in grateful love, and finally to live with Him in heaven for the praise of His glory.

Since the entrance of sin into the world, many are the temptations married couples face to sever the love-bond which the Lord has created between them. Christian spouses may often feel like they are swimming upstream against the strong current of the times.

But as they spend time together in God's Word, looking to their heavenly Father for guidance, and as they treasure up the blessings of marriage in their hearts, they will find themselves well equipped by

the Lord to fulfill the special roles He has assigned to each within the marriage relationship.

The apostle Paul's familiar but compelling words regarding the respective roles of each spouse are these: "*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word....Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior...*" (Ephesians 5:25-26, 22-23 NIV).

With Christ as their Pilot and His Word as their compass, the "ship" of a couple's marriage will continue safely on its voyage "till death us do part."



THE DISCOURSES OF CHRIST

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

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord. But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your Yes be Yes, and your No, No. For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away." MATTHEW 5:33-42

Looking after the Interests of Others

Pastor Mark Gullerud · Bowdle, South Dakota

How often we hear sayings such as, 'You have to look out for yourself!' 'Don't let anyone take advantage of you!' 'Stick up for your rights!'

Each of these sentiments places self above others. This is not of God, as Holy Scripture teaches, "*Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others*" (Philippians 2:4).

In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches what it means to look out for the interest of others. He gives examples regarding

oaths (vv. 33-37), injuries (vv. 38,39), legal matters (v. 40), compulsory service (v. 41), and charity (v. 42).

When the Pharisees in Jesus' day tried to convince people that some oaths are less binding than others, they were looking out for their own interests. In that way they felt justified in not being true to their word or promises. Jesus exposed their faulty ethics by revealing that every oath is serious and binding.

When it comes to daily conversation, the Lord impresses upon us that we shouldn't need oaths to convince people we are telling the truth and will keep our promises.

Since God is the Father of all truth, the same will be the case with His children.

When a person is injured by another, the sinful self wants to get even. By referring to an Old Testament levitical law (Exodus 21:23,24) the Pharisees mistakenly believed God approved of this.

Jesus teaches that the expression "*an eye for an eye*" is not authorizing personal revenge but rather teaching judicial authorities that the punishment should fit the crime. The Bible is very clear about vengeance (Romans 12:17-19). The way of the child of God is to turn the other cheek when one is struck, not resorting to paying back or getting even.

In today's society the civil courts are filled with cases by which vindictive people try to get one-up on their neighbors by suing them. Since as Christians we wish to live at peace with everyone, we want to make use of every means available to become reconciled to one another. This may require suffering injustice or loss rather than exerting our civil rights.

Jesus' counsel to go the extra mile was spoken in the context of the Roman practice of compulsion in occupied lands. Roman soldiers could require their subjects to carry baggage or cargo for a mile.

While the sinful self bucks against such imposed servitude, the new self worked in us by the Spirit of God leads us to serve our neighbor willingly in what is required, and at the same time to go beyond what is expected.

Think of Simon of Cyrene who was compelled to carry the cross of Christ as our Savior made His way to Calvary (Matthew 27:32).

Finally, in matters of Christian charity Jesus says, "*Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.*" The spirit of selfishness might cause us to turn a deaf ear to those who are truly needy. However, the spirit of Christian love is unselfish, spurring us on to be generous benefactors.

In putting others before ourselves in all things and at all times, we find no greater example than that of our self-giving Savior, Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul therefore gives the following exhortation, *“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”* (Philippians 2:6-8, ESV).



Apologetics — Should We Even Be Doing This?

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

“The Bible needs no defense.”

“God’s Word will take care of itself. So who are we to think that our puny efforts and inadequate reasoning could help defend God’s almighty Word?”

On the other hand, since God also promises to give us our daily bread, should I therefore say, “Since what God says will always come to pass, who am I to think that the Lord needs me to provide for my family?”

Or even: “Why evangelize? Does God need me to preach His Word when He could have the rocks cry out if He so chose?” (Luke 19:40)

The problem with the above lines of reasoning is the assumption that God ordains the end but doesn’t implement the means to those ends. Such thinking confuses what God does or doesn’t need with what God has called us to do.

God wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4) **and** He has called us to “Go and make disciples of all the nations...” (Matthew 28:19).

He gives us daily bread even without our asking **and** He has told us to provide for our families (1 Timothy 5:8).

His Word stands alone **and** He has told us to be ready always to defend the faith to anyone who asks us the reason for the hope that we have (1 Peter 3:15).

Throughout the book of Acts we see the Apostle Paul in his God-given responsibilities—to preach the gospel, to work, and then to defend. Thus, he went on three extended missionary journeys to preach Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23). He worked as a tentmaker to provide for his daily bread (Acts 18:1-3), **and** he defended God’s Word when he entered synagogues (Acts 17:1-2), marketplaces (Acts 17:17), the courts of philosophers (Acts 17:22), and even went before government officials (Acts 26:2). He reasoned with them (Acts 17:2), tried to persuade them (Acts 18:4), and spoke true and rational words (Acts 26:25). He confounded them by proving that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 9:22).

What was the foundation of Paul’s efforts? When he reasoned with them from the Scriptures (Acts 17:2), he did not tell his opponents that they have things mostly correct. We do not hear him say that people have done pretty well for themselves and they need only add a little Christianity to the mix.

Instead, he calls for a complete turn around. Repentance is called for because the day is coming when God will judge the world. We are assured of this because God has raised Christ from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

With God’s Word as our cornerstone, we too, with Paul, can ask, “*Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*” (1 Corinthians 1:20) We will not be held captive by philosophies according to the traditions of men (Colossians 2:8). Instead, we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). We do not walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds (Ephesians 4:17). We have been renewed in the spirit of our minds and have put on the new self that is created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:23-24).

We do not count ourselves wise and then work our way up to belief in God. Rather, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*” (Proverbs 1:7).

Before telling us to always be ready to defend the hope that we have, Peter calls upon us to “*in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord*” (1 Peter 3:15). Fearing the Lord and honoring Christ will give the ability to answer both every-day challenges (the neighbor across the backyard fence) and scholarly ones (the local university professor).

God has commanded that we always be ready to defend the hope that we have. We are earthen vessels through whom God chooses to glorify Himself and to defend His truth.

Thus, as occasion provides, it becomes the privileged responsibility of believers to engage in Apologetics.

This We Believe

475TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE *SMALCALD ARTICLES*

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

3. Of Cloisters/The Papacy

Pastor David Reim • Vernon, B.C. (Canada)

“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). There is only one way of salvation—justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins.

The Biblical teaching of justification by faith in Jesus Christ is like the bright beam of a lighthouse showing the way to God. The false teachings and practices within visible Christendom are like a thick smoke screen that obscures the light of the gospel and leads people to shipwreck on the rocks of work-righteousness.

Dr. Martin Luther recognized the need to blow away that smoke screen by pointing out error so that the light of the gospel could shine on the hearts of people. In Articles III and IV of Part Two of the *Smalcald Articles*, Luther points to two institutions of the Roman Catholic Church that obscure the truth of our salvation.

Part II - Article III

[Chapters and Monasteries] and
Article IV [The Papacy]

Planned series on the *Smalcald Articles*:

- #1 Of The Divine Majesty/Redemption/Salvation by Grace
- #2 Of The Mass
- #3 Of Cloisters/Papacy (in this issue)**
- #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

• Why did Luther include the Articles about Monasteries and the Papacy in this section on Redemption?

Both of these inventions of the Roman Catholic Church introduce alternate ways of salvation which supplant Jesus Christ as our only way of salvation.

Chapters and Monasteries were originally designed for the education of boys and girls to prepare them to be pastors and teachers and God-fearing citizens and parents.

However, they have been turned into “blasphemous services, invented by men, which claim to be superior to the ordinary

Christian life and to the offices and callings established by God.” The Roman Church elevated these practices to be meritorious works that earned the favor of God and thus became ways of gaining salvation. Therefore the [RC] church's teaching “is in conflict with the first, fundamental article concerning redemption in Jesus Christ.”

• **How does the Papacy contradict the chief article of Redemption through Christ?**

First, God placed Christ as the head over His Church, but the papacy has usurped Christ's position, claiming that the pope is the divinely appointed head of the Church on Earth (see Luther's comments in SIDEBAR quote #1).

How serious this is can be seen when the papacy makes demands and decrees contrary to Christ, thus proposing a different way of salvation. That Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father is denied by the claim that none can be saved unless and until they submit to the pope.

In the year 1302 Pope Boniface VIII gave his papal bull (official decree) on the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church. In it this blasphemous statement is made: “It is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the

Roman Pontiff.” Pope Leo the X reaffirmed that claim in 1516 (see SIDEBAR quote #2).

• **Why is Luther so vehement and caustic when speaking about the Papacy?**

When Luther in the *Smalcald Articles* identifies the papacy as the Antichrist and an “Apostle of Satan” (see SIDEBAR quote #3), some may think Luther shows his own anger and vengeance against the man who opposed him and that he has no respect for authority.

However, in His Word God Himself has used those terms for those who oppose and exalt themselves above God and His Word (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2). Those who treasure the gospel of full and free salvation through faith in Jesus Christ as Luther did will not hesitate to pronounce God's condemnation on all who malign the only-saving gospel of Jesus.

Luther wrote with the same zeal and vehemence as the Apostle Paul who, in denouncing the work-righteous Judaizers, said, “*If anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed*” (Galatians 1:9). It is clear that whoever sets himself up in place of Christ as head and source of salvation makes himself an enemy of God.

• **How does this apply to us today?**

Still today the Roman Catholic papacy claims that its pope is the divinely appointed head of the Church and still demands submission to him as a prerequisite for salvation.

A Roman Catholic publication titled, "I'm Glad You Asked" under the section on the papacy says, "The Pope can also exercise the 'power of the keys' in making what is called an infallible pronouncement which is binding on the universal (catholic) Church."

"To teach infallibly, the Pope must be teaching on faith or morals; he must speak with his full authority as the Successor of Peter and head of the universal Church on earth; he must make a final pronouncement on a doctrine at issue, and he must bind all the faithful to accept his teaching or

fall away entirely from the divine and Catholic faith."

Luther had predicted, "They neither can nor will concede to us even the smallest fraction of these articles." He was right. In response, the Roman Catholic Church spelled out its teaching even more clearly by condemning anyone who believed in the simple gospel of salvation by faith alone in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. By so doing they confirmed that the institution of the papacy is truly the Antichrist "*who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*" (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

We need to hold on to the only name under heaven by which we can be saved—the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. And we should be prepared to share the true gospel with any of the millions who are still under the deception of the Antichrist.



2010 Convention Delegates in auditorium at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

The Book of Concord

The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church [Tappert Edition]

Excerpts from THE SMALCALD ARTICLES Part II, Article IV. Of The Papacy

1. *“The pope is not the head of all Christendom by divine right or according to God’s Word, for this position belongs only to one, namely, to Jesus Christ. ... Hence it follows that all the things that the pope has undertaken and done on the strength of such false, mischievous, blasphemous, usurped authority have been and still are purely diabolical transactions and deeds...which contribute to the destruction of the entire holy Christian church (in so far as this lies in his power) and come into conflict with the first, fundamental article which is concerned with redemption in Jesus Christ.” (#’s 1&3)*
2. *“Here it is asserted that no Christian can be saved unless he is obedient to the pope and submits to him in all that he desires, says, and does. This is nothing less than to say, ‘Although you believe in Christ, and in him have everything that is needful for salvation, this is nothing and all in vain unless you consider me your god and are obedient and subject to me...’” (#4)*
3. *“This is a powerful demonstration that the pope is the real Antichrist who has raised himself over and set himself against Christ, for the pope will not permit Christians to be saved except by his own power, which amounts to nothing since it is neither established nor commanded by God. This is actually what St. Paul calls exalting oneself over and against God.”...“Finally, it is most diabolical for the pope to promote his lies about Masses, purgatory, monastic life, and human works and services (which are the essence of the papacy) in contradiction to God, and to damn, slay, and plague all Christians who do not exalt and honor these abominations of his above all things. Accordingly, just as we cannot adore the devil himself as our lord or God, so we cannot suffer his apostle, the pope or Antichrist, to govern us as our head or lord, ...but we ought rather speak as the angel spoke to the devil in Zechariah, ‘The Lord rebuke you, O Satan’ (Zech. 3:2).” (#’s 10,14,15)*



Brief Statement

of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod (Adopted 1932)
[Approved as a confessional document of the CLC at its founding]

Paragraph 43:

As to the Antichrist we teach that the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures concerning the Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2:3-12, 1 John 2:18, have been fulfilled in the Pope of Rome and his dominion. All the features of the Antichrist as drawn in these prophecies, including the most abominable and horrible ones, for example, that the Antichrist "as God sitteth in the temple of God," 2 Thess. 2:4; that he anathematizes the very heart of the Gospel of Christ, that is, the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins by grace alone, for Christ's sake alone, through faith alone, without any merit or worthiness in man (Rom. 3:20-28; Gal. 2:16); that he recognizes only those as members of the Christian Church who bow to his authority; and that, like a deluge, he had inundated the whole Church with his antichristian doctrines till God revealed him through the Reformation—these very features are the outstanding characteristics of the Papacy...Hence we subscribe to the statement of our Confessions that the Pope is "the very Antichrist."

[Pertinent paragraphs of The Smalcald Articles are then referenced. – Editor]

Announcement

NOMINATIONS FOR PRESIDENT OF IMMANUEL LUTHERAN COLLEGE

The Board of Regents announces the following nominations for the office of President of Immanuel Lutheran College: Pastor Wayne Eichstadt; Professor Joseph Lau; Professor John Pfeiffer; Professor Jeffrey Schierenbeck; Professor Steven Sippert; Professor Paul Sullivan. The term of the call for President of Immanuel Lutheran College is for two years, extending to the end of Academic Year 2014.

The call committee for educational institutions of the CLC will meet on the evening of June 18, 2012 in Eau Claire, Wis. Members of CLC congregations are invited to comment on the nominees. Comments on the nominees should be submitted in writing and must be mailed or e-mailed no later than midnight June 11, 2012, to:

Mr. Craig Ryan
499 Country Lane
Fulda, MN 56131
E-Mail: cryan@page1printers.com

CORRECTION

The article "Paul, Being Dead, Yet Speaks!" in our May issue contains the following sentence (p. 12): "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." The correct rendering should be: "...as is evident from [Paul's] last will and testament here in 2 Timothy chapter 4." We regret the error—which was made by the editor, not by the author of the article.

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

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