



LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

“...The Scripture Cannot Be Broken.” — John 19:35

For The Lord Is Good;
His Mercy Is Everlasting,
And His Truth Endures
To All Generations.

PSALM 100:5

New Beginnings at ILC

Prof. Em. Paul R. Koch, reporting

David Rodebaugh has received another new beginning.

He received it from God's storehouse of new beginnings.

He received it on August 20, 2012, when he was formally inducted into the office of the teaching ministry as high school and college professor at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. What privileged responsibilities God has given him!

Prof. Rodebaugh's new beginning at ILC is built on earlier beginnings, of course. The Lord of the Church was preparing David for decades and through a variety of secular and spiritual experiences...to become Professor Rodebaugh.

To illustrate: David's service in the U.S. Marine Corps (1983-87) served to bring him and Rebecca Haug together in marriage (1985), which introduced him to her Lutheran heritage. Call it happenstance if you will, but God crafts connections so that we find one another in this small corner of His world. (Becky's grandparents were pastored by Egbert Schaller in Clear Lake, S.Dak., and her mother was playmate with Anne Schaller Koch [the reporter's wife—Ed.] back in those good old days.)

After they moved from California to LaCrosse, Wisconsin (1988), and were touring the neighborhood, was it happenstance that the Rodebaughs came across the little, white CLC church in Onalaska pastored by Egbert Albrecht and thus discovered that the CLC was the church home they had been missing?

Not happenstance; God was working.

When they moved to Kansas (1993, job-related), the Lord of the Church sustained them with home devotions via the CLC's Ministry by Mail, and then they got acquainted with another of God's solitary servants, Paul Bentrup, who traveled hundreds of miles every few months to worship with them in their basement. Meanwhile their family grew—as the Lord entrusted them with sons Joshua in 1990, Samuel in 1992, and Nathan in 1994.

Prof. Rodebaugh's career as a Transportation Planner for City of Wichita in Kansas seemed settled enough, but God turned them in a new direction when a Milwaukee friend suggested that David apply for an opening in a Milwaukee-based consulting firm. He did so, was hired, and the family moved to the Milwaukee area (Franklin)... where they became members of Messiah at Hales Corners (CLC); there new friends awaited them, and God provided the Christian day-school for their sons.

Not happenstance; God's plans at work.

As the Lord prompts parents and students who love ILC as their Alma Mater to



Becky and David Rodebaugh

“...Your Redemption Draws Near”

Pastor Theodore Barthels • Austin, Minnesota

There is so much going wrong in the world. We hear so much that distresses us as children of God.

We see the morality of the country declining to the point that depravity and perversions are not only growing more common but are being approved and even endorsed as wholesome.

It distresses the child of God to see more and more of Christendom rejecting more and more of the truth of God’s Word.

The things that we see going wrong in America and, for that matter, around the world should not surprise us; the Lord Jesus warned us about them.

The Apostle Paul also warned of the increase in false teaching that would come in the end-times. To Timothy he wrote that *“...in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”* (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

We see all these sinful attitudes happening just as the Lord warned and just as Paul warned. On the surface of things we don’t see much reason for optimism either, for Paul went on to write that *“all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived”* (2 Timothy 3:12-13).

Since the Lord has not hid this depressing reality from us, we expect exactly what He told us would be coming. When we speak up for the truth of God, we will suffer persecution! Indeed, the unbelieving people of this world may regard us as the ones who need to be pushed aside as unwelcome and backward fundamentalists. (Imagine their reaction if they could comprehend the Bible-based confessionalism we strive to practice!)

So, exactly how should we be responding to all of this apostasy and wickedness in the world? How should we react to the distress among the nations and all the horrible things that we see? Without doubt, sin grieves the heart of the child of God even as Lot was grieved by the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:8).

Yet it is not time for us to hang our heads in despair as though all were lost.

Quite the opposite! It is time for us to hear the assurance of our Lord Jesus: *“Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near”* (Luke 21:28).

Jesus pointed out to His believers that the whole universe will fall apart. Listening to many of those in the science community these days, we may get the impression that the whole of creation is already crumbling and falling to pieces. Yet even now believing children of God possess the confidence of faith which causes them to lift up their heads and look to the skies for their Savior’s return.

Far from despairing at the terrible things taking place in this world, let us instead be lifting up our heads and watching for *“the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”* (Titus 2:13).



CENTENNIAL AFTERGLOW

“Like living stones built into a spiritual house...”

(1 Peter 2:5-6)

With humble gratitude to our God the members and friends of St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Clarkston, Washington, celebrated 100 years of blessings showered upon us from the Father above.

St. John’s was officially organized on April 30, 1912. Our centennial year was marked with a special worship celebration on May 27, 2012. The celebration included a 2:00 p.m. worship service, followed by a meal and a special centennial program.

The families of Paul Krause and Paul Schaller (former pastors at St. John’s) traveled to be with us for this once-in-a-lifetime celebration.

The Word of God preached that day reminded us of our Triune God’s plans of grace—carried out in the past, given in present, and promised for the future.

The building swelled with songs of praise and joyous laughter from the dozens who joined us, including visitors from CLC sister congregations in Seattle and Spokane. A pastors’ choir—including Pastors Paul Krause, David Naumann, Paul Schaller, and David Schaller—sang an anthem, as did the regular St. John’s church choir.

A delicious meal was served by the ladies of the congregation. The afternoon program featured three speakers and a DVD presentation (produced by Mr. Tom Naumann) which highlighted many of God’s blessings over the last one hundred years. To God alone the glory! —Pastor David Naumann, reporting



Of Blood and Covenant, Birds and Thanksgiving

Pastor David Fuerstenau • Ketchikan, Alaska

‘ Take a heifer, goat and sheep; slaughter, divide them in two and arrange their carcasses in two parallel lines, one half of each animal to a side. Kill two birds and add them, forming a corridor of blood and dead animals. ’

No, this is not a recipe for a Thanksgiving Feast gone wild, although American celebrations can include sumptuous dining that might make Julia Childs “turn over in her grave.” Rather, these were the basic instructions God gave Abram centuries ago in his own special need (Genesis 15:9ff).

God had reassured Abram that a son from his own body would be his heir, and that his descendants would be as the stars in the sky—uncountable. Abram believed the LORD, and “...*He counted it to him for righteousness*” (Genesis 15:6).

When God further told Abram He had given the land of Canaan to him—Abram believed but wanted to be further reassured that he would indeed possess this material blessing.

“Take a heifer, goat, and sheep.” If this seems a bit strange, remember that Abram had come from the culture of Babylon. According to ancient blood-covenant ritual, when two parties each passed through a corridor of slain and divided

animals and birds, that served as the strongest guarantee that both parties subscribed to the contract.

Later in his vision Abram saw a smoking firepot and flaming torch—representing God Himself—passing between the two sections of the sacrifice. By this extraordinary means God signed, sealed, and guaranteed His promise to His believer.

Abram that day was not celebrating a special Thanksgiving Day, yet who can doubt that he was a most thankful man?

Abram that day was not celebrating a special Thanksgiving Day, yet who can doubt that he was a most thankful man? He believed God and obeyed; he built altars and sacrificed to God; he tithed and called upon the name of the LORD.

On our part, we no longer build altars for animal sacrifice nor are we obliged to tithe. But we are exhorted to offer up the sweet-smelling sacrifice of faith—living praise and gratitude (see Hebrews 13:15).

This we strive to do in all that we do—with our hearts, voices, and limbs. But on a day dedicated to thanksgiving, do we not also hear the words of God as He reaffirms His promises and assures us that He will continue to be with us and bless our labor? That seedtime and harvest will not fail? That He will open up His hand and satisfy our needs and desires?

Abraham is called the father of all believers (Romans 4:11). Can we capture his vision? In the midst of prepared turkeys and ducks, beef roasts and legs-of-lamb laid out so bountifully on our tables, can we not know and acknowledge that God is with us, will bless us, and will keep His promises? Surely we can say with the psalmist: *“I have been young, and am now old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread”* (37:35).

But see also the great drops of blood—pools of it—rivulets of innocent blood streaming from a certain cross on Calvary. There God fulfilled His greatest promise(s): *“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7).

Jesus said, *“Because I live, you will live also”* (John 14:19). *“I go to prepare a place for you...”* (John 14:2)—mansions in heaven that believers will surely possess. This is nothing less than won and offered forgiveness, righteousness, life, salvation, and eternal happiness.

Therefore, *“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”* (Romans 8:32)

See the vision of the covenant: blood, animals, birds, and God’s reaffirming presence.

Hear His Word and promises for righteousness.

Believe and rejoice with thanksgiving!

In fact, we New Testament believers have received elements for a

new vision/covenant—the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. In them not only do we hear the words of God’s mercy and love but also God gives us something to see, feel, and taste. Christ as the Light of the World passes through the water and the bread and wine—working faith through them, assuring us of His grace and commitment.

See this vision, be reassured, and rejoice with thanksgiving!

A warning note! After Abram had prepared the animals, he became vigilant. He had to, for birds of prey descended to devour elements of the covenant. Vultures—unclean birds—tried to steal what was important and good.

Beware today of such despoiling birds (Ravens, Warhawks, Eagles, etc.) who will try to distract your attention away from worship and thanksgiving; the black crow who will encourage you to boast of yourself and not of the Lord; the far-sighted hawk who will tempt you to focus on the things of this world; the hearing-acute owl who will softly hoot that you should listen to the desires of your sinful flesh.

Fight off these birds! Chase them away from your covenant feast! Shotgun blasts and scarecrows will not suffice. But God’s Word will.

“You were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

“Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 106:1).

“Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you” (1 Samuel 12:24).

God grant that our Thanksgiving Day and our entire life is one of faith and vision, gratitude and vigilance!

Abraham is called the father of all believers (Romans 4:11). Can we capture his vision? In the midst of prepared turkeys and ducks, beef roasts and legs-of-lamb laid out so bountifully on our tables, can we not know and acknowledge that God is with us, will bless us, and will keep His promises?



Thanks — for everything!

Teacher David Bernthal • Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

Thanksgiving—who wouldn't celebrate this holiday? After all, everyone has something to be thankful for. Our American Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday because of that fact. Turkey, football, and family—who isn't thankful for such things?

Even though President Abraham Lincoln did his best to direct our nation's attention to whom and for what we should be thankful, we know that many today miss this point: “No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things [our prosperity]. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People....I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.” (Excerpt from Lincoln's Thanksgiving Day Proclamation – October 3, 1863)

Even the heathen are taught to say “please” and “thank you.” The unchurched can express gratitude for pleasantries done to or for them. Only the most ungrateful wouldn't be thankful for the wonderful comforts and pleasures to be enjoyed in this life.

However, it is the mark of a Christian to be thankful in all things, as the Word of our Lord says, “...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

That's a tall order! How often don't our plans go awry? How often don't we end up in situations we hadn't planned for? Are those also times of thanksgiving on our part?

In *The Hiding Place* Corrie ten Boom wrote of the ordeals her family faced during the Nazi occupation of WWII. This Christian woman and

her family were herded into concentration camps for aiding and hiding Jews. In one camp Corrie's sister Betsie was trying to keep everyone's spirits up; by having the above Bible passage read aloud, she reminded them to be thankful for what they still had. They began thanking God for everything around them in the prison, starting with the smuggled Bible in their hands. Finally, in her great enthusiasm Betsie went on... "Thank you for the fleas and for..."

"The fleas! This was too much. 'Betsie, there is no way even God can make me grateful for a flea.'

'Give thanks in all circumstances,' she quoted. 'It doesn't say, "in pleasant circumstances." Fleas are part of this place where God has put us.' And we stood between the piers of bunks and gave thanks for fleas." (from *The Hiding Place*)

What kind of faith would give thanks for something as miserable as being infested with fleas?! — Apparently a humble, childlike faith!

When problems and troubles arise, let us see them as a time to rejoice with thanksgiving that our Father is giving us opportunity to apply His Word to seek a solution. When the "fleas" of this world bite and annoy, let us remember our many sins which contribute to the grief in this world and then also recall the blessed forgiveness that is ours in the blood of Christ. Again, a reason for thanksgiving!

Later on it was revealed to Miss ten Boom that the guards were afraid of catching fleas from the prisoners they were watching. As a result the sisters were allowed to conduct Bible studies unmolested by the authorities. The gospel of Jesus was witnessed to countless women in those prison barracks—for many just before they left their time of grace on Earth.

The Lord may not always reveal to us the purpose of the "fleas" in our lives. But as children of our loving Father we can truly be thankful in every situation, for we know His heart and mind: "*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil...*"

(Jeremiah 29:II). Thanks be to God—for everything!

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They are the
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remembered mercy.**

*“For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God...
holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught...” (Titus 1:7ff).*

Spiritual Leaders—To Be And To Do

Pastor Em. Warren Fanning • Sun City, Arizona

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”

TITUS 1:5-9

The Apostle Paul was a Word-bound man as well as a very practical man. He radiated these qualities during his apostolic ministry.

More than radiated; he instilled them. All his hearers were encouraged to be upright, doctrinally sound, and organized.

This was especially emphasized for the clergy, young and old, and for congregations as well. We can see it in the apostle’s divinely inspired advice to Timothy, and especially here in our selection to Titus—with emphasis on a good sense of order.

Whereas Timothy’s main work was to restore order, it was Titus’ work to establish order.

To Titus Paul boiled it all down to two things, with regard to present and future elders, bishops, or pastors (three words, same work).

The first thing was the stress on what you are to be.

The second was on what you are to do.

In other words, a spiritual leader was to be respected not only because he had only one wife and subordinate children, not just because he couldn’t be accused of some open sin or hot-headedness

or drunkenness or of violence or greed. He was to be respected not only because he was warm, level-headed, upright, and in control of himself.

“About My Father’s Business”

Being a spiritual leader certainly involved those things, but it involved more than what one was to be; it also included what one was to do.

Certain things lacking in the Cretan churches had to be attended to. There was a stewardship to be performed—the word in its original gives us the sense of “economy”—the management of various matters.

It reminds us of the very young Christ who told His parents that He was *“about My Father’s business”* (Luke 2:49). And we know what kind of “business man” He was—His business was to go to the cross for us all.

Jesus, the perfect Shepherd, was a Word-bound man, and He knew what He had to do with His life!

Congregational life involves work—internally and externally. If there is no sense of God’s orderliness, the result is apathy and entropy—and disintegration. We have witnessed that happening in some Lutheran churches.

The apostle Paul knew that very few people like to take orders, especially from God. That is the way he himself was at one time in his life. But the words of Jesus must have echoed in Paul’s mind often—the words which Jesus told him on the road to Damascus: *“Arise, and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do”* (Acts 9:6).

The word “order” is a big word and concept for the apostle—in verse five of our text as well as in at least a couple places in Corinthians: “The rest I will set in order when I come” and *“Let all things be done decently and in order”* (I Corinthians II:34, I4:40).

And as far as Paul was concerned, a most important thing for spiritual leaders to do—in Crete as elsewhere—was to teach. Especially here in Crete the great danger of falsehood was penetrating the churches.

Titus was to do something about it. And so were the leaders he trained.

And, of course, these qualities go beyond the ministers and pastors and leaders in the congregations. They affect all the members, for every believer is a servant of the most high God.

That gives you and me something to be, and certainly something to do.



“...The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me” (John 10:25)

“Be Cleansed!”

Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer • Spokane, Washington

Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

(MARK 1:40-45)

The day had begun as countless other days for this man, an unclean outcast.

As one who had contracted the horribly debilitating and often fatal disease known as leprosy, he was required by Old Testament law to live separately from the rest of society—separate from his family, from his friends, and even from worship services at the Temple.

But the moment he came into contact with Jesus everything changed! With boldness of faith this societal and religious outcast knelt before Jesus and said, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.”

How BOLD it was of any leper to approach Jesus in the first place. How BOLD this man was to trust that Jesus had the divine ability to cleanse him of his disease. But beyond that, it was a BOLD faith that would trust Jesus to cleanse him only if He, the Savior, thought it was right — “*IF You are willing,*” he said.

Such faith in Jesus would not be disappointed. The gentle heart of our Good Shepherd looked upon this man in his miserable condition and was “*moved with compassion.*” Jesus pitied him.

As a good, law-abiding Jew, Jesus then did the unthinkable—He stretched out His hand and touched this “unclean,” leprous man! Such an action would make a Jew “unclean” so that he would have to go through a period of ritual cleansing, but when the holy Son of God reached out His hand, not only did Jesus not lose His purity, but He also cleansed the one He touched.

“I am willing; be cleansed.” As soon as Jesus had spoken those words, the leprosy left the man; he was cleansed.

It was a true miracle—one that could not have occurred without divine power! By the power of His Word Jesus healed the man immediately. What had started out as just another sobering, segregated day for this leprous man changed the moment Jesus spoke to him!

We could say the same thing, couldn't we? Though we don't have the outward markings of leprosy, we certainly are unclean by nature! Isaiah writes about our spiritual condition: *“We are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags”* (Isaiah 64:6).

We are unclean with the leprosy of sin. And because of this spiritual uncleanness, Isaiah also writes, *“Your iniquities have separated you from your God”* (Isaiah 59:2).

What do sin and holiness have in common? Nothing—they are separate!

Yet Jesus was moved with compassion also upon us. The holy Son of God did something else that was unthinkable: He left the glories of heaven and came to live here on Earth among this sin-infested colony of spiritual lepers. He was willing to cleanse us too. For that purpose He laid down His life on the cross of Calvary, there shedding His holy blood. *“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7).

Our lives too changed the very moment Jesus spoke to us in His Word. His Word had an immediate effect in our hearts and lives, creating faith in Him as our only Savior from sin and our only Hope for eternal life.

Jesus worked in us the miracle of faith and the miracle of salvation!

Thanks be to Jesus who was willing to cleanse us completely from our leprosy of sin!



‘End of the World’ Scenarios

(First of Two)

Pastor Andrew Schaller, Watertown, South Dakota

“And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease”

(GENESIS 8:21-22, ESV)

It’s the end of the world as we know it.

It’s the end of the world as we know it.

It’s the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine.¹

Last year Harold Camping, a radio broadcaster, numerologist, and self-proclaimed prophet, claimed that the end of the world would take place on May 21, 2011 (coincidentally, Commencement Day at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire). Camping said that Jesus would return to Earth, and the righteous would fly to heaven while the Earth would be subject to five months of fire, brimstone, and plagues.

I think it’s fair to say the man was shown to be a religious false prophet.

On the other hand, why is it that ‘scientists’ can suggest that the Earth will end in some far-fetched cataclysmic event, but they are not touched by the “crackpot” branding iron?

A truly staggering number of end-time events are foretold by ‘scientists’ in our day. The movie-making industry is always interested in portraying the ‘end of life as we know it’—and sets to work spending millions of dollars to make blockbuster movies.

This can lend credence to end-time theories by crackpots. It can also contribute to increased anxiety and fear in society.

“Why?...it’s just a movie, right?!” True, but so many in our society accept as true almost anything which appears in print (unless printed in a Bible) or on the movie screen or internet.

Putting this another way—if a statement begins, “Thus says the LORD...” it is generally dismissed. But if it begins, “Most scientists agree,” people sit on the edge of their seats, holding their breath as they await the revelation.

So let's examine briefly the ways many 'scientists' contend that life on planet Earth will end.

BY AN ASTEROID

Some 'scientists' suggest that an 'earth-killing' asteroid is bound to strike the Earth, and if the object were large enough, it could create an explosion that would burn away the Earth's atmosphere, turning much of the Earth's surface into molten rock.² It would trigger earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanoes. It would return the Earth to the condition it had in its formative stage—according to evolutionists, a molten, fiery world without life.

Other 'scientists' say a smaller asteroid will strike with devastating long-term effects. When it strikes planet Earth, it will cause a dust cloud which will block out the sun's rays and cause all plant life to die. It is confidently affirmed, “The last time this happened, it killed the dinosaurs and most other life-forms!”

BY CLIMATE CHANGE

Anyone who has been in the room when another person uses hairspray knows that the stuff smells bad enough to kill small animals. Well, some 'scientists' suggest that aerosol fluorocarbons have opened a hole in the ozone layer surrounding the Earth. They whisper that we humans have set in motion our own doom...the warming climate is melting the ice caps, and soon the waters will rise and flood the Earth.³

This used to be called 'global warming,' but that is no longer politically correct. Now it's called 'climate change.' Some claim that climate change will cause changes in the magnetic field of the Earth and usher in a new ice age.⁴ Fear not, for environmentalists say that 'mother Earth' will use the ice age to cleanse herself.

BY ECOSYSTEM CHANGES

This popular end-time scenario begins with the words, “...most biologists agree that the earth's ecosystem is much more fragile than formerly imagined.”⁵

There are ‘scientists’ who claim that micro changes in the ecosystem will lead to a tipping point in the planet’s ecosystem. As evidence that this end-time scenario has been set into motion, these ‘biologists’ point to a perceived reduction in the polar bear population and a shortage of bees.

BY A SUPER VOLCANO

When the Grimsvotn Volcano in southeast Iceland erupted in 2011, ash was spewed twelve miles into the stratosphere. This ash grounded airplanes in Iceland and interrupted air service in Europe. It caused President Obama to shorten his trip to Ireland.⁶

It also caused scientists to spew forth new end-time prophecies of a super volcano. The 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens is classified as a VEI 4 or VEI 5 which sent 1.2 cubic kilometers of rock and ash into the atmosphere. It is suggested that a VEI 8 or VEI 9 Super Volcano would send much more ash and rock into the stratosphere, leading to a volcanic winter and the ‘end of life as we know it.’ It seems this has also led to increased talk of an imminent eruption in the Yellowstone basin as well as an eruption of super volcano movies.⁷

Many other ‘scientific’ end-time prophecies exist out there... but enough is enough. In part two, we will move out of the fiction section of this writing to the absolute truth—the non-fiction that is God’s Word.

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1. This is the familiar (?) chorus from the R.E.M. song of the same title, published as part of their 1987 album entitled *Document*.
 2. Cf. blockbuster movie – *Armageddon*; *Deep Impact*; and others.
 3. Cf. blockbuster movie – *The Day After Tomorrow*, and others.
 4. Cf. blockbuster movie – *The Core*, and others... (okay, maybe not a blockbuster!).
 5. The category of “most biologists” would not include Professor Rodebaugh, who is teaching biology at our Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.
 6. This, some say, is the basis behind the Disney Film, *WALL-E*
 7. Cf. blockbuster movie – *2012* (which includes the Super Volcano idea, though not like the 2005 movie *Super Volcano* and others).



The Beauty and Joy of Christian Fellowship

Pastor Em. David Lau • Eau Claire, Wisconsin

(Second of eight)



There was beauty and joy in the beginning. There will be beauty and joy at the end. But what about now? Let me show you from God's own Word that even now, in this world of sin, we who love our Savior and trust in Him do indeed experience the beauty and joy of Christian fellowship.

Of course, it is impossible for such fallen creatures as ourselves to establish or maintain such beautiful and joyful fellowship. But our merciful God wants not only to restore such beauty and joy in the future world of bliss that

He won for us through Christ. He wants those who trust in His promises of future happiness to have even now a foretaste of heaven.

And so, even in this present world of sin the same God who created Adam and Eve in His image is busy creating through Word and Sacrament a multitude of individuals who have God living in them. For this is what the Lord's apostle Paul has revealed to us in his New Testament letters to the Corinthians, the Ephesians, and the Colossians.

To the Colossians Paul promised (chapter 3): *“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”* That is the future bliss

that is promised. But then Paul went on: “*You have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.*” As God created Adam and Eve at the beginning in His image, so He has created at this very time in His own image “*the new man*” in those individuals who are brought to faith in Him through Gospel Word and Sacrament. “Christ is all and in all” as far as these new creations of God are concerned.

About the same time Paul wrote to the Colossians he wrote also to the Ephesians (chapter 4): “*You have not so learned Christ [to live the way you used to live as heathen], if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you 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.*” As Adam and Eve were created in righteousness and holiness at the beginning, so “*the new man*” in the Christian believer is created anew “according to God.”

“*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). “*We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed*

into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Where the image of God is being restored in individuals by the Holy Spirit of God, there exists the possibility of a renewal of the beauty and joy of Paradise—for this new man is not something that comes from the naturally wicked heart of man but is a genuine creation of the holy and merciful God.

We go a step further. What happens when we have a gathering of two or three or many of these persons in whom has been created the new man according to the image of God? We have what Scripture calls “*the body of Christ*,” that is, the Holy Christian Church (Ephesians 1:22-23). The individual believer is not alone in this world. The “one” becomes the great gathering of “we.” “*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.*” Even the God-ordained distinction between Jew and Gentile is done away with. “*He Himself is our peace, who has made both [Jew and Gentile] one, ... so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace*” (Ephesians 2:14-15). Just as the individual Christian is known as a new creation of God because of the “new man” in him, so also the whole body of Christians is called “*one new man*”

because of the “new man” in each of these Christians.

God's creation is marvelous, indeed. *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”* (Ephesians 4:4-5).

The prophet Isaiah was given a picture of this new creation of God in advance. This is what he saw: *“Your people shall all be righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified”* (Isaiah 60:21). *“You shall be called Hephzibah [my delight is in her], and your land Beulah [married], for the LORD delights in you, ... and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you”* (Isaiah 62:4-5).

On the night before He died, Jesus was thinking about this new creation of His, this bride of God, this people of His planting, and He prayed for them. *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, ... that they may be one, just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me”* (John 17:20-23).

Just as there was beauty and joy in God's original Eden, should we

not expect beauty and joy in this new creation of God, this Church of His, this people of His, this work of His hands? After all, just as God's original creation was “very good,” and there was perfect harmony between God and all His creatures, and joyful fellowship between God and man, “*we are His workmanship*” now, and what God creates is always very good.

The apostle John, Jesus' most intimate friend during His years of humiliation on Earth, directed these words to his fellow-believers: *“That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”* (1 John 1:3).

What we are awaiting in Paradise—fellowship with the Father and the Son together with all other believers, as our Lord has promised—already exists to some extent right now in our sinful world for us sinners who by God's grace in Christ are God's saints, reconciled to God through the blood of Christ. We are forgiven, justified, persons who have the Holy Spirit living in us. Thus already now we experience and we enjoy **the beauty and joy of Christian fellowship.**



(to be continued)

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)

8. Of Ordination/Traditions/Conclusion

(Part III - Articles X-XV)

Pastor Wayne Eichstadt • Mankato, Minnesota

At the outset of the *Smalcald Articles* Martin Luther had laid out the “first and chief” article of faith—namely, “Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, ‘was put to death for our trespasses and raised again for our justification’ (Romans 4:25).” [Article I, 1]

As he brings this Confession to a close, Luther makes a few final scriptural applications to the Church and then comes back to that same fundamental article of justification by faith. It is on this all-important truth that Luther—who, we are reminded, had undertaken these articles as a “final will and testament” to the church—makes his final “stand,” thus providing continuity and finality in this confession of faith.

What final truths does Luther set forth?

In these final articles Luther addresses what the true Church is and how God chooses to lead the earthly church through His called servants; at the same time he reiterates what is most needful—

Planned series on the *Smalcald Articles*:

#1 Of The Divine Majesty/Redemption/
Salvation by Grace

#2 Of The Mass

#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

namely, the knowledge of how the sinner’s soul is saved eternally.

The true Church is not identified with a single congregation or denomination. Rather, the Church is made up of all believers—of all sheep who hear the Good Shepherd’s voice and follow Him [Article XII].

This gathering of believers not bounded by time or space is localized when one portion of it joins together to form a congregation for the purpose of worship, mutual encouragement, and edification (see Ephesians 4:16, 5:19, and others). In visible assemblies of believers the Lord directs the calling of individuals

who are to serve publicly with the Means of Grace, the gospel in Word and Sacrament. Luther rightly sets forth the biblical “priesthood of all believers” when he contends that such assemblies of believers can call pastors and other servants regardless of whether or not those individuals are ordained by a bishop or other higher office.

Priests/pastors have the God-given “right” to marry should the Lord provide that gift to them. No divinely called servant is commanded to marry, but neither is marriage forbidden him. “Forbidding to marry” is actually condemned by God, being cited by St. Paul as one of the wicked practices of the last days (see I Timothy 4:1-3).

Luther wanted to once again provide the simplest and purest gospel for the comfort of souls while also encouraging fruits of faith; thus he masterfully provided a concise statement concerning salvation and the role of good works. He and all true Lutherans confess:

“...by faith we get a new and clean heart, and God will and does account us altogether righteous and holy for the sake of Christ.... Although the sin in our flesh has not been completely removed or eradicated, He will not count or consider it. Good works follow such faith, renewal, and forgiveness. Whatever is still sinful or imperfect in these works will not be reckoned as sin...for the

sake of the same Christ....To this we must add that if good works do not follow, our faith is false and not true.” [Article XIII]

What doctrinal errors is Luther specifically addressing?

In these final articles Martin Luther contradicts the false teaching that only bishops can rightfully ordain pastors. He exposes bishops of his day as being much more interested in being earthly authorities than in caring for souls.

Luther refutes such false teachings as these: that priests are forbidden to marry; that any one visible church is “the (true) Church”; that good works can save us from our sins; that monastic vows have any redeeming quality or benefit; and that human traditions are equal to the Word of God.

How does this apply to us today?

We sinners are unable to redeem ourselves or to save ourselves even in the slightest. For this reason Luther’s powerful presentation of Christ’s universal justification—which is brought to us through faith in Him—resonates each and every day. There is not a single moment when this truth does not apply to each of us and provide great blessing.

In a world which becomes so muddled and confused about what the Church really is, what its purpose is, and how it is led, the confessions of Luther in these

Smalcald Articles stand as a beacon of clarity enlightened by God's Word.

- ❖ Is the church to be caught up in legalities and formalities or will it be caught up in proclaiming the gospel?
- ❖ Is the church to be a quasi-political organization or is it an assembly of believers who turn to God's Word for direction on what is right and wrong and how to be faithful citizens of this country in which we sojourn while longing for a far better country?
- ❖ Is the church a group of individuals who can rally around a cause or is it an assembly of souls called out of the darkness of unbelief into a marvelous light and given a commission by Christ Himself?
- ❖ Are leaders of the church hired for good public relations and because they "play well" on TV, or are they divinely called to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God?
- ❖ Are church leaders to be hired after extensive searching, or are they divinely called by God Himself and given as gifts to the church?
- ❖ Will the called leaders dilute the Means of Grace with rituals and traditions that are molded to fit any whim or desire, or will they uphold the use of Word and Sacrament for true spiritual

blessings given by God?

These and many other questions are answered in God's Word which identifies the Church, the Church's Head, and the Church's mission.

In a society that seeks to define marriage according to the depravity of sinful mankind, Luther's words concerning the marriage of priests might, at first glance, seem to allow for such notions. Luther writes, "We desire marriage to be free..." What ought never be forgotten is how Luther continues: "...AS GOD ORDAINED AND INSTITUTED IT." (Article XI, emphasis ours)

What was Luther's Conclusion to these *Smalcald Articles*?

Luther concludes with a staunch declaration of the foundation of Holy Scripture on which he stood, upon which he built this particular Confession, and upon which he placed his certain hope of redemption and life everlasting.

In 1521 at the Council of Worms Luther declared to the Emperor and the Council, "Here I stand. I cannot and will not recant." He spoke in similar fashion when closing this written confession of Scriptural truth and his personal faith:

"These are the articles on which I must stand, and on which I will stand, God willing, until my death. I do not know how I can change or concede anything in them. If

anybody wishes to make some concessions, let him do so at the peril of his own conscience.” [Article XV, 3]

The date was 1537. By God’s grace Luther stood on this platform of Scriptural truth until his death (1546). On his deathbed, when asked whether he stood by all that he had taught and confessed and declared on the basis of Scripture, Luther declared definitively “JA!”

May we all likewise die in the Lord—confident in His grace and expectant of the glory in life eternal. “*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his!*” (Numbers 23:10)



FROM THE EDITOR:

This article concludes this series whose aim was to reacquaint us with the biblically-based, orthodox content of one of our Lutheran Confessions, the *Smalcald Articles*, on the occasion of its 475th anniversary (1537–2012). We heartily thank the writers.

To the undying comfort and eternal salvation of our blood-bought souls, may each of us ever confess: “God’s Word and Luther’s doctrine pure Shall now and evermore endure.”

To God alone the glory!

Continued from page 2

New Beginnings at ILC

tell their stories, the Rodebaughs became acquainted with our synod’s school-system, and ILC became the next step for Joshua—followed by Samuel (now a Junior in Immanuel Seminary’s Pre-Theological course), and then by Nathan.

Not happenstance; God’s connections.

This semester Prof. Rodebaugh is entrusted with high school biology, science, and health courses, add class advisor responsibilities and Athletic Committee activities to round out his new beginnings at ILC.

With all of that on his plate, it seemed fair game for this inquirer to ask, “Are you happy that you left secular employment to come to ILC?” Without a blink, the new professor responded, “Yes! No doubt about it!”

When he steps into the classroom to share with the students all that he has to give, we expect that the Lord will make use of Prof. Rodebaugh’s undergraduate work in Political Science, his graduate degree in Urban Planning, and his decades of business experience as tools for His workshop.

At the installation service in the ILC Fieldhouse on opening day, Pres. Steven Sippert shared with us the Lord’s Word from Lamentations 3:22-24—which turns out to be no lamentation at all but rather an assurance that the Lord will continue to provide new mercies for a new school year.

Pastor Theodore Barthels (Board of Regents) also officially inducted Prof. Sippert into his new privileged responsibilities as President of ILC.

May our good Lord Jesus bless us in all our new beginnings! Amen!



EDITOR'S NOTE:

Two clarifications (October 2012 issue):

Page 2, second paragraph, rather than Romans 3:28, the Scripture passage should be Romans 1:17: "...the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, *The just shall live by faith.*" The gates of paradise opened to Luther when he came to a proper understanding of the term "God's righteousness" in this passage—that is, a righteousness before God which is the believer's through faith alone.

Page 9, 14 lines down, for clarity the sentence should read as follows: "Therefore, if Satan were to have any success, he would either have to discredit the Means of Grace or find a way to withhold God's Word from mankind."

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— Benno Sydow, Business Manager

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

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