

# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

*"...The Scripture Cannot Be Broken." (John 10:35)*





**Martin Luther Bible School** **It doesn't look like much, does it?** Yet this is the seminary where young men are trained for the pastoral ministry in the CLC-affiliated Berea Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Andhra Pradesh State, India. Students at the Bible school are supported by individual sponsors from the Church of the Lutheran Confession in the U.S. The picture on the left was taken halfway through a recent renovation project. For the "after" picture, turn to **page 12**. For more information on sponsoring a seminary student or an orphaned child overseas, **see page 9**.

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# The Christian Pentecost

*“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4).*

**A**n expression I remember from my childhood is *Emma go ‘het*. It didn’t make much sense, but I knew what it meant. *Forward with zeal and determination!* I suppose the words were a rendering of a German-English phrase *Immer go ahead!* Always forward!

The Jewish festival of Pentecost was named *Shavuot* in Hebrew—meaning *weeks*. It fell seven weeks, or a “week of weeks,” after the Passover Sabbath. The festival, by count, was on the 50th day after the Passover Sabbath (Leviticus 23:15-16). The Feast of Weeks marked the

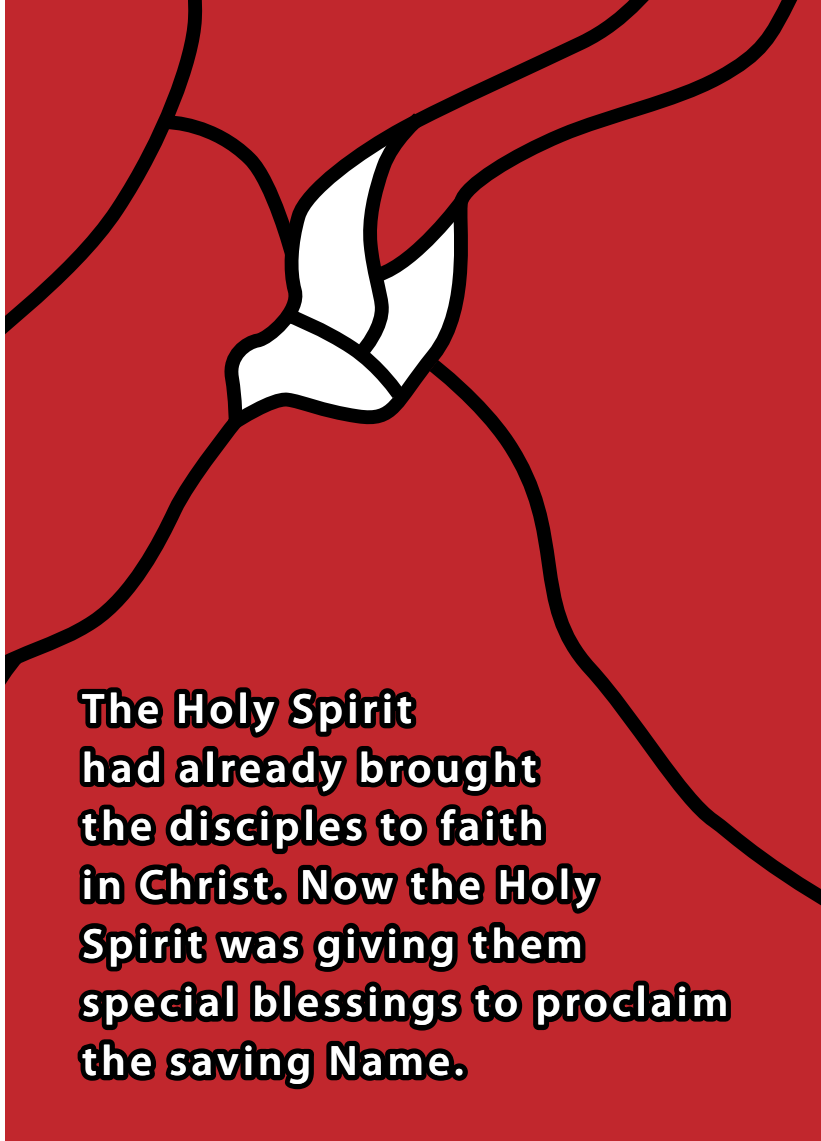
end of the grain harvest and was the time to offer the first fruits (Leviticus 23:20). The name *Shavuot* later became *Pentecost*—Greek for *fiftieth*.

On the first Christian Pentecost, the one after Jesus' death and resurrection, the promise Jesus had given to His disciples was fulfilled. He had said, before ascending, "*Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high* (Luke 24:49), and "*You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*" (Acts 1:5). The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, was poured out upon the disciples on Pentecost (Acts 2). The Holy Spirit had already brought the disciples to faith in Christ. Now the Holy Spirit was giving them special blessings to proclaim the saving Name of Jesus—courage, zeal, wisdom, understanding of the Scriptures, ability to speak other languages, power to work miracles—all to further their witness that the crucified and risen Jesus was the Savior from sin.

Luke wrote in his Gospel that the Holy Spirit was specifically involved in Jesus' work as Redeemer. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the virgin Mary was with child; at Jesus' baptism at age thirty, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove; Jesus, filled by the Holy Spirit, was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil; Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (Luke 1-4). When the seventy returned from their mission to proclaim Christ, Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit (Luke 10). Jesus was opposed by Satan, demons, and hate-filled men continually. The Holy Spirit gave Jesus the needed strength and counsel to carry on.

Likewise, after Jesus' ascension into heaven, the disciples would need counsel and strength from the Holy Spirit to preach Christ, the Savior from sin! Satan, demons, and hate-filled men would oppose them. Luke specifically relates in Acts how the Holy Spirit continued to work *after* Pentecost: Peter and John spoke boldly to the Jewish leaders after being jailed, Peter confronted the lies of Ananias and Sapphira, Peter boldly spoke to the angry Sanhedrin in behalf of all the apostles, Stephen presented a staunch witness to his enemies prior to being stoned, Saul the persecutor was filled with the Holy Spirit upon his conversion (Acts 3 - 11), and so on! God the Holy Spirit kept the preaching of the Gospel from being squelched.

Does the Christian church today—including our synod, congregations, members, and you and I—need the Holy Spirit? Satan and his forces oppose us! Why



**The Holy Spirit had already brought the disciples to faith in Christ. Now the Holy Spirit was giving them special blessings to proclaim the saving Name.**

is it difficult to talk to others about Jesus? Lack of confidence? Lack of courage? Lack of knowledge? Why is it difficult to talk to a congregation member about being more devoted to the Savior? Lack of zeal? Lack of conviction? Why is it difficult to talk to a family member enmeshed in a grievous sin? Fear of being despised? Fear of fracturing the family? We and the church today need the blessings of the Holy Spirit! We need His individual assurance that, sinners though we are, we are forgiven through Jesus' blood and righteousness, we are graciously pardoned for Jesus' sake. We need His blessings so that we may proclaim Christ — against all forces! Pray for His help.

With the Holy Spirit at our side, it will be *Emma go 'het!*



**Richard Kanzenbach** is pastor of Morning Star Lutheran Church in Fairchild, Wisconsin, and Peace with God Ev. Lutheran Church in Onalaska, Wisconsin.



# Re-Gifting the Holy Spirit's Gifts

I'm pretty sure re-gifting is not a recent idea. Although it seems to be gaining popularity, there are those who consider it a tacky practice. The idea is that if you get three toaster ovens for your wedding, for example, you could give two of them away as gifts to someone else. It is important to take stock of the things we own. "If it's not being used, it's wasted" is my wife's motto. I seem to have a hard time living up to this expectation and often find unused and underappreciated items in my possession.

Gifts, of course, come to us in many different forms. Our Heavenly Father is truly the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17), but God gives us much more than the earthly blessings of house, job, and family. He also gives us spiritual blessings, including faith to know and trust our Savior, and the ability to understand and believe His Word. But intermixed with these more obvious presents are some often unused or underappreciated gifts as well. Throughout the Scriptures we read of the Holy Spirit coming to His people to bestow upon them a variety of skills and abilities as gifts.

In the Old Testament, we read of the Spirit of God coming to specific individuals with a variety of gifts. Many men and women were blessed with the gift of prophecy. David had not only the gift of prophesy, but also the added gifts of music and poetry. What a blessing his Spirit-inspired lyrics, recorded in the Psalms, have been to the Church throughout the ages! I'm sure his music could lift the spirits of the believers of his day just as it calmed the heart and mind of Saul.

In the book of Exodus we read of a man, Bezalel, who was given a special gift. The Lord tells us He had filled this man, ". . . with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of

God gives us much more than the earthly blessings of house, job, and family. He also gives us spiritual blessings.

*workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship"* (Exodus 31:3-5).

When the Spirit came to Gideon, he was given courage and wisdom to use in battle. The Spirit of God was the true source of Samson's incredible strength. Whether he used his strength wisely to defeat God's enemies, or foolishly to "show off," it still remained the Spirit's gift (read Judges, chapters 13-16).

In their New Testament letters, we can see that the apostles Peter and Paul were of the opinion that all believers in Christ would receive gifts from the Spirit. Even though these gifts may be diverse in nature, Paul reminds us that they have unity in one Giver and one purpose. Paul emphasizes this diverse unity in 1 Corinthians 12:1 and following, but drives home the purpose of the gifts with verse 7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all." Peter echoes this sentiment in 1 Peter 4:10, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Unlike many gifts, ours from the Holy Spirit are given for a purpose: our God would have us use them, not for self-glorification, but rather for the benefit of our fellow believers and the furtherance of His Church. No matter the gift—helping, teaching, preaching, encouraging, praying, enhancing worship or the worship facility—we need to take stock of our lives to identify any unused or underappreciated gifts that we might possess.

In other words, let us find the gifts the Spirit has bestowed upon us, sharpen them into the best possible tools, and then re-gift them—to glorify the God Who gave them, and to benefit our fellow man.



**David W. Bernthal** is the principal of Luther Memorial School in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

# A Mother's Comfort

It must have been in one of the special Sunday cartoon strips that I saw it—because otherwise Bil Keane's Family Circus cartoons were always in circles. I remember three frames. The first showed Billy (Jeffy?) in tears, running to find his mother. The second frame shows the same boy encountering his dad—tears were gone—"Oh! Hi, Dad." The third frame, with Dad gone, shows the same son back in tears continuing in his search to find Mom.

It's true, isn't it? There is no one else like Mom! No one else's kiss can dispel those tears more quickly; no one else's smile and hug can take away a problem's sting better; no one else can put on that Band-Aid like she can; no one else can give comfort like Mom can.

What beautiful imagery for the Lord to use through the prophet Isaiah in 66:13: *"As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you."*

There was no one who needed such motherly comfort more at that time than did God's own people! For after the Babylonians came to Jerusalem those three times, there was not much left of the once-glorious capital city of Jerusalem, nor of the people who once inhabited her. They were taken off into a foreign land, to spend seventy years in captivity as a result of their constantly turning their backs on God to worship heathen idols.

And once those who were taken into captivity realized that this was not just a fluke, not just a brief, temporary stay away from home, their pride and arrogance would turn overnight into grief and despair.

It was then, God knew, that His people would need His comfort more than anything else. This is why He caused Isaiah's words to be recorded long before the captivity even took place. It is also why the second half of the prophet/priest Ezekiel's book was written.

God's people needed comfort!  
And there was none better to give the comfort they needed than God Himself. No one can comfort the brokenhearted as God can!

How often we have found comfort in reading the pages of Scripture! We find comfort in the Good Shepherd watching over His sheep (Psalm 23, John 10), comfort in being given peace which the world cannot give (John 14:27), comfort in being told that it is *"... by grace you have been saved through faith"* (Ephesians 2:8).

Mom is wonderful, yes—but human. Her love for her children runs deep—but she cannot always be there.

God can—and is! The comfort that He gives to His own flows from His forgiving heart. *"Comfort My people . . . her iniquity is pardoned"* (Isaiah 40:1-2). The comfort that God gives isn't limited to the application of Band-Aids to bruises and hurt feelings; it goes to the heart and heals. His comfort takes the sins that are there and casts them *"... into the depths of the sea"* (Micah 7:19).

And since we know the depths of God's love, the eternal lengths of His grace, the omnipresence of His aid, we can go to Him with everything. We can cast ALL our cares upon Him, for He cares for us! (see 1 Peter 5:7).

This Mother's Day, we give thanks for our Christian mothers and the multitude of ways we have been blessed by them. Let us also thank God for honoring the comfort our mothers give us by using it as a picture of His own comfort for us in Christ!



**Paul Krause** is pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Markesan, Wisconsin.





# The Penetrating Word



*“Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:11-13).*

**W**e may face difficult and trying problems this side of heaven. We may have to bid a temporary goodbye to loved ones who—trusting in Christ—pass through death into life. We may have anxious hearts when family problems arise and hard feelings divide. During such times we long for better days. The Spirit of God comforts us in the Letter to the Hebrews by revealing that there remains a rest for the people of God. We struggle now. One day we will “tread the verge of Jordan” (TLH 54) and enter the Promised Land of heaven. We will then rest from our labors and enjoy peace in the presence of the Lord Christ.

While we await our upward call, we are urged as children of God to “. . . be diligent to enter that rest,” to do what we can to keep strong our link (faith) to Christ our Savior. We do this by regularly hearing the Word of God proclaimed in truth, by studying and meditating upon its precepts, and by making use of the Sacrament of the Altar to strengthen our faith in Christ’s sacrifice—which has secured our redemption. We are also to make every effort to avoid temptation and sin, lest we fall from faith and find ourselves disqualified.

Fear not! Our gracious God has given us in His Word a tool that penetrates the innermost part of a human being to lay bare guilt and to change the heart. The Word of God is no dry and dusty book, unable to speak to today’s world and today’s sinner. It is not like the breath of a man which is sent into the air and dissipates and may or may not produce results.

God’s Word is living and active, filled with the life-giving power of God. It is always effective (see Isaiah 55:10-11) in accomplishing what God desires.

God’s Word is here compared to the short sword of a Roman soldier. Even as the sword of the soldier was effective to pierce and divide, so God’s Word is able to penetrate the innermost part of a human being either to

lay bare his guilt or to change his heart.

God’s Word is able to divide what seems impossible to divide, even soul and spirit. In the English language, the words *soul* and *spirit* are largely synonymous. In Greek, however, both words have a range of meanings that can vary widely depending on context. This section of Hebrews is clearly emphasizing the *penetrating* and *discerning* power of God’s Word. Even the sharpest of swords could hardly cleave a joint with a single stroke, or pierce cleanly through a bone to its marrow; yet God’s Word is a power that swiftly and easily penetrates to the very core of a person.

God’s Word is even able to judge the thoughts and considerations of the heart. It passes infallible, unimpeachable, and impartial judgments on the very thoughts and motives of human beings. While some people attempt to escape the judgments of the Word of God (as Herod with John the Baptist, and Felix with the Apostle Paul), and others declare that the Bible is merely a book of fables, they cannot escape its judgment (see John 12:48). Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Word of God will not (see Matthew 24:35)!

God’s Word uncovers all things. It reminds us that all things are known to Him to Whom we must give an account.

This truth might well frighten us, except the Word of God also uncovers to us God’s loving heart and kindly disposition toward us in Christ. The Law of God, like a brutal weapon, does indeed lay bare the heart and uncover sin. But the Gospel of Christ binds up wounds and is a healing salve that comforts and delivers wounded sinners.



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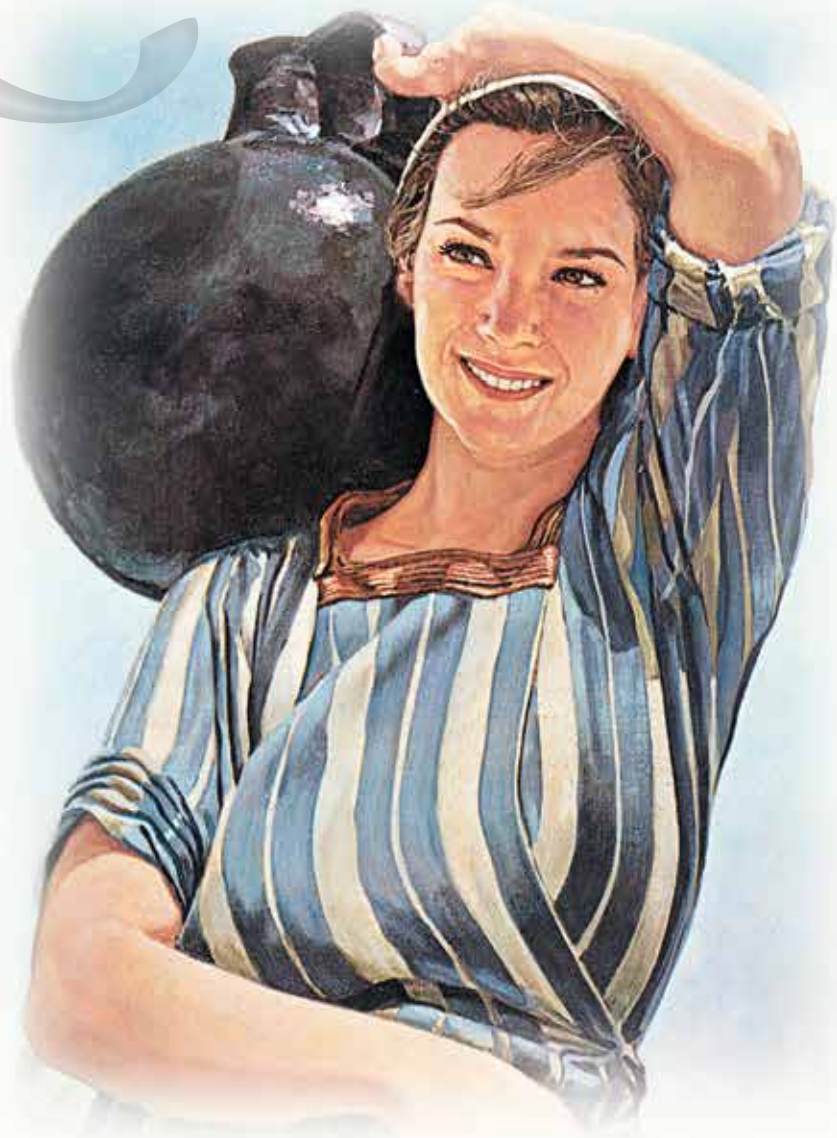
# Ruth

## A GEM OF A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

One of the popular topics for jokes is mothers-in-law. Generally, the nature of these amusements is not very complimentary, as they poke fun at perceived weaknesses, shortcomings, and failings. Lighthearted quips can be good for the spirits, but not when they are demeaning to others. The Lord wants us to show respect for one another, and especially for those who represent Him (see the Fourth Commandment). His good and righteous will for us is to build up one another, rather than tear down others with unkind words.

When we survey the Old Testament account of Ruth, we see that it was not Ruth's way to make fun of her mother-in-law Naomi. Even when Naomi's life turned rather sour, so that she preferred to be called *Mara*—which means *bitter*—rather than by her given name—which means *pleasant*—Ruth did not speak disparagingly of her mother-in-law. Instead, she showed the utmost respect and loving concern for Naomi.

While living in the foreign land of Moab during a time of drought back in Israel, Naomi was having a difficult



time dealing with the deaths of her husband and two sons. When making plans to return home, she was faced with the prospect of having no means of support in her old age. With all this hanging over her head, was she



hard to live with for her two widowed daughters-in-law? Perhaps.

Ruth, not thinking of herself and her personal future advantages, was not about to let her mother-in-law return home all alone. In the spirit of selfless love, she made this well-known plea and declaration to Naomi: *“Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me”* (Ruth 1:16-17). What an extraordinary commitment for a young non-Hebrew woman!

Life was not easy for Ruth; it was difficult to put food on the table for herself and Naomi. She spent long hours of sweaty, back-breaking work in grain fields, gleaning barley and wheat. When she received a neighborly invitation to a meal during the work day, she saved part of her portion for her mother-in-law (Ruth 2:14-18). After toiling all day in the hot sun, Ruth came home with about a half-bushel of grain. This would make close to 20 loaves of bread to help sustain the two women.

Not only did Ruth work hard and long in order to support her mother-in-law, she was also willing to marry a much older man for the sake of preserving the family name and the heritage of Elimelech (Naomi’s late husband) and Naomi.

In all of this, we see the gracious hand of God at work. It was the Lord who brought Ruth into a Christian family where she learned to know and believe in her Savior-God. It was the Lord who worked the spirit of Christian love in the heart of Ruth so that she gave of herself for the sake of her mother-in-law. And it was also the Lord who, according to His providential will and gracious planning, included the Moabitess Ruth in the family tree of the Savior of the world; for she was the great-grandmother of David.

Ruth was richly blessed by the Lord, according to His abundant grace and mercy, for being a woman who would have no part in making fun of her mother-in-law, but who rather went the extra mile for the benefit of her mother-in-law.



**Mark Gullerud** is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bowdle, South Dakota, and Zion Lutheran Church in Ipswich, South Dakota.



# Project KINSHIP

Through the CLC’s Project KINSHIP, stateside sponsors provide support for orphans and seminary students in India, Nepal, Myanmar and Africa.

For \$20-\$50 per month, you can provide basic needs for a child or a seminary student. Interested?

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# Why Can't CLC Members Join the Lodge?

**T**he constitutions of congregations within the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) include a statement declaring that in order to hold communicant membership, an individual must be "... free from all unchristian associations and lodges."

When reference is made to "the Lodge," it is most frequently referring to the Masonic Lodge—Freemasonry. Freemasonry and Christianity are completely opposed to one another. For that reason, it is impossible for a Christian to faithfully serve the Lord and at the same time engage in the false worship and beliefs of the Masons.

**Jesus said,** "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other" (Matthew 6:24).

Masonry does not uphold the Bible as God's inspired Word. "Masonry has nothing to do with the Bible; it is not founded on the Bible. If it was, it would not be Masonry, it would be something else."<sup>1</sup> The Bible, the book of Mormon, the Koran, and any other so-called "Book of the Law" are all viewed as being on the same level, and are considered equal by Masons.

**Jesus prayed,** "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth" (John 17:17).

Masonry confesses only one God, but it is not the God of Scripture. "It is anti-Masonic to require any religious test other than to believe in a God, the Creator and Governor of the Universe."<sup>2</sup> The Masonic god is distinctly Christ-less. Their god is, therefore, a false god.

**God says,** "...all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him" (John 5:23).

**Jesus says,** "I am the resurrection and the life . . . whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25-26).

Masonry teaches a salvation by works and promises a life after death in the "Grand Lodge Above."

**God says,** "By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Fundamentally, Masonry with its nameless, Christ-less god and its work righteousness is opposed to the one true God and His Gospel. It regards the Bible as only partly true and Jesus Christ as just one teacher among many with good things to say. In addition to this, the various rites, rituals, and secret activities of the Masons are equally an affront to the Lord and to His Word.

There are other lodges that, though similar to the Masonic Lodge in some ways, may differ substantially from it in other ways. In addition to the lodges, there are other associations and organizations that a Christian might consider joining. Any time a child of God is considering becoming part of an organization, it is needful first to engage in careful and prayerful consideration of what joining the organization will mean to one's Christian confession.

A number of years ago, the General Pastoral Conference of the CLC studied how to approach involvement with organizations of the world. Part of the resultant work was a series of questions to ask before becoming involved with an organization:

What does membership in this organization mean (I Thessalonians 5:21-22)? Would my membership in this organization hinder the proclamation of the Gospel of my Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:27)? Would it serve to glorify my God (I Corinthians 10:31)? Would it be walking in darkness or walking in light (compare I John 1:5-7)? Would it obscure my Christian witness (II Corinthians 14:8-9)? Would it be an offense to a weak Christian brother (I Corinthians 10:32-33)?

There is an ongoing need to apply biblical principles and direction to organizations of this world and our association with them. May God enable each of us to sound clear trumpets and be a light-giving witness of Christ to those around us.

If you have further questions on this topic, or to discuss these matters more fully, please talk to your pastor.



He's called as your spiritual shepherd and will be happy to study and apply Scripture with you in these matters.

**Wayne Eichstadt** is associate pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota.

<sup>1</sup> Chase's Digest of Masonic Law, 1863, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> Chase, p. 206.



# Valentin Loescher

“Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock” (Matthew 7:24b-25).

Jesus says that a person who hears and lives His teachings is like a house made strong by the foundation upon which

it stands. Valentin Ernst Loescher (1673-1749), the last great Lutheran theologian of the 1700s, was one who built on the Rock of Christ. He was also a calm and compassionate voice in the storm, calling out to others so that they might join him on the one sure foundation.

Loescher was born into a Christian home about 150 years after Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses. His father first served as a Lutheran pastor, and then as professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg.

Upon completing his education, Valentin followed in his father’s footsteps. After serving as superintendent in Juterbog and Delitzsch, Germany (nine years), Valentin was appointed professor of theology at Wittenberg (two years). Finally, he served as pastor of the *Kreuzkirche* (“Church of the Cross”) and superintendent in Dresden. He resided in that city for the rest of his life.

Loescher’s lifetime falls squarely into the period which historians call *The Enlightenment*. During this period, European thinking changed considerably. This period was so significant that one could say that Western civilization as we know it was born from The Enlightenment. Essentially, The Enlightenment sought to solve all human problems by elevating reason as ruler over all.

Throughout his life, Loescher rigorously defended the pure teachings of the Lutheran church as Enlightenment ideas bled into religious thinking. Notably, he established the first theological magazine to broadcast the truth. But most of all, Valentin Loescher is remembered for his stand against Pietism.

Pietism looked at the church of its day and saw a cold, rational religion: “We’ve got all our facts straight, but we



Valentin Ernst Loescher  
(1673-1749),

As we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we take a brief look at the lives of some of the most influential and important Lutheran theologians.

**... what Lutheranism needs today?  
Steadfast voices that stand on  
the foundation of Christ and  
broadcast the truth!**

don’t really live out what we claim to believe.” In response, Pietism taught the opposite extreme: “We really want to live Christian lives, but as for a list of teachings the Bible lays out, we’re not so concerned about that.” Pietists emphasized an “inner light” that would guide them, dismissing the light of divine revelation that God had already given them in Scripture. As a result, they deviated from the solid biblical teachings that had been rediscovered in the Reformation.

Loescher wrote against Pietism in *Der Timotheus Verinus*, which was translated into English and published in 1998. One reviewer states, “Loescher’s remarkably insightful analysis of Pietism captures the key elements of the movement. . . . Beyond a mere description, . . . Loescher reaches into the depths of Pietist thought and shows the essential manner in which it compromises biblical Christianity.” (Concordia Theological Quarterly, 1998).

Loescher was not an angry theologian throwing rocks at everyone who didn’t agree with his position. He listened to Pietist arguments, accepted some of their suggestions, and arranged to meet with his opponents for meaningful dialog. He conducted himself with moderation, hoping to win his opponents over to the truth.

Isn’t this what Lutheranism needs today? Steadfast voices that stand on the foundation of Christ and broadcast the truth? We are not a church that is so concentrated on true teaching that we lose doing. Nor are we a church that is so much about doing that we lose true teaching.

Loescher inscribed a motto in his book for the Pietists.



It reads: “*Pietas et Veritas*.” The phrase means “Piety AND truth.”

**Caleb Schaller** is associate pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.



IN THIS SERIES, THOSE INVOLVED WITH CLC FOREIGN MISSIONS PROFILE ONE AREA OF OUR OVERSEAS ENDEAVORS.

*(Note: because of the risk of persecution, the full names of individuals, as well as place names, have been left out of the following article.)*

# THE BELC: Building on the Foundation of Christ

## Martin Luther Bible School

Martin Luther Bible School is the training center for the Berea Evangelical Lutheran Church (or BELC) in India. Until recently, their building was a rented facility. About the time school officials were notified that the building was going to be sold, funding was made available through a special gift to the Mission Development Fund (MDF). This enabled the BELC to purchase the building, and improvements have been completed in record time.





This year the graduating class is made up of twenty-two students, whose two-year course of study has been supported by Project Kinship sponsors here in the U.S. Students range in age from nineteen to fifty-eight. Several of the men have already served as pastors, or helped other pastors. Eleven were already members of the BELC. The other eleven came to Martin Luther Bible School from other church bodies, though at graduation it is expected they will declare their doctrinal agreement with and membership in the BELC.

#### **BELC President D. Paul**

The president of the BELC is Pastor D. Paul. He also serves as principal, and one of the five teachers, at Martin Luther Bible School. In addition, he serves as a chairman for two of the twenty-four districts in the BELC, and is pastor of a church in a nearby village. Despite all his titles and responsibilities, D. Paul simply likes to be called “Pastor.”



Pastor D. Paul began serving as the president of the BELC in 2002, after problems with a previous leader led to a ruptured relationship with the first BELC, which was the *Bharath* Evangelical Lutheran Church. The formation of the new *Berea* Evangelical Lutheran Church came when pastors noted the error of the former leader, and sought to remain in fellowship with the CLC.

When Pastor D. Paul was appointed as the new president, his responsibilities included overseeing thirty-five other pastors. His first term was three years, after which he was re-selected. He will continue as long as he is able, and is faithful to God’s Word. Now he oversees six other district chairmen, and with their help more than seven hundred pastors who serve BELC churches, or are studying to do so through colloquy.

Pastor D. Paul was born into a non-Christian family in 1964. At a young age he was sent to a Christian boarding

school operated by the Church of Christ in Chennai. It was there, through the Word and work of the Holy Spirit, that he first learned about Jesus, his Savior.

His education after high school provided earning potential far beyond that of his parents, who were rice paddy workers. He has a degree in chemistry, and worked in a private firm as a typist. He also studied three years at South Asia Bible College, then three more years at the first Martin Luther Bible School, of the Bharath Evangelical Lutheran Church.

He was ordained by Missionary David Koenig and CLCI Pastor Jyothi Benjamin in 2003, and has served as pastor for three different congregations in the BELC. He is especially fond of God’s assurance found in the third chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans; *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 3:23-24).

Pastor D. Paul has never been to the U.S., nor does he seem eager to go. He and his wife, Elishapath, have seven children, nine to twenty-four years of age. This past year they also became grandparents. With all of his responsibilities at home, in the church he serves, as a district chairman, at MLBS, and with the BELC, his schedule is already quite full. Even most of the financial operation of the BELC falls under his leadership. Among his many blessings he is especially thankful to the Lord for the prayer and support of his fellow-Christians in the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

*“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ”*  
(I Corinthians 3:11).



**Edward Starkey** has served as a foreign missionary in India. He is currently the pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Corpus Christi, Texas.



## June 2015

TLH = The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941; WS = Worship Supplement 2000; SC = Martin Luther’s Small Catechism;

[ ] = Minor Festivals or commemorations in the Christian Church Year

Date	Reading	Verse
<b>Jun 1</b>	<b>Isaiah 6:1-8</b>	<b>WS 771</b>
	Father, Son, and Spirit say, “Who will go for us?” – so all three persons take part in sending out Isaiah.	
<b>Jun 2</b>	<b>1 Peter 1:1-9</b>	<b>PS 28</b>
	Our joy in all circumstances is that we are receiving the goal of our faith, the salvation of our souls.	
<b>Jun 3</b>	<b>Matthew 3:13-17</b>	<b>TLH 242</b>
	By His presence, the Spirit confirms what the Father says: Jesus is the Son of God.	
<b>Jun 4</b>	<b>Acts 2:22-36</b>	<b>TLH 244</b>
	David’s tomb is not empty, but Jesus’ tomb is, for He has risen from death and is at His Father’s right hand.	
<b>Jun 5</b>	<b>Numbers 6:22-27</b>	<b>SC Apostles’ Creed I</b>
	This blessing describes activities characteristic of each person in the Trinity. Find the work of Father, Son, and Spirit.	
<b>Jun 6</b>	<b>Matthew 28:16-20</b>	<b>PS 89</b>
	If the disciples had doubts about doing mission work, Jesus assured them that He would be with them at every turn.	
<b>Jun 8</b>	<b>Mark 3:20-35</b>	<b>PS 101</b>
	We are warned not to stand against Jesus. The good news is that Jesus isn’t Satan’s ambassador, but heaven’s.	
<b>Jun 9</b>	<b>Proverbs 11:23-31</b>	<b>SC Commandment VII</b>
	Do not cling to earthly wealth—and remember how Jesus became poor to make you rich through the forgiveness of sins.	
<b>Jun 10</b>	<b>2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1</b>	<b>PS 34</b>
	Time takes its toll on our bodies, but inwardly we are renewed and refreshed by the eternal promises of Jesus.	
<b>Jun 11</b>	<b>Acts 11:19-30</b>	<b>TLH 464</b>
	[Festival of St. Barnabas] Barnabas lived up to his name (Ac 4:36) by encouraging the Christians at Antioch. What a blessing for God’s people!	
<b>Jun 12</b>	<b>Matthew 19:16-26</b>	<b>PS 126</b>
	“What must I do?” The question is still asked. The answer is still, “Jesus has done it.”	
<b>Jun 13</b>	<b>Judges 2:1-12</b>	<b>PS 77</b>
	How quickly we can forget God’s goodness to us! What relief that we can return to Him for forgiveness!	

Date	Reading	Verse
<b>Jun 15</b>	<b>John 8:1-11</b>	<b>PS 11</b>
	Jesus’ forgiveness is not an excuse to go on sinning, but rather a reason to leave our lives of sin.	
<b>Jun 16</b>	<b>Ezekiel 17:22-24</b>	<b>PS 113</b>
	Jesus is the “splendid cedar” who rises up and lifts us weak and dry trees to glory.	
<b>Jun 17</b>	<b>2 Corinthians 5:11-17</b>	<b>SC Commandment VIII</b>
	Christ died for all so that all can live for Him.	
<b>Jun 18</b>	<b>Mark 4:26-34</b>	<b>TLH 297</b>
	The Gospel brings about growth.	
<b>Jun 19</b>	<b>Matthew 11:16-24</b>	<b>TLH 430:6-8</b>
	The unbelieving world has everything backward, proclaiming evil good and good evil.	
<b>Jun 20</b>	<b>1 Timothy 1:8-17</b>	<b>WS 743</b>
	Who is the “worst” of sinners? Each one of us! Therefore let us praise Christ’s mercy and patience toward us.	
<b>Jun 22</b>	<b>Job 38:1-11</b>	<b>TLH 17</b>
	When we question God, He questions us back: “What do you know?” It also comforts us that He has the world in His hand.	
<b>Jun 23</b>	<b>Mark 4:35-41</b>	<b>TLH 428</b>
	If Jesus isn’t worried, do we need to be?	
<b>Jun 24</b>	<b>Luke 1:57-80</b>	<b>TLH 272</b>
	[Birth of John the Baptist] John the Baptist would do much good, but the main event would be Jesus and the salvation He would bring.	
<b>Jun 25</b>	<b>Matthew 16:13-18</b>	<b>TLH 394</b>
	[Augsburg Confession Presented] When we confess our faith, it is because God has worked in our hearts. All the credit goes to Him.	
<b>Jun 26</b>	<b>2 Corinthians 6:1-13</b>	<b>WS 775</b>
	Your pastors and teachers aren’t speaking for themselves, but for the Lord, so don’t let their words fall on deaf ears.	
<b>Jun 27</b>	<b>2 Chronicles 33:9-16</b>	<b>PS 130</b>
	As He humbled Manasseh, sometimes God must humble us so that we repent and trust in Him.	
<b>Jun 29</b>	<b>1 Peter 1:17-25</b>	<b>PS 50:7-23</b>
	[St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles] The blood of Jesus was the redemption price for your sin. It was a price that only He could pay—and He did.	
<b>Jun 30</b>	<b>Mark 10:13-16</b>	<b>TLH 648</b>
	It’s good to grow up, but we dare never outgrow our faith in Christ. Jesus, keep our faith childlike!	



# The Art of Inviting

**Invite:** verb, transitive: to request the presence or participation of another person

## FACT:

According to Barna Research, 73% of people who do not attend church *have never been invited*.

## LEVEL 1—Movies, dinner, lunch, weddings, birthday parties, and so forth.

We invite people all the time. It's part of living with others. We invite people to share a meal with us or come for a visit. We invite them to see a new movie or to go out to eat. We invite them for a variety of events. Most people don't find this kind of inviting difficult at all.

### Questions:

*To whom do we frequently extend invitations?*

*What invitations are easy to extend?*

## LEVEL 2—Church

Inviting people to church or to a church activity can be more challenging for us. Why is that? Do I doubt that church will be a blessing in someone else's life, as it is in mine? Perhaps I fear rejection, or being seen as a religious zealot. But remember—we *are* zealous for the Gospel. If anything in life is worth being zealous about, this is! Tremendous blessings are dispensed here in God's house. Here the Holy Spirit is working through the means of grace—the Gospel in Word and sacraments. We already have those blessings, so why wouldn't we want to invite others to share them? Not everyone is ready to attend a worship service every Sunday, but why not start by inviting a friend to a special service—like Palm Sunday, or Easter, or Christmas Eve? What about extending an invitation to a church potluck dinner? Everyone likes good food. Inviting someone to church doesn't have to be hard.

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These brief topics were written to help Christians think about the ways in which they share the Gospel with others. Cut this page out if you like and post it on your refrigerator. Decide for yourself whether this is a helpful addition to your "outreach repertoire."

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Do I doubt that church will be a blessing in someone else's life, as it is in mine? Perhaps I fear rejection, or being seen as a religious zealot. But remember— we *are* zealous for the Gospel.

It does involve some risk, but the potential blessing for the invitee is huge!

### Questions:

*Whom in your life would you like to invite to a church activity?*

*Which activities would that person particularly enjoy?*

## LEVEL 3 — Faith in Jesus Christ

Our world is full of people who are hungry for meaning in their lives. Many long for someone to help them make sense of life. Luther defined Christian evangelism this way: "We are hungry beggars showing other beggars where to find food." How can we not share our faith and hope in Jesus Christ? So many people desperately need this Good News in their lives! Even if they don't end up coming to our church, we need to present the Gospel and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work through the Word. Nothing is more important than this! Let us pray for God to empower us to be clear witnesses to the Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. May God open our hearts, eyes and mouths to opportunities to bear witness to our Savior. Let us pray for courage to invite, invite, invite!

### Questions:

*Which people come to mind as opportunities for you to witness the Gospel?*

*How might you share the Word of God with them?*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### 2015 Minnesota Delegate Conference

Salem Lutheran Church, Eagle Lake, Minnesota  
June 7th, 2015, 3:00 p.m.

#### Agenda:

- CLC/WELS Discussions - Pastor Nolting
  - Boards Panel - Pastor Fleischer, Tom Lentz, Pastor Barthels, Rick Nelson, Pastor Eichstadt
  - Using scripture in everyday conversation - Chad Hestekin, Eli Wales, James Bomber
  - MN evangelism, what we might do as a conference - Yusef “Joe” Haddad
- Submitted by Phil Matzke, Conference Secretary

### 2015 West Central Delegate Conference

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lakewood, Colorado  
May 27-28, 2015

#### Agenda:

- Emphasizing the Vital and Proper View of the Sacraments as Something God does for Us Rather than Something We Do for God - Teacher Sherman Carstensen
  - Book Review - “Broken: 7 ‘Christian’ Rules that Every Christian Ought to Break as Often as Possible” by Pastor Jonathan Fisk - Lay Delegate of Prince of Peace, Loveland
  - A Study of the Blessings of Confession (Why has its use fallen to the side and how can we encourage its use?) - Lay Delegate of St. Paul, Lakewood
  - A Study of Spiritual Gifts (those given to the disciples of Jesus’ day versus spiritual gifts given to his disciples today) - Pastor Frank Gantt
  - Election: Doctrine of Comfort - Pastor Luke Bernthal
  - A Proper Understanding of 1 John 1:9 - Pastor Mark Gullerud
  - Devotional Study of a Psalm or Prophet - Pastor James Naumann
  - Scripture Passages Which We Can Use to Warn Against Misuse and Dangers of Social Media & How to Witness Effectively Using the Social Media. - Lay Delegate of Redeemer, Cheyenne
- Chaplain: Pastor Michael Roehl  
Communion Service Speaker: Pastor Aaron Ude
- Submitted by Pastor Mark Gullerud, Conference Chairman

## SEEN IN PASSING

Items of interest from various sources of religious news and opinion, in print and on the web.

### Pro-Abortion Author Inadvertently Tells the Truth.

In her recent book, *PRO: Reclaiming Abortion Rights*, author Katha Pollitt . . . gave an interview to an online news site and had this to say about the Silent No More Awareness Campaign: ‘I go every year to the Right to Life March in Washington, around the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, and there are always these women, and I write about this in my book, and they stand up there and they read from these laminated cards the story of their abortion. And the story of their abortion always is, “Someone pushed me into this. And it ruined my life. And now I’ve found Christ.” That’s always the story . . .’ We couldn’t agree more. Finding forgiveness in Christ is the first step toward healing everyone who is impacted by the shockwaves of abortion. It’s always the story.’ Morana, Janet and Forney, Georgette. “Healing the Shockwaves of Abortion” *LifeDate*, Spring 2014:8-9. Print.

### Why I Make My Kids to Go to Church.

“More and more, studies are showing that young families are disappearing from American churches at large, and that children and teens aren’t participating in religious life. Most perplexing of all to me, I’ve heard parents say that they don’t want to ‘make’ their kids attend church or ‘force’ their beliefs on them. When I hear those arguments, I think, but isn’t that part of my job as a parent? I ‘force’ beliefs on my kids all the time when I think something is truly important: you need to go to school, you need to wear a seat belt, you need to help out with household chores, you need to get immunizations, you need to brush your teeth.” Evans, Jenny. “Why I Make My Kids Go To Church” *Unremarkablefiles*. N. p., 16 Feb. 2015. Web. 6 Mar. 2015.

### Missouri Synod President Laments Failure to Remove False Teacher.

“When a public teacher on the roster of Synod can without consequence publicly advocate the ordination of women (even participate vested in the installation of an ELCA clergy person), homosexuality, the errancy of the Bible, the historical-critical method, open communion, communion with the Reformed, evolution, and more, then the public confession of the Synod is meaningless. I am saying that if my Synod does

not change its inability to call such a person to repentance and remove such a teacher where there is no repentance, then we are liars and our confession is meaningless. I do not want to belong to such a synod, much less lead it. I have no intention of walking away from my vocation. I shall rather use it and, by the grace of God, use all the energy I have to call this Synod to fidelity to correct this situation.” Harrison, Matthew. “Regarding a recent decision of a panel not to proceed with charges regarding a public false teacher in the LCMS.” *Witness, Mercy and Life Together*. Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. 26 Jan. 2015. Web. 6 Mar. 2015.

### Sociologists Document Growth of “Christianophobia” in the U.S.

A small but elite group of Americans is displaying growing signs of acute anti-Christian hostility, claim sociologists George Yancy and David Williamson in a recent book. Interviewed about the book, Dr. Yancy, a professor at the University of North Texas, said that “... Christians are fortunate in one sense, because those with anti-Christian hostility are small in number; but in another sense, they should be concerned, because those with ‘Christianophobia’ tend to be powerful elites with influence in certain important areas,” such as government and higher education. A large statistical study led Dr. Yancy and his co-author to their conclusions. “I consistently saw evidence of Christianophobia in many areas of life and society. Unlike other types of intolerances, those who exhibited Christianophobia do not tend to think that they are intolerant. Usually those who do not like blacks or Muslims admit that they are intolerant but simply try to justify their intolerance. Those with Christianophobia tend to deny that they are intolerant but rather claim that they are fairly interpreting social reality. Envisioning themselves as fair and free of intolerance allows them to blame those they detest rather than recognize how their emotions have distorted their intellectual judgments. . . . By documenting just how hateful some of the attitudes are toward Christians, and who tends to have such hateful attitudes, I hope to bring Christianophobia into the light.” Nazworth, Nap. “Anti-Christian Hostility Infects Powerful Elite Subculture” *CP-US*. Christian Post, 29 Jan. 2015. Web. 6 Mar. 2015.