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LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



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The Lord of Hosts Is with Us



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Wartburg Castle, Eisenach, Germany

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On the Cover: *The attachment of Luther's 95 Theses, Julius Hübner 1878*

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The hymn “A Mighty Fortress” (TLH 262), is Martin Luther’s most famous hymn, and one of the most well-known of all Christian hymns. I was reminded of this recently when I heard a character refer to it in an episode from an old TV series. Not many hymn titles make it into popular culture.

“A Mighty Fortress” has long had a place in nearly every Protestant hymnal, and more recently even in some Roman Catholic hymnals. It has been translated into more languages than any other hymn, and there are more than seventy English translations of it.

To say that it is widely known and sung is not to say that it is widely understood or truly appreciated for its message. No doubt many who like it for its majestic tune may not pay much attention to what it says beyond its opening line.

But when we sing the entire hymn—as most of us will be doing in Reformation observances this month—we appreciate it for the powerful and profoundly Christian hymn it is.

In *The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal*, W. Gustave Polack says of “A Mighty Fortress,” “This hymn is truly written out of the fullness of Luther’s heart.” It was most likely written in 1529 for the Diet of Spires, where the German princes made a formal protest against the withdrawal of their freedom to follow the teachings of the Reformation in their territories. The hymn expresses

Luther's Catechism — A Treasure of the Reformation

Luther's trust that the cause of the Gospel would not be lost even in the face of opposition from church and empire. The cause was God's own; He was able to make it prevail.

The inspiration for "A Mighty Fortress" was Psalm 46, though it is not a paraphrase of the psalm, but a new composition. The idea of God as a strong fortress in which His children find protection comes from the opening words of the psalm, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

The God that Luther sees in Psalm 46 is not some powerful but vague deity. It is the one true and living God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Luther understands that "the LORD of hosts" in the Psalm's refrain is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son. The title "LORD of hosts" glorifies God as the one who is Lord over the hosts of heavenly angels (see article on page 8). The New Testament identifies Jesus Christ as the One whom angels worship and obey (Hebrews 1:6; Matthew 25:31).

Christ is the "Valiant One whom God Himself elected." He is the One who fights for us. The cause of the Reformation was Christ's because it was His Gospel that was the message of the Reformation. Luther's doctrine was that we are saved by the work of Christ alone. His atoning sacrifice alone has cleansed us from our sins. His righteousness, which is ours by faith, alone justifies us before God. Luther believed that even the devil himself could not stop the cause of the Gospel, because Christ had defeated him and robbed him of his power. "This world's prince . . . can harm us none. He's judged; the deed is done."

"The old evil foe" still means deadly woe and is still scowling fiercely in our day. He is still opposing the Gospel of Jesus Christ on many fronts. The forces that Luther contended with are still active. The false teaching of righteousness by works is still widely taught and believed. The ungodly world grows ever bolder in its hostility toward the truth and those who believe it.

But let's not be discouraged. It is said of Luther that when he was down, he would say to his friend and coworker Melancthon, "Come, Philip, let us sing the 46th Psalm." Then together the two friends would sing Luther's "A Mighty Fortress." At our Reformation services this month let us follow their example and sing this great hymn with joy and confidence.



John Klatt is pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Loveland, Colorado.



"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (Titus 1:9 NIV).

The Apostle Paul wrote these words to Titus to give him direction for appointing elders within congregations. These are words that are applicable to all of us. Simply change the "he" to "we" where it appears above. How can we achieve this? During the period of Reformation, confessions (formal doctrinal statements) were written, defining and presenting the true doctrine of God as clearly taught by the Word of God. The theologians of that day, along with the princes who served as courageous leaders in the Reformation, published these confessions so that all might know the truth and reject error. So we have the confessions of the Lutheran Church, which are often thought of as pretty difficult stuff, written by theologians for theologians.

Martin Luther earnestly desired that not only pastors and elders be well versed in the truth of God's Word, but that fathers be able to educate their children in the basic truths of God's Word. To this end Luther wrote his Small and Large Catechisms. These two volumes, presenting the chief parts of Christian doctrine in a concise and simple manner, are also recognized as important parts of the confessions of the Lutheran Church.

The format of the Catechism is important for us to notice and appreciate. In Luther's Small Catechism, the chief parts of Christian doctrine are presented in a form that is not only easily read and understood, but also concise enough to be committed to memory. This should not be an exercise reserved for our young children preparing for confirmation. We all have good reason to become reacquainted with the words of the Catechism. In our day, every bit as much as in the days of Martin Luther, we see exactly what the Apostle Paul foretold. He wrote to Timothy: "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths"



A continuing review of the Catechism should be a part of each of our devotional lives.

(2 Timothy 4:2-4 NIV).

Luther's Catechism is an excellent response to this exhortation of the Apostle. Luther presents the truth of God's Word in each of the Ten Commandments, and then asks, "What does this mean?" He leads us to appreciate the truth of the means of grace and asks, "Where is this written?" Always Luther directs us, in his precious little books, back into the Word, the source of all truth.

So often we find ourselves challenged by the world concerning our faith. Too often, in response, we cringe within ourselves as we struggle to give the right answer, the answer that has authority behind it (not "I think" or "My church teaches"). Knowing and memorizing Luther's Small Catechism, and reading and studying Luther's Large Catechism, present us with the answers for a wide range of topics. These answers possess the authority of the Word of God, and place the right words to speak directly onto our lips.

A continuing review of the Catechism should be a part of each of our devotional lives. If you ever wonder how it is that your pastor seems to come up with those answers to your questions in Bible Class, often it is simply because he is teaching the Catechism to your children, and Luther's presentation of the Lord's Word is fresh in his mind. Find Luther's Small Catechism, then read it, and yes, even memorize it once again. Then, with the Spirit's blessing, you will ". . . hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that you can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (Titus 1:9 NIV).



Theodore Barthels is pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Austin, Minnesota.

What God Has Joined...

While I write this, I am pondering the upcoming marriage of our daughter, a new experience for my wife and me. Perhaps a brief refresher on the estate of marriage would benefit all of us. First and foremost, marriage is not an invention of humans. God ordained it, and the Bible is the instruction manual. We must then turn to Scripture for guidance.

God's Institution

Woman was fashioned out of man to be a helper comparable to him, because it was not good that man should be alone (Genesis 2:18-23). Marriage was instituted in the garden of Eden when God joined Adam and Eve; the two became one flesh (Genesis 2:24). Lest anyone think that this institution is referred to only in the Old Testament, Jesus Himself reiterates the essence of marriage in Matthew 19:4-6, "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Blessings of Marriage

"He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD" (Proverbs 18:22).

In addition to the companionship, sexual fulfillment, and suitable help that spouses bring to one another, God also blesses marriage through the gift of children. He commanded Noah and his family to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 9:1). Children are described as a gracious gift from God (Genesis 33:5), and a heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127:3).

Marriage Under Assault

It is not that Scripture is unclear about the institution of marriage. It is intended to be between one man and one woman until they are parted by death (Romans 7:2-3). The erosion of marriage in our society is due to sin, our unwillingness to conform to God's prescribed arrangement. Marriage is under assault from every direction. Cohabitation, or couples living together as husband and wife without being married, is so common now that many see it as normal, even practical, behavior. God sees it as the sin of fornication. Adultery, or having sexual relations with someone else's spouse, is perhaps considered unfortunate, but almost inevitable (surely

one cannot be expected to have just one sexual partner over the course of a lifetime!) Homosexual behavior, once considered taboo in our society, is awarded legal equivalency to marriage by our own Supreme Court. According to the most recent census data, 40.6 percent of children born in the United States are born to unwed mothers (David Crary, AP).

Many would agree that the breakdown of the traditional family unit is a root cause of many of society's ills. Yet, with each passing year, the number and variety of attacks on marriage increase.

A Christian Response

How should a Christian respond in such a world? First, we must acknowledge that we too are guilty of not obeying God's Word in this area. In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He said, ". . . whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). He also warned against looking for a speck in our brother's eye while not considering first the plank in our own (Matthew 7:3). The duty of husbands is to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5: 25-29). Since Christ's love was perfect in every way, even to death, we know that we have not met that standard. The duty of wives is to submit to their husbands, as to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-24). They too fall far short. With humble hearts we confess our need for forgiveness. May we daily strive to live in accord with God's Word, and to be positive examples to our families and communities.

Christians will also want to be bold in defending scriptural marriage. It is not our job to change the heart, for only the Holy Spirit can do that, but we are called upon to witness faithfully to the world around us. To us, this should not be primarily a political or social issue, but a moral one. Societal opinions and court rulings will change, but God's Word does not. When debating a point, it is not our opinion that matters, but what God's Word says. To this end, may the Holy Spirit give us the opportunities, the desire, and the words with which to proclaim the truth.



Joe Lau is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

"TIME TO GROW UP"

(**HEBREWS 6:1-8**) *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.*

There is a natural progression in life. We are born, grow, and mature. We post ABC's in preschools and kindergartens, but not in college classrooms or corporate boardrooms.

A similar progression is true of the Christian life. When born again, we are meant to grow and grow up in our faith and understanding of Scripture. Faith is to be childlike, but not childish. Instead, we are to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

Sadly, the first readers of Hebrews were regressing, rather than maturing, in their faith. In Hebrews 5 they are described as "dull of hearing"—literally, slow or lazy listeners; as students who should be teachers; and as needing milk instead of solid food.

Clearly, it was time for these Christians to grow up in Christ. Preferring infancy to maturity not only deprived them of spiritual blessings, but also was dangerous to their faith. As Paul explained to the Ephesians: ". . . [W]e should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ" (Ephesians 4:14-15).

With a resounding "therefore" in Hebrews 6:1, the writer urges his readers to leave behind the "elementary principles of Christ" (the ABCs), and to "go on to perfection" or

maturity. This is not a call to forsake the fundamentals of Christian doctrine, but rather to build on them—in other words, to grow up.

Growing up and going forward are common themes in Hebrews, evident in such phrases as "enter" (4:11), "come boldly" (4:16), "go in" (6:1), "show diligence" (6:11), "lay hold" (6:18), "draw near" (10:22), and "stir up" (10:24). But Hebrews also warns its readers not to "drift away" (2:1), "neglect" (2:3), "depart" (3:12), "come short" (4:1), "become sluggish," (6:12), "forsake" (10:25), "cast away" (10:35), or "draw back" (10:39).

The warning in Hebrews 6:4-6 is one of the most severe in the entire epistle: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."

These are sobering words; but the writer of Hebrews offers them in Christian love. His intent is to rouse his readers from their spiritual lethargy and immaturity by reminding them that salvation is serious; that faith is precious, and not an off-the-shelf commodity that can simply be repurchased when lost, or rekindled when extinguished.

Tragically, when a believer falls away, he also throws away the heavenly gifts of God—faith, salvation, forgiveness, the "good word of God," partaking of the Holy Spirit, present hope and future glory. What do people throw away? That which they consider old, out of style, unwanted, defective, and useless. To throw away salvation, then, is to throw away Christ as being of no value—to crucify Him again and "put Him to an open shame." As long as one views Christ as "garbage," he cannot be brought to repentance.

Having issued such a severe warning, the writer of Hebrews nevertheless joyfully asserts: "But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner" (6:9).



Mark Weis is pastor of the Church of the Lutheran Confession in North Port, Florida.

The Man Who Did Not See

I thought it a bit surprising, if not embarrassing. A lady had commented that it was too bad that the editors of *The Lutheran Hymnal* didn't have spell-check available to them. When I raised my eyebrow in question, she bemoaned the fact that in the *Sanctus* (p.26), *Sabbath* had been misspelled. Turned out that she had never heard that *Sabaoth* was a quite different word, and "Lord of Sabaoth" means Lord of Hosts, or Lord of Armies.

This lady had seen a misspelled word; another man saw with closed eyes. 2 Kings 6 brings us the account of a Syrian invasion of Israel. Elisha was God's prophet at the scene, whose hearing was so good that he heard the inner war-council of the Syrians and so trumpeted a warning. The Syrian king then sent his army to "get" Elisha. The enemy came by night and with many horses and chariots surrounded the city of Dothan.

When Elisha's man-servant saw in the dawn mist the besieging force, he cried out in panic, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" To his human eyes the situation was most precarious. But Elisha replied, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Elisha then prayed that his servant's eyes be opened to the real situation, and he then saw what the prophet saw: ". . . the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (v. 17). Indeed, the Lord of Armies was on site in full battle array.

Centuries later Jesus pointed out what Elisha saw—that there were at His disposal many legions of heavenly angels (Matthew 26:52-54). The Lord of Armies surely is not bound or restricted by conditions or centuries. A secondary or tertiary theme of the Lutheran Reformation was the defending, protecting Lord of Sabaoth. Martin Luther saw and trusted, and so confidently penned: ". . . But for us fights the Valiant One, Whom God Himself elected. Ask ye, Who is this? Jesus Christ it is, Of Sabaoth Lord, And there's none other God; He holds the field forever." [TLH: #262, v.2]

When Luther incurred the wrath of the pope for his Gospel teaching, the Lord of Hosts provided German

princes and electors to protect him. When after the Diet of Worms Luther was in danger of arrest and assassination, others of God's soldiers "kidnapped" him and kept him safe at Wartburg. When the whole of Europe faced the invading Turks from the East, the Lord of Sabaoth made sure His Reformation child was not killed in infancy.

Indeed, the Lord of Armies was ever on the scene!

Are we like the servant who did not see and was afraid? Or do we know, can we see the great Lord of Armies? It all starts by seeing Christ Jesus as Savior and trusting what He already has done for us. Our great enemy is Satan, who brought sin into this world. We were helpless before his deceitful power, and desperately needed a Valiant One. And so ". . . for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8), and thus rescue and protect us.

Islamic terrorists and armies are again marching, threatening, and slaughtering. We are tempted to cry, "Alas, alas! What shall we do?" Such a cry is of baseless alarm, for "the Angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them" (Psalm 34:7). Various evils are like Syrian raiding parties out to get us. Yet our mighty Sabaoth Lord reassures us that the heavenly Father ". . . shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11). False prophets and the forces of evil threaten the faith of the very elect of God on earth. But the Lord of Hosts is with His people. He is ". . . our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

Today we see by faith; in heavenly glory by sight. Then will we see with resurrected eyes, not only the glorious, triumphant Lamb of God, but also the angelic armies of heaven (Revelation 19:14), mounted and serving Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. With all fear removed, we will perfectly understand then what we should know now—that those with us are more than those against us.



David Fuerstenau is pastor of Holy Truth Lutheran Church in Ketchikan, Alaska.



The Lord of Armies surely is not bound or restricted by conditions or centuries.

Can You Please Explain our Position on Fundraisers?

It seems like the perfect business model. Start with products that are donated or deeply discounted. Add volunteer labor and a worthwhile cause. Plug in a community of willing buyers. Reap a handsome profit that any retailer would envy.

It also seems like the perfect fit. Picture a not-for-profit church groaning under financial obligations. It has no predictable cash-flow—only freewill offerings. There is a stubborn deficit that doesn't seem to budge. Match this legitimate need with that time-tested solution, and voila! Problem solved? That depends on what the problem really is.

Every church has needs: overhead, maintenance, salaries, benefits, outreach goals, building projects, and so forth. In a fallen world, the needs will always outpace the revenue, because there is always more that a church could do. But the church's biggest need is not, and never will be, financial.

One day, Jesus watched people deposit their offerings at the Temple (Mark 12:41-44). If money were a fundamental issue for the church, you'd have to wonder why He did what He did. When ". . . many who were rich put in much," Jesus remained silent. No words of commendation, no pats on the back, no public recognition of their sizable donations.

Then, ". . . one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans." It was hardly a mortgage lifter or a checkbook balancer, but to Jesus, it was greater than all the other contributions that day. What mattered to the Church's Head was not the size of the gift—not the money—but the heart from which it came. The rich gave some from their abundance. The widow gave all from her poverty.

Normally, when someone says, "It's not about the money," they really mean, "This is about the money, but I don't want you to think that it is." That's not the case here. In the church, it really isn't about the money; it really is about the heart (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). As the account of the Widow's Mite shows, we can't always tell whether gifts are small or large, because they can't always be measured in dollars and cents.

What mattered to the Church's Head was not the size of the gift—not the money—but the heart from which it came.



Two bronze mites, also called *leptons*, from the time of Christ

Christian giving is not about raising money—least of all from non-members. God has plenty of money. He could accomplish His purposes without spending a single dime or using any of us. Instead, He invites us to partner in His work, so that each member, no matter how much money he has, can be involved in the incredible task of saving souls eternally.

And what of the financial challenges that every congregation faces? These are about more than money, too. They are about goals, trust, foresight, faith. They are opportunities for faith to be shifted from Park into Drive; to honor God here and now, before He takes us to heaven forever.

Obviously, not every cause is kingdom work, and not every group has the Gospel. When it is the Gospel's business, though, then the need is not to raise funds, but to raise faith. Through the message of Jesus Christ—crucified, risen, and highly exalted—the greatest Gift this world has, and will ever receive, the Spirit does just that. Faith grows and responds. God gathers the gifts of faith and multiplies them for His purposes.

If you'd like to measure the wisdom of using a fundraiser against the principles of Scripture, speak with your pastor.

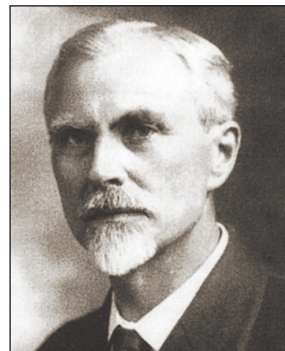


James Albrecht is pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Okabena, Minnesota.

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.

August Otto Wilhelm Pieper*

Of Reformation confessors, there are many whom we generally do not recognize in the context of the Reformation era itself. However, in that the Reformation was about the Word, and further that perpetuation of the Reformation principles calls for steadfast and bold confessors of the Word, it is fitting that we recognize latter day confessors as well.



When we hear the Pieper name, no doubt we think of Francis (Franz) Pieper, author of the three-volume “*Christian Dogmatics*,” still used in our seminary. But an eminent theologian in his own right was his younger brother, August Otto Wilhelm Pieper (1857-1946).

After the death of his father, August came with three brothers and his mother to America in 1869. They settled in Watertown, Wisconsin. After graduating from Northwestern College, August attended Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, where he sat at the feet of renowned Lutheran theologian C.F.W. Walther. Upon graduation from the seminary, he served several parishes in Wisconsin, the last in Milwaukee. From there he was called to the seminary in Wauwatosa.

While Franz served in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, including some years as the president of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, August served in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Of his sixty-four years in the ministry of the Gospel, he spent forty-one years at the seminary, of which he was also president for a time (1930-1937). One of August’s daughters was a member of the CLC until her death. A son, Gerhard, was a charter member of the CLC and served as one of two pastors of Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac. Two of August’s granddaughters were members of the CLC until their death, and descendants of his remain active in our fellowship.

Pieper was highly respected in the Wisconsin Synod.

* With thanks to Professor David Lau for historical background
1 August Pieper, *Isaiah II* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1978) 38.
2 Curtis A. Jahn, ed., *The Wauwatosa Theology*, vol. 1 (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997) 96-97.
3 August Pieper, “Vorwort zum zehnten Jahrgang,” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 1913, 10:1.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, of the twentieth century—after the death of Adolf Hoenecke—Pieper, J.P. Koehler, and John Schaller were considered the preeminent theologians in the synod. Pieper was a professor of isogogics (introduction to the books of Scripture) as well as Old Testament exegesis (interpretation) at the seminary. Pieper’s most enduring work may be *Isaiah II*, a commentary on chapters 40-66 of Isaiah, in which he argues staunchly for the unity of Isaiah, opposing critical scholars who say that the book had more than one author. Pieper wrote, “The testimony of the New Testament has wholly convinced me of the Isaianic authorship of the whole book of Isaiah, and particularly also of Part II.”¹

Pieper was instrumental in the establishment of the *Theologische Quartalschrift*, the Wisconsin Synod’s theological journal. He also wrote many essays related to the church and its ministry. His essays, together with those of his fellow professors Koehler and Schaller, appear in the three-volume set entitled *The Wauwatosa Theology*.

One of the very positive elements of the Wauwatosa theology was an emphasis on the exegetical study of Scripture itself, rather than blind reliance upon the teachings of the church fathers. The Word of God was the authority—not what the church fathers declared or set forth.

These three theologians, of whom August Pieper was one, “. . . retained and passed on the doctrine of plenary inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture,” “. . . retained and passed on the doctrines of election, conversion, and objective justification,” and “. . . sought to realize the principle of *sola scriptura* more fully.”²

In conclusion, we appreciate Professor Pieper’s words in his foreword to the tenth edition of the *Quartalschrift*: “The church of God stands and falls with no man, but with God’s Word alone. . . . Now this Word is found in authentic form in Holy Scripture alone. Therefore Scripture alone is the true source and norm of theology.”³



Daniel Fleischer is a retired pastor and former president of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. He lives in Oakdale, Minnesota.

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

French, Fervent, and Faithful

A few years ago, while Missionary David Koenig and I were visiting pastors around India, we happened to come across two pastors who could not have been more different in some respects. One was young and bouncing all over the place, full of ideas and dreams, restless and eager to serve the Lord. The second was an older man whose character was similar to molasses. He wasn’t lazy—far from it—but watching him get up from his chair was enough to put a man to sleep. And yet both of these men served the Lord in their own way. And the Lord used both in His own way. It would be impossible to say that one of these served the Lord better than the other.

After a week in Togo with Kossi Blewu, it is quite obvious that he more closely resembles the first of these. Kossi Blewu lives in Lome, Togo, on the western coast of Africa. He speaks Ewe, French, and English just well enough to translate for me. He met Missionary David Koenig in 2001. Although Kossi was already a pastor at that time, Missionary Koenig taught him a better understanding of Christian doctrine, and Kossi gladly joined in fellowship with the CLC. To this day, whenever I visit, Pastor Kossi asks after the health of his “Father Koenig.”

At that time, Pastor Kossi had a single small congregation. Now his main congregation numbers more than 120, and he has started five more preaching stations in and around Lome, Togo. He has also crossed the border in both directions. On one side of the border, he has taken under his wing a pastor from Ghana and his congregation, training them in Lutheran doctrine and practice. On the other side of Togo, he has begun steps to establish a preaching station in Cotonou, in the country of Benin.

Kossi’s heartfelt desire is to fill Togo with Lutheran churches. He is constantly reminding me that they are the only group of Lutheran churches in Togo. This isn’t literally true, since the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod does work in Togo also, but it does show his zeal and desire.



Pastor Kossi Blewu



Lomé, with a population of 837,437, is the capital and largest city of Togo. Located on the Gulf of Guinea, Lomé is the country’s administrative and industrial center and its chief port. The city exports coffee, cocoa, copra, and palm kernels. [Wikipedia](#)

Even given as much energy and desire as Kossi has, seven preaching stations are too many for one man. Kossi is aware of this and is eagerly training young men to help him. He currently has seven young men, including the pastor from Ghana, whom he is training to help him serve the Lord in the work of the ministry. It is mainly to help him in this work that I spent a week in Togo not long ago. In the past we have held seminars covering various doctrinal differences between Lutherans and other churches: Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, fellowship, and so on. This year we attempted to do a brief overview of the Scriptures using Pastor John Schierenbeck’s instruction course, *Shadows and Substance*. In the week I had to teach them, we finished most of the Old Testament lessons. I promised I would plan a couple of extra days on my next visit so that I can complete the Old Testament lessons and teach the twelve New Testament lessons as well.

Kossi and the students were very eager to learn more, begging me to stay longer. When I told them that was not possible, they said that I must come back quickly and teach them more. This I was able to do when, by God’s grace, I returned to visit them in June of this year.



Matthew Ude is a full-time CLC missionary to Africa and India. He and his wife live in Chennai, India.

Peace Lutheran Church—Orofino, Idaho



“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you” (John 14:27).

Jesus’ gift of spiritual peace has always been a wonderful and amazing part of God’s steadfast love and kindness to His Church. By faith God’s children are guided by the Holy Spirit to believe in the promises of the Word that assure us of the complete forgiveness of sins found in the cross of our Savior Jesus. That declaration of “not guilty” by our loving God gives our otherwise guilty consciences a peace that passes understanding. It is a genuine rest in our hearts that could come only from the One who is greater than our hearts, the Sabbath of our souls, Jesus Christ.

Your fellow saints, the members of Peace Lutheran Church of Orofino, Idaho, have been receiving Jesus’ gift of spiritual peace for the last seventy-four years. With two charter families meeting in their homes, they began in 1941 as a preaching station of St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church of Clarkston, Washington. They were served by Pastor Edward Kirst. In 1950 a constitution was adopted and they became a separate congregation served by Pastor Leonard Bernthal.

In 1952 Peace Lutheran Church applied for and received membership in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. However, in the fall of 1957, the congregation voted to terminate fellowship because of the WELS’ false teachings regarding the doctrine of church fellowship. Three years later, on December 18, 1960, the congregation

Orofino is a city in Clearwater County, Idaho, along Orofino Creek and the north bank of the Clearwater River. The population was 3,142 at the 2010 census, and the city is the county seat of Clearwater County.
Wikipedia



voted unanimously to apply for membership in a newly-formed synod called the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

For the first 30 years, the members of Peace Lutheran Church met weekly in several different rented facilities. In 1980 a new mobile home was purchased and converted into a suitable house of worship. In 1986 a new lot was purchased, and the church was relocated to 13946 First Avenue West in Orofino. This steadfast little group of believers has been worshipping there ever since.

Over the years, the work of God’s kingdom has been carried out by many faithful men and women of the congregation. Most importantly, the members have been blessed with the regular preaching and teaching of God’s Holy Word. The Holy Sacraments of Baptism and Communion continue their God-intended work of the giving of the forgiveness of sins and all spiritual blessings. Some highlights of



Clockwise, from top: sanctuary and altar of Peace Lutheran Church; organist Mrs. Deena Irby; some of the members

God’s blessings to date at Peace Lutheran Church include 116 Baptisms, 54 Confirmations, 23 weddings, and 23 saints who have been ushered from the church on this earth to the eternal mansions above. The following pastors have been privileged to declare Jesus’ gift of peace to the blood-bought souls of this congregation: Edward Kirst (1941); Maynard Witt (1941 vacancy); George Frey (1942-48); Fred Tiefel (1948 vacancy); Leland Grams (1948 vacancy); Leonard Bernthal (1949-65); Kenneth Hallauer (1965-67); Helmuth Rutz (1967-80); Paul Schaller (1980-90); Peter Reim (1990-96); Paul Krause (1996-2008); Scott Schiermeister (2009); and David Naumann (2010-present).

Currently the congregation has thirty-three members with twenty-nine communicants. With an average attendance of eighteen, worship services are held Sunday mornings at 8:00 A.M., and a 7:30 A.M. half-hour

Bible study is offered prior to Sunday service September through May.

By Spirit-worked faith, the members of Peace are thankful to the Lord of the Church for His steadfast love and kindness in guarding our hearts and minds with the peace of His Son Jesus Christ. We look forward to our Triune God’s blessings and His gracious plans for our hope-filled future.

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).



David Naumann is pastor of St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Clarkston, Washington, and Peace Lutheran Church in Orofino, Idaho.

The Youth Conference 2015

The Youth Conference 2015 was held at Camp Como, just outside Como, Colorado, from July 28 through August 2. It was sponsored by Immanuel Lutheran Church of Mankato, Minnesota. Twenty-eight young people (ages fourteen to twenty and representing eleven different CLC congregations) together with twelve staff members (from five different CLC congregations) immersed themselves in God's Word for five days while standing in awe of the natural beauty of the Colorado Rockies.

Keying in on modern technology, the conference theme was "Scripture—Thousands of Apps!" Eleven ninety-minute learning sessions were held, followed by small-group discussions lasting from thirty to ninety minutes, with the students picking up those discussions at times on their own.

The topics included the following:

- App 1.0** Bible App Store: Running on a 4God Network
- App 2.0** Downloading Content(ment): Fostering an Attitude of Gratitude
- App 3.0** American Idle: Making Good Use of Your Time
- App 4.0** Going Green God's Way: Our Use of the Earth
- App 5.0** iWorship: Dedicating All to Christ
- App 6.0** MapIt: Missions
- App 7.0** Giftmeister: Discovering and Developing Gifts and Talents
- App 8.0** Friend Me! Building Strong Relationships
- App 9.0** Maintaining Purity: Protecting Your Heart and Mind
- App 10.0** News Feed: Being Wise in a Share-Everything World
- App 11.0** System Maintenance: Taking Care of God's Temple

Each day began and ended with a brief chapel service. Two music sessions were held each day with the young people choosing the two anthems to be sung at a closing worship service held at and hosted by St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Lakewood, Colorado.

Time was set aside each day for outside activities. Almost everyone involved enjoyed an afternoon of white-water rafting on the Arkansas River, with another afternoon dedicated to zip-lining on the Camp Como property.

Other free-time activities included a four-mile hike, mountain biking, frisbee golf, and rock climbing. The camp also featured a premier playground with virtually everyone enjoying a new game—Nine Squares.



The final evening at the conference included a skit night/talent show featuring five "silent" skits developed and rehearsed during the week by the staff and students, together with musical performances by a number of the students. A final group activity served to emphasize the difference between the inevitable frustration of living life without God as opposed to the ultimate peace experienced from living life with God.



Most participants traveled to Colorado via coach bus from Mankato. Those participants thank Good Shepherd of Rapid City, Redeemer of Cheyenne, St. Paul's of Lakewood, and Grace of Valentine for their help with lodging and meals along the way, as well as those individuals subsidizing the bus transportation.

A follow-up conference evaluation by the students yielded very positive comments: "Super fun!" "It was a blast! Thanks so much!" "Life-changing!" "Loved it! Want to come back." "The whole week was amazing." "It's amazing what the Lord can do in such a short time with a group of people that don't know each other very well!" "Everyone was wonderful and I was blessed with the opportunity to meet each and every person. Thank you, . . . for your time, experience, and openness to me and my questions."

Much prayer and planning went into this year's conference. The Lord answered those prayers and blessed those plans! Prayer and planning for YC 2017 have already begun!



Paul Nolting is senior pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota.

Who Won?

Whether it is believed or not, truth remains truth.

"What a game last night! You should have been there!" you breathlessly tell your coworker the next morning. "The lead changed every inning. Did you hear about the bases-loaded home run and the unbelievable catch by the center fielder in the ninth?" But finally, what your friend really wants to know, what really matters in the end, is *who won?*

It was 1547, the year after Martin Luther's death. Charles V had won a decisive military victory over the Lutheran forces of the Schmalkaldic League in the battle of Mühlberg. Then for the first and last time, he entered Wittenberg, Saxony, Luther's home for some thirty-four years. As he stood in front of the pulpit in the Castle Church where Luther had been buried, some urged him to have the reformer's body dug up, burned, and its ashes scattered to the winds. Charles is said to have replied, "I do not make war against dead men." Who won? Fast forward to the present. Today, while the Roman Catholic Pope enjoys worldwide acclaim, a mere fifty to one hundred people gather weekly in the pews of Wittenberg's City Church. So who won?

If victory is determined by numbers, wealth, and political influence, Luther and those who followed him, including us, are definitely on the losing side. However, prestige and power were never Luther's goals. Already Early in life, he was already searching for something else. What he longed for and what he spent years feverishly striving for with good works, prayers, and self-imposed punishment was peace with God. He failed miserably. He came to the devastating realization that he could never win the righteousness he needed to stand before the holy, almighty God.

Yet finally, by God's grace, he came to see himself as a winner, not by his own goodness, but by the righteousness of Christ credited to him by faith. "*The righteous will live by faith*" (Romans 1:17 NIV) was the lifeline that he clung

to with all his might. His eternal life depended on it. The magnitude of God's love in reconciling the entire world to Himself by punishing His Son on the cross filled Luther with irrepressible joy and the untiring desire to preach the Gospel and oppose all false teaching, even when it came from the Roman Catholic Church coupled with threats of excommunication and death.

Luther did not fight for a personal victory. He preached a victory already won, the defeat of Satan, sin, and death at the hands of the Lamb Who was slain, but Who now rules over all at the Father's right hand.

Look around today. Who's winning? We see congregations of believers under increasing stress from declining numbers and the pressures and demands of modern life. Budgets are tight. Society embraces immorality as loving and inclusive, and denounces those who stand on Scripture as discriminatory and hateful. People you know may tell you that the news of salvation in Jesus alone just doesn't fulfill them spiritually. They express confidence in discovering their own spiritual path, one that "works for them."

But let's remember that whether it is believed or not, truth remains truth. The Word of our God stands forever. The gospel of forgiveness in Christ alone which gave Luther such peace, joy, and purpose, in life as well as in death, is also our peace. The Word, which seems so weak by worldly standards, will always be "*the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes*" (Romans 1:16 NIV). It will continue to accomplish its work in hearts.

This Reformation season let's again remember the events the Lord graciously used for His saving purposes. Let's share with everyone the news: "Jesus won, and because He did, we do too!"



Michael Eichstadt is pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, and president of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

SEEN IN PASSING

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

Tough Questions for Self-Described Christians Who Support Gay Marriage.

Kevin DeYoung, in a column for the Gospel Coalition, acknowledged the many difficulties facing Christians in the wake of the June Supreme Court decision on gay marriage. But, he says, hardest of all may be “. . . seeing some of our friends, some of our family members, and some of the folks we’ve sat next to in church giving their hearty ‘Amen’ to a practice” that the Bible says is a sin. DeYoung’s resulting “Forty Questions for Christians Now Waving Rainbow Flags” went viral on the internet. Among the questions: “How long have you believed that gay marriage is something to be celebrated?” “What Bible verses led you to change your mind?” “Do you think Jesus would have been okay with homosexual behavior between consenting adults in a committed relationship? If so, why did he reassert the Genesis definition of marriage as being one man and one woman?” “What arguments would you use to explain to Christians in Africa, Asia, and South America that their understanding of homosexuality is biblically incorrect and your new understanding of homosexuality is not culturally conditioned?” “What do you think you understand about the Bible that Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, and Luther failed to grasp?” DeYoung, Kevin. “40 Questions for Christians Now Waving Rainbow Flags.” *TGC*. Gospel Coalition, 1 Jul. 2015. Web. 16 Jul. 2015.

“I Always Thank God for Everything,” explained Chicago Cubs pitcher Pedro Strop.

This, after broadcaster Bob Costas ridiculed him on-air for pointing to the sky after a poor performance on the mound. Strop said that he thanks God for the opportunity every time, whether he performs well or not. Costas later apologized. N.a. “Quotables.” *World Magazine*. July 25, 2015:14. Print.

U.S. District Court Rules in Favor of Traditional Views.

A Chicago-area community college had barred from its campus a group, Heterosexuals Organized for a Moral Environment, which advocates for traditional marriage. In a surprise ruling, U.S. District Court Judge Robert W. Gettleman said that according to the First Amendment, “provocative speech

is entitled to the same protection as speech promoting popular notions.” Kellogg, Bob. “Free speech in trouble, just not at Waubensee.” *Legal-Courts*. OneNewsNow, 29 Jun. 2015. Web. 16 Jul. 2015.

Planned Parenthood’s Violence Exposed.

In the first of several hidden-camera videos released in July and August, Planned Parenthood’s senior director of medical research, Dr. Deborah Nucatola, is seen frankly describing the process of harvesting fetal organs from abortions performed at Planned Parenthood’s clinics. Over lunch (!) with people posing as prospective buyers of fetal organs, she said, “We’ve been very good at getting heart, lung, liver, because we know that, so I’m not gonna crush that part, I’m gonna basically crush below, I’m gonna crush above, and I’m gonna see if I can get it all intact.” A second hidden-camera video was subsequently released in which Dr. Mary Gatter, a Planned Parenthood official, apparently negotiates the price of fetal tissue, at one point joking, “I want a Lamborghini,” and later saying that she prefers a “less crunchy” technique for keeping fetal body parts intact. The videos have gone viral, bringing pressure on the organization that has long been a major provider of abortions, including, in some cases, late-term abortions. Sullivan, Peter and Ferris, Sarah. “Fears on the Left Growing for Planned Parenthood.” *The Hill*. Capitol Hill Publishing, 22 Jul. 2015. Web. 22 Jul. 2015.

Hilton Hotels Come Clean.

“After meeting with anti-pornography advocates, major global hotel chain Hilton Worldwide announced that it will no longer include video-on-demand adult entertainment at their facilities. Hilton, a hospitality company that boasts over 4,300 properties, recently made the announcement that there will be a gradual phasing out of pornographic entertainment at the hotels they own which offer it. In an official statement, the company noted that they were “. . . making immediate changes to our global brand standards to eliminate adult video-on-demand entertainment in all our hotels worldwide. We believe in offering our guests a high degree of choice and control during their stays with us, including Wi-Fi on

personal devices. However, we have listened carefully to our customers and have determined that adult video-on-demand entertainment is not in keeping with our company’s vision and goals moving forward.” Grybowski, Michael. “Hilton Removes Porn From Hotel Rooms After Hearing Sexual Exploitation Concerns.” *C.P.U.S. The Christian Post*, 19 Aug. 2015. Web. 19 Aug. 2015.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In accord with our usage and order, **Michael Schierenbeck**, who was called by Faith Lutheran Church, Markesan, Wisconsin, to be its pastor, was installed on August 2, 2015. Preaching for the service was the undersigned. Also participating were Pastors Neal Radichel and David Ude.
—Pastor Mark Bernthal

In accord with our usage and order, the following were installed as teachers in Faith Lutheran School, Markesan, Wisconsin on August 2, 2015: **Sherman Carstensen** (Principal and Grades 3-5), **Barry Hay** (Grades 6-8), **Marie Muehlenhaupt** (Grades 6-8).
—Pastor Michael Schierenbeck

2015 Minnesota Pastoral Conference
Mount Olive Lutheran Church
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota
October 6-7, 2015

Agenda:

- OTX – Habakkuk 1:7ff—Pastor John Johannes
 - NTX – 1 Timothy 4:11-16
—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
 - Twenty Proverbs for Today
—Pastor George Dummann
 - Compilation of Materials for Continued Education of our Post-confirmation Young People—Pastor Paul Nolting
 - How Do We Help our Members Live as Considerate Christians?
—Pastor Robert Sauers
 - Reformation Topic (essayists choice)
—Pastor David Baker
 - Engagement and Parental Consent
—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt
 - Evaluation: “God is Good”
—Pastor James Albrecht
- Chaplain: Pastor Theodore Barthels
—Submitted by Pastor Wayne Eichstadt