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# LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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

*"But on this one will I look:  
On him who is poor and  
of a contrite spirit,  
And who trembles  
at My word.*

*(ISAIAH 66:2b)*



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*“For the message  
 of the cross is  
 foolishness to those  
 who are perishing,  
 but to us who are  
 being saved it  
 is the power  
 of God”*

(I CORINTHIANS 1:18)



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# When It's Time to be Uncomfortable

It's natural to seek a certain level of comfort. I'm talking about getting and being comfortable. People want to be comfortable in their clothing, in their homes, and in their lives. If we become uncomfortable, then we try to make a change of clothing, or the body position that doesn't feel right, or the circumstances that we face.

How does this tendency square with the Lord's outlook in Isaiah 66:2? *“But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.”* We can notice definite times when we should *never* be comfortable. We can't afford to be comfortable with any of our sins, especially not with an attitude or habit that the Bible identifies as sinful. Each one will have to take stock of his own heart, attitudes, and actions. For example, are we comfortable in looking down on other people? Are we comfortable in letting unacceptable language tumble out of the mouth without a second thought? Are we comfortable in a routine of attending worship, only to sit there inattentive and hear little of what is said? Are we comfortable with a carefree or careless attitude toward the responsibilities that we have as family members or employees or fellow Christians?

There is a real danger in getting comfortable with sin. Regardless of what the sin may be, if we get used to it, we are making friends with a deadly enemy. If we become comfortable with our sin, we let it attach like an anchor that could sink us spiritually. If we get comfortable with our sin, the devil has an open door to chip away at our faith in the hope that it erodes down to impenitence and unbelief.

Let's agree on a healthy attitude of being *uncomfortable* with our sins. In such a state we are then the person



described in Isaiah 66, the person who is *“poor and of a contrite spirit.”* That means that you're not only aware of your sin, but also broken by its guilt and in desperate need of God's forgiveness. That person then is the one on whom God looks favorably, to whom He brings His unfailing love, mercy, and comfort. Yes, God will bring His comfort to the spiritually uncomfortable.

It's guaranteed because of Jesus. He's the One who became quite uncomfortable for you and me on the cross. He took all of our sins on Himself as the weight that plunged Him into the suffering of God's judgment on the cross. As a result, we get to hear God's comfort in His

declaration that all of our sins are forgiven in Christ, so that we can go forth in peace with His presence and His promise of blessing and help for all that we face in this sin-cursed world.

The emergency room is a place where you find uncomfortable people. It's a place where we normally don't want to be. We go there only when necessary. In the course of our spiritual lives as believers in Christ, we will go to the ER of God's grace many, many times. With sin as a problem we face every day, we need the diagnosis of the Law and the treatment of the Gospel on a regular basis. It's a true comfort that God will give when He first leads us to be uncomfortable with our sin and always dependent on His grace, which is made sure to us by our sin-removing Savior, Christ Jesus.



**Steven Sippert** is president of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

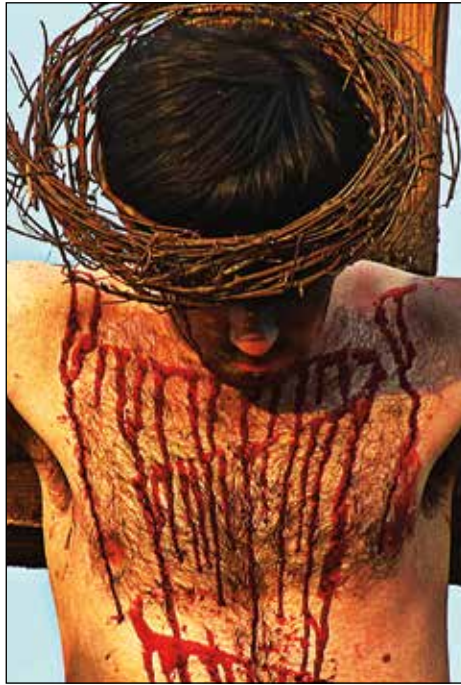


# A Long Road to Spring

If there is one thing to look forward to here in the Midwestern part of our country, it is spring. I can remember long and brutal winters that seemed to hang around forever. I recall waiting with longing for the daylight to lengthen and the temperatures to rise. Everyone seems eager to see that first green shoot come up, or perhaps the first hardy robin to arrive. It's a time of anticipation and preparation for good things to come.

The Lenten season is a long road of anticipation as well. As far as can be determined, the word *Lent* comes to us from an Anglo-Saxon word for spring. As early Christians anticipated the coming of Easter in the springtime, they would prepare themselves during this penitential period. Many of the devout would fast during the Lenten season in order to reflect on their sins and the consequences they bring. Forty days seemed an appropriate length of time to prepare for the resurrection celebration, possibly recalling Christ's forty days in the wilderness. Since it was thought inappropriate to fast on Sundays, they were not counted in the forty days.

No matter how long it may take for spring to arrive, the road to Easter is much longer and more difficult. For if Lent is a time of reflecting on our sins, where is the end of it all? Not in forty days, or forty years, or centuries, for that matter, could we contemplate the magnitude of our sin. From the height of our hypocrisy to the depths of our depravity, we have transgressed our Father's Law in thought, word, and deed. Confronting our sin is a gut-wrenching, guilt-ridden experience for the faithful, for we know that the just punishment for transgressing God's holy Law is death, hell, and damnation. But there is spring to look forward to—crucifixion, redemption, and Jesus' resurrection day!



**Difficult as our Lenten journey may be, the road Christ traveled was infinitely worse.**

Yet, as difficult as our Lenten journey may be, the road Christ traveled was infinitely worse. Jesus was born into this world with a plan in hand. He knew what was required of Him—absolute perfection. As the day of Jesus' crucifixion drew nearer, the onslaughts of Satan, of the world around Him, and even of His own followers increased. At every turn there was temptation and hardship trying to dissuade Christ from fulfilling His redemptive mission. How did Jesus keep His mind on the mission? How could He endure the hardships and pitfalls on that long road to spring? “Jesus . . . who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus looked beyond the stony and tortured path of Lent to His destination. There at His Father's side, where He now prepares a place for us!

In order for us to make it through this life to the next, we need to focus on Jesus, Who already made it through. He suffered sin, death, and hell for us, that we might be His own. We can believe that “in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18). Let us not be more concerned or consumed with the journey through this life than we are with the destination. Let us follow in the bloody footprints of our Savior during the long road of Lent, but let us also remember to focus on the destination, past the cross of shame, and on to the resurrection to life eternal!



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

## The Greatest of All Our Eternal Priest

“Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: ‘You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.’ For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God” (Hebrews 7:11-19).

It happens fairly often in the sporting world. A team, sometimes unexpectedly, has rare success establishing a lengthy winning streak. As the unbeaten streak grows, sportswriters take notice and begin to compare the team to other successful teams in the sport. Then articles are written and sportswriters debate which is the greatest of all. In the end, though, it really doesn't matter which team is the greatest of all—because it's just a game.

In the Letter to the Hebrews, the Holy Spirit shows time and again that Jesus is the greatest of all.

### Greater than the Angels

He is greater than the angels (see Hebrews 1:5-14) for He is the Son of God made flesh. While we picture Him now as the One who humbled Himself and was made “a little lower than the angels” in order to taste death for everyone (Hebrews 2:9), the day will come when He is revealed as the exalted Christ, returning as the glorious King of kings and Lord of lords.

### Greater than Moses

He is greater than Moses, who was faithful as a servant; but Christ is the mighty Creator become Redeemer (see Hebrews 3:1-6).

### Greater than Any Other High Priest

He is greater than any other high priest, because He understands our weaknesses, having walked among us, having been tempted as we are, yet without sin. He is our greatest ally in times of temptation (see Hebrews 4:14-16). He is the greatest High Priest of all. In fact, He is unlike any other high priest—there is no “apples to apples” comparison!

### Greater than Old Testament Priests and Sacrifices

When God Himself instituted the office of the high priest, He elected to choose men from among the tribe of Levi. Those men were themselves sinners, needing to offer up sacrifices first for themselves to atone for their sins. Those men offered up the blood of animals repeatedly, day after day, as prescribed by the Law of God given through Moses—which God accepted because He had promised to provide the once-for-all sacrifice. Those men eventually died and were replaced by other men. Finally even the service of their sacrifices ended, and the priesthood and Temple were torn down—no longer needed!—once God provided the ultimate sacrifice in the person of His Son. In many ways, those priests were pictures of our great High Priest, except that His service and priesthood will never end.

### A Priest Forever

While the Levites no longer offer sacrifice on Mount Moriah and the priesthood is no more, Christ our High Priest remains. He was chosen by God to be a priest forever—not from the tribe of Levi, but from the tribe of Judah. He did not establish His own priesthood and glory, rather God Himself established it, as foretold in Psalm 110:4, and quoted again here in Hebrews 7:17. He who offered up Himself once for all sins even now intercedes at the throne of God.

He is the greatest of all, by the declaration of God's own Word. He comes to us not as One appointed by the Law to carry out its precepts, but as the Mediator of the New Covenant and the One who assures sinners of God's justice and mercy. He is the One through Whom we draw near to God without fear—He is the greatest of all.



**Andrew Schaller** is pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church in Marquette, Michigan.



HYMN 143

“O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken”

**Sin.**

The Cross.  
Darkness.  
Sorrow.  
Anguish.  
Scourging.  
**Blood.**  
Crucifixion.

**Death.**

LENT

A significant number of modern American churches do not dwell on these themes—during Lent or at any other time. Instead, they try to avoid them. Such biblical elements are considered too negative for their members to hear, too much of a “downer.” Instead, those churches tend to proclaim the theological Prozac of self-esteem and a truncated message focused solely on the biblical truth that “God wants me to feel happy, not burdened with guilt and shame,” without ever mentioning our sin or the suffering the Son of God endured to redeem us to Himself and thereby remove that guilt and shame. 1 Corinthians 1:18, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God,” is not likely to be a sermon text in such churches. The largest Christian congregation in America, for example (Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas), has no crosses in or on its church building

**For I have not  
shunned to  
declare  
to you the  
whole counsel  
of God.**

(Acts 20:27)

because the pastor considers crosses to be a “negative image,” not in keeping with his “positive” message.

In our hymns as well as our preaching, we seek to faithfully proclaim the *whole* counsel of God (Acts 20:27). Hymn 143 is a hymn for the season of Lent, and it is typically Lutheran in its biblical content. It is the opposite of the relatively superficial “praise songs” often found in contemporary American “Evangelicalism.” Of that modern trendiness, Craig A. Parton says

about an outdoor service he attended (on a Good Friday!), “I was first struck by the music—upbeat, soft rock done by a James Taylor wanna-be backup band. Wireless microphones were attached to the lapels of performers acting as if they were doing a ‘gig’ for Jesus. Everyone was laughing, smiling, joking—it was all very cute and fun. The testimonials and the message sounded the theme of ‘upward and onward.’”<sup>1</sup>

For the most part, although the “praise

songs” of contemporary American “Evangelicalism” do indeed present some biblical content, they seldom deal with the cross, the reality and consequences of sin, our guilt and need for repentance, and so forth. In sharp contrast to that reluctance, Hymn 143 gives us the true biblical perspective on the sufferings of Christ for our salvation, presented in music that reinforces the words (please go to <http://lutherantacoma.com/hymns/> to listen to this music). It presents scriptural truth, not pop psychology.

Based on Luke 23:20-24, in which Pilate’s pronouncement of Jesus’ innocence is contrasted to the mob’s insistent demand that He be crucified, this hymn likewise presents strong contrasts:

The severity of Jesus’ punishment *contrasted* to His innocence: “**What law hast Thou broken / That such sharp sentence should on Thee be spoken?**” (v. 1)

The unpunished guilty ones *contrasted* to the punished innocent One: “**It is my sins for which Thou, Lord, must languish; / Yea, all the wrath, the woe, Thou dost inherit, / This I do merit.**” (v. 3)

God’s sinless Son *contrasted* to the sinful children of men: “**The sinless Son of God must die in sadness; / The sinful child of man may live in gladness.**” (v. 5)

Jesus’ selfless love for us, which led Him to the cross, *contrasted* to our pursuit of worldly things: “**O wondrous love, whose depth no heart hath sounded, / That brought Thee here, by foes and thieves surrounded! / All worldly pleasures, heedless, I was trying / While Thou wert dying.**” (v. 7)

The first seven verses of this hymn present our sin and guilt contrasted to the unfathomable love of God that

led Him to sacrifice His own Son to redeem us from the consequences of that sin, and thereby reconcile us to Himself. The last eight verses then address our response to that astonishing love: “**How shall I find some worthy gifts to proffer? / What dare I offer?**” (v. 8) “**Oh, how should I do aught that could delight Thee! / Can I requite Thee?**” (v. 9). We cannot “pay God back,” but we can bear “fruits worthy of repentance”: “**I will renounce whate’er doth vex or grieve Thee / And quench with thoughts of Thee and prayers most lowly / All fires unholy.**” (v. 10)

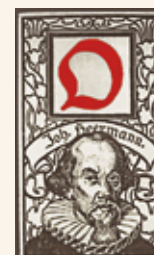
Again, typical of the biblical soundness of the Lutheran chorale, Hymn 143 emphasizes that even our attempts to serve God in response to His grace to us in Christ cannot be done in our own strength; it is the Holy Spirit Who must empower us: “**To all good deeds, oh, let Thy Spirit win me / And reign within me.**” (v. 11)

Do you have children? When they were toddlers and brought you a crayon-scribbled picture titled *Mommy and Daddy*, did you criticize their lack of artistic ability, or did the picture melt your heart with the sincerity of their love? Then you can appreciate the import of v. 14: “**But worthless is my sacrifice, I own it; / Yet, Lord, for love’s sake Thou wilt not disown it; / Thou wilt accept my gift in Thy great meekness / Nor shame my weakness.**”

The depth of God’s love for us in Christ is beyond our full understanding, but in this solemn Lenten season, may He grant us a renewed and increased appreciation of that love.



**Craig Owings** is a retired teacher and serves as assistant editor of the *Lutheran Spokesman*. He lives in Cape Coral, Florida.



**Hymn 143: O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken**  
Author: Johann Heermann (1630);  
Translator: Catherine Winkworth (1863)  
Tune: HERZLIEBSTER JESU Published in 18 hymnals

**Heermann, Johann**, son of Johannes Heermann, furrier at Baudten, near Wohlau, Silesia, was born at Baudten, Oct. 11, 1585. He was the fifth but only surviving child of his parents, and during a severe illness in his childhood his mother vowed that if he recovered she would educate

him for the ministry, even though she had to beg the necessary money. He was appointed diaconus of Koben in 1611. In October, 1638, he retired to Lissa in Posen, and died there on (Feb. 17), 1647. (Koch, iii. 16-36; Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, xi. 247-249, &c.)

As a hymnwriter Heermann ranks with the best of his century, some indeed regarding him as second only to Gerhardt. His hymns are distinguished by depth and tenderness of feeling; by firm faith and confidence in face of trial; by deep love to Christ, and humble submission to the will of God. Many of them became at once popular, passed into the hymnbooks, and still hold their place among the classics of German hymnody.



**Winkworth, Catherine**, daughter of Henry Winkworth, of Alderley Edge, Cheshire, was born in London, Sep. 13, 1829. Most of her early life was spent in the neighbourhood of Manchester. Subsequently she removed with the family to Clifton, near Bristol. She died suddenly of heart disease, at Monnetier, in Savoy, in July, 1878. Catherine Winkworth is “the most gifted translator of any foreign sacred lyrics into our tongue, after Dr. Neale and John Wesley; and in practical services rendered, taking quality with quantity, the first of those who have laboured upon German hymns.

Our knowledge of them is due to her more largely than to any or all other translators; and by her two series of *Lyra Germanica*, her *Chorale Book*, and her *Christian Singers of Germany*, she has laid all English-speaking Christians under lasting obligation.”

—Annotations of the Hymnal, Charles Hutchins, M.A., 1872  
<http://www.hymnary.org>

<sup>1</sup> Craig A. Parton, *The Defense Never Rests: A Lawyer among the Theologians* 2nd Edition (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003 and 2015) 41-42. Quoted with permission of the author.



AS WE APPROACH THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION, WE TAKE A BRIEF LOOK AT THE LIVES OF INFLUENTIAL AND IMPORTANT LUTHERAN LEADERS AND THEOLOGIANS

## Adolf Hoenecke (1835-1908)



**As a professor, he was able to train up a generation of thoroughly Lutheran pastors.**

What would you expect from a child born to a religiously indifferent father, whose body—weakened by typhoid fever—made a military career impossible, who then chose the ministry only after being told by someone teasing a corpulent pastor, “Look, Adolf, become a pastor and then you will have a good thing”? Who then studied in a school more known for its scientific methods than its Lutheran orthodoxy? Whose father-in-law was a Reformed pastor? And who then turned to the Berlin Mission Society, which represented the “mild and moderate Lutheranism” of the Prussian Union, to be assigned a parish in America? And who, finally, was sent to an infant synod itself still struggling to find its Lutheran bearings? This doesn’t sound promising, does it? But God made Adolf “the one great theologian” of the Wisconsin Synod.

How did God do this? He gave him a professor at the University of Halle, August Tholuck, who took pains to take him under his wing and nourish his soul and not just train his mind. Tholuck gave his students not only academic meat, but also valuable spiritual counsel. And seeing his gifts (Adolf had taught himself enough Hebrew in twelve weeks to pass the entrance examination!), he encouraged Adolf to read deeply in Lutheran dogmatics. This Adolf did, to his great profit.

Since there were no immediate opportunities for a position in Germany, he was willing to go to America, still hoping eventually to return for a position in the Prussian church. He arrived at Milwaukee in the middle of our Civil War, in 1863, and was called to a small congregation at Farmington, near Watertown, Wisconsin.

What a time of confusion! The Wisconsin Synod, only thirteen years old, was associated with the General Synod, “a hodge-podge of individual synods whose leaders fought each other to the death,” and many of those leaders were quite unionistic. Adolf was able to watch the situation from the sidelines for a time.

But only a short time. In 1864, he was elected secretary of the synod, and thus was thrust into the thick of inter-synodical activities. Then he was made associate editor of the church periodical, the *Gemeindeblatt*, and was busy writing sorely-needed, clarifying, confessional articles. Next he was appointed to a committee to screen ministerial candidates for the new school at Watertown, to prevent unsuitable students from enrolling. Later he was made dean of students at the school and was to teach theology. Finally, Hoenecke became sole professor of the seminary and editor-in-chief of the periodical. He had been in the country just four years, and was only thirty-one years old.

Hoenecke was now in a position suitable to his talents and quiet temperament, and except for a few years when the seminary was closed, remained there until his death forty-two years later. As a professor, he was able to train up a generation of thoroughly Lutheran pastors.

As a writer and editor (later also of the *Quartalschrift*, a journal intended for pastors), he was able to wield the powerful sword of the Word throughout his fellowship and far beyond. He was in a position to correct the errors from within and to combat the errors from without. In an age when polemics were often harsh and cutting, he was “able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9), and to do so in a convincing but gentle manner. He was a reluctant warrior, “combat-ready in any debate,” but “a quiet, peace-loving man”—fully armed, but never rejoicing in the fight.

His greatest literary work, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, was published by his sons after his death. Fortunately, it has been translated, and the author—who never learned much English—can now speak to us through these four volumes.



**Norman Greve** is pastor of St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iron River, Michigan.

## Esther — A Real Heroine

(O.T. BOOK OF ESTHER)

Our society has a fascination with heroes. A good example of this is the popularity of super-heroes found in D.C. and Marvel comic books and movies, such as Superman and Spiderman. There are, of course, also super-heroines like Wonder Woman and Supergirl.

What intrigues and excites readers and viewers are the supernatural powers of the super-hero/heroine. They revel in the way these superheroes/heroines skillfully employ their great powers to defeat the villain.

But then, all these heroes are fictitious. Also, because of society’s fixation on heroism, there has been a tendency to label someone a “hero” who has not really performed genuine heroics. Nevertheless, there certainly are real heroes who display tremendous courage in dangerous situations and make great sacrifices for the sake of others’ safety.

Holy Scripture provides us with numerous examples of real heroes. We might think of the young lad David, who battled the giant Goliath with sling and stone for the honor of the Lord. Or the prophet Daniel, who was thrown into the lions’ den because he was unwilling to compromise his faith. Or the apostle Paul, who stared death in the face for the sake of the Gospel.

But it wasn’t just *men* in the Bible who displayed courage as heroes of faith. There were also women whom the Lord blessed with such a praiseworthy spirit. One of those biblical heroines has an entire inspired book in the Old Testament that tells her story. The title of this book is *Esther*. *Esther* is the Persian name for a Jewess whose birth name was Hadassah.

Esther had been orphaned while living in exile under Persian rule. Her cousin Mordecai, who was a government official, raised her like a daughter.

Even though the name of God is not mentioned in the book of Esther, nevertheless we can see His hand at



**It wasn’t just men in the Bible who displayed courage as heroes of faith. There were also women whom the Lord blessed with such a praiseworthy spirit.**

work behind the scenes, causing things to work out for the good of His people. Esther had been blessed with extraordinary physical beauty and womanly graces, which the Lord made use of in His providential rule of protecting and preserving countless lives. When the Persian king Ahasuerus (Xerxes I) banished his wife after being slighted by her, Esther was chosen to replace her as queen.

A grave and deadly threat to the entire Jewish race arose when Haman, one of the highest officials in Persia, devised a scheme to annihilate the Jews. Mordecai, being a Jew, would not bow down to Haman as others did. As a result, Haman hated Mordecai and all the Jews. Haman



went to the king and falsely accused the Jews of being lawless subjects. Promising to fill the king's treasury with silver at the expense of the Jews, Haman persuaded king Ahasuerus to issue a decree which—if carried out—would cause the extermination of all the Jews throughout the kingdom. This genocidal plan not only threatened to eliminate a whole race of people, but also jeopardized the fulfillment of God's promise—the promise that He would send His Son into this world, born of the Jews, in order to redeem every race, people and nation.

Mordecai persuaded queen Esther to use her influence in pleading for the lives of their people, posing this important question to her, "Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (4:14). This proposition involved Esther risking her life, for if she came to the king without being summoned, she would be put to death unless the king held out the golden scepter to her and allowed her to approach. Esther replied to Mordecai (4:16), "And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" Putting her life at risk for the sake of preserving a whole race of people was indeed courageous heroism! Such a spirit was surely instilled in Esther by the powerful working of God (Philippians 2:13).

The Lord caused His will to be done by seeing to it that the king not only granted Esther the courtesy of approaching him, but also consented to her requests. Esther used a very wise and ingenious approach in persuading King Ahasuerus to issue a decree which, in effect, nullified a previous decree that otherwise could not be set aside. On the date the Jews were to be attacked by their enemies, they would be allowed to defend themselves. Not only would the Jews be allowed to fight in their own defense, but also "all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews" (9:3).

As for Haman, the king had him hung on the very gallows that Haman had built for Mordecai.

Esther was indeed a real heroine, for through the working of the Lord she had the courage to put her own life at risk in the hope of saving the countless lives of God's chosen people! Praise, honor, and glory be to God who causes all things to work out for the good of innumerable souls!



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

## Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Loveland, Colorado

*"I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:1-2).*

The imagery employed in this familiar psalm is the kind that is easily grasped by anyone, and it is most certainly meaningful to those who live within view of mountains. The sight of mountain peaks in the distance or the view from a mountain height is a mighty witness to the greatness of God, Who brought these massive formations into existence by the power of His Word. Mountains make us feel small and weak but remind us of the power of God, Whom we know from His Word to be gracious toward us sinners.

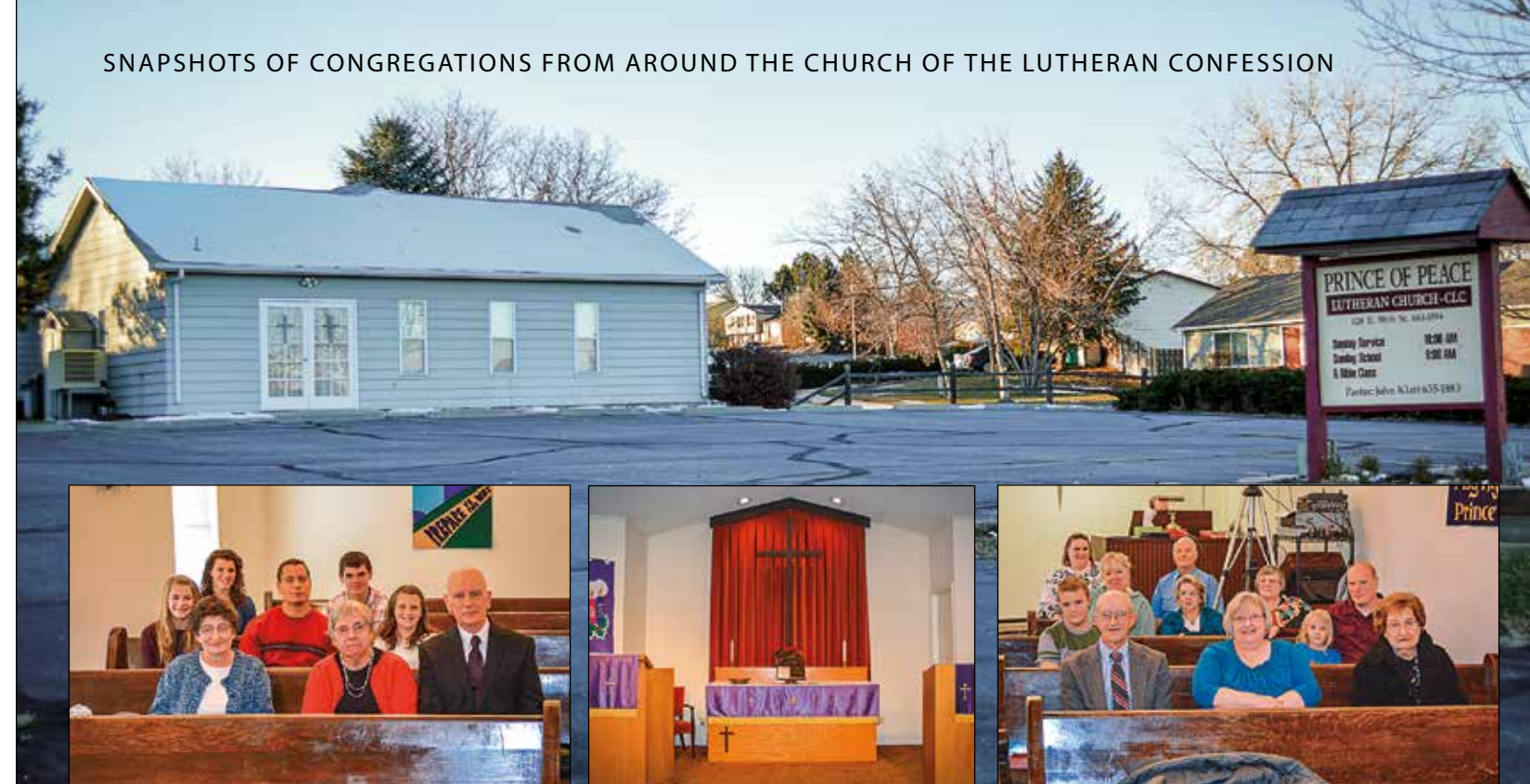
The city of Loveland, Colorado sits not far to the east of the Front Range of the Rockies and Rocky Mountain National Park. It was in this community that CLC members who had located here for work started a Christian congregation.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church was incorporated in 1978. This Gospel ministry, in its beginning, was helped by Redeemer congregation in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and their pastor, Michael Sydow, who conducted the first CLC services in Loveland. At the end of 1979, the congregation consisted of ten communicants and one unconfirmed soul. The original members were Larry and Ann Dassow and their children Mary, Kay, and Paul; Lloyd and Pat Lundeen; Lowell Kolb; Susanne Kolb; and Robert and Susan Will. The congregation joined the CLC in 1980.

Prince of Peace membership began to grow, largely by relocation of CLC members to the northern Colorado area. The young congregation called Pastor Robert Reim, who at the time was serving Trinity Lutheran Church, a CLC congregation in Broomfield, Colorado, a suburb of Denver. Pastor Reim became the first resident pastor of Prince of Peace in 1980.

The other pastors who have served Prince of Peace were Paul F. Nolting (1985-1988), Michael Sprengeler (1988-1995), Peter Reim (1996-2010), Scott Schiermeister (2010-2014), and John Klatt (2014-present).

In 1981, with the assistance of a loan from the Mission



Top: exterior of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. Above: some of the congregation members, and a view of the chancel.

Extension Fund of the CLC, the congregation built a church/parsonage on a one-third-acre lot in a developing area in the northeast part of the city. This building has been the house of worship for Prince of Peace to the present day.

The congregation also planned for the future by purchasing, in 2002, a piece of land near the present church and moving an existing house onto the property to serve as a parsonage. This property is a good location for a new church building, should the Lord so increase and guide the congregation. God has also blessed the congregation through the sale of three building lots from this property. The recent sale of the third lot has provided funds for much-needed repairs on the church.

For many years, members of Prince of Peace carried on the CLC's Ministry by Mail program of distributing printed sermons and then video recordings of our church services. Though Ministry by Mail is now produced elsewhere, the congregation still records video services on DVDs, which are made available to members who live too far away to attend regularly.

The membership currently numbers thirty-eight communicants and five pre-communicants. Sunday attendance averages in the twenties. For one week each summer there is a Vacation Bible School, which includes several children of non-members. Signs of growth in the past year included an infant Baptism, an adult

confirmation, a child confirmation, and two teenage boys in regular attendance in catechism classes.

A reminder of the purpose of our ministry at Prince of Peace also occurred in the past year. A long-time member was taken to be with the Lord at the age of ninety-seven. For over thirty years, this man's faith in his Savior had been sustained and strengthened here by the Word and Sacrament for his entrance into eternal life.

The continued existence of a congregation such as ours over the years is a testimony to the Spirit's silent and invisible work in the hearts of the members. It is God Who moves souls to make sacrifices of money, time, and effort to maintain a Gospel ministry, to keep the light of Christ shining in a community.

Like most of the congregations in the CLC, Prince of Peace is small in numbers and material resources when evaluated by the standards of the world. But the mountains to our west stand in constant reminder that the God we serve is almighty, His resources unlimited. And the Gospel Word that sounds within the walls of our



church teaches our hearts that He is our Father Who loves us, our Savior Who gave His life for us, and our Comforter Who dwells within us and gives us life.

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



# Busia, Uganda

Before boarding the bus to Busia, you had better be sure for which Busia you are bound. Busia is a bustling border city split in half by the countries of Kenya and Uganda, and it is home to one of the first CLC congregations in Uganda. North of this bastion of boda bodas (the nickname given to bicyclists and motorcycle drivers who constantly pass from border—"boda"—to border) is the small village of Bulondani. It was the trek from Busia to Bulondani that made one mission helper remark, "Now this is the Africa I had in mind!" Lush jungle foliage, wild animals, and throwback thatched-roof housing are common sights in this area.

In mid-November, while some minor effects of El Niño were being felt here in the United States, hundreds of thousands were displaced from their homes as floodwaters ravaged several parts of Uganda. Pastor Tanas Wangira lives in the rural Ugandan village of Bulondani with his wife, children, and mother. The flooding washed away not only their thatched-roof, mud-walled home, but also their crops. We are thankful, however, for the fellowship that we share, so that we are able to bear one another's burdens in such a time of need.

Tanas, like many others with whom we have the privilege of partnering in kingdom work, has many responsibilities apart from serving his congregation. His family has offered a part of their land to establish a church building; the building is still under construction but coming along quite well. It served as the site for our Mission Helper Program's first-ever stop in Uganda. Tanas serves as a community leader, in essence filling the role as the city council secretary, in addition to teaching at a local school and advocating for area children who have lost their parents/guardians. Tanas has taken it upon himself to reach out to the many orphaned children of his area, in order to help them find some clothing for their backs and also to share with them the news that they do indeed have a Heavenly Father who has clothed them with the sparkling robes of the righteousness of Christ. As we spent time with him, Tanas's humble appreciation for the Word of God became obvious to us through his manner and conversation.



Left: Pastor Tanas Wangira with his family. Below: the Tanas home compound. Below left: Tanas translating Pastor Gurath's sermon for the congregation.



Recently he remarked, "What I have learned most from you people (the CLC mission helpers) is that everything comes back to Jesus. Formerly in my preaching I would give people directions, points to carry out in their lives, but now I think that will change. We must point people back to Christ, Who has done these things perfectly. He is where we get our strength."

Tanas and his family have begun rebuilding his homestead, as many have been forced to do. They will have to purchase food until the next planting and harvesting cycle. In the Spirit-created fellowship we share, we can be encouraged by his example, and by his zeal for bringing the message of Christ crucified for sinners to many. We now have the opportunity to encourage and support our brothers and sisters with the comfort by which we ourselves have been comforted.

*"But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior'" (Isaiah 43:1-3).*



Michael Gurath is pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Phoenix, Arizona, and a part-time missionary to Africa.



Andrew Roehl

**Age:** 23

**Program:** College—Teaching Track

**Year in School:** Senior

**Where were you born?** Live Oak, Florida.

**Where did you grow up?** I moved to Bismarck, North Dakota, when I was three, and my family has lived there ever since.

**Married? Unmarried?** Tell us about your family.

I married Angela Brown two years ago. She enjoys her social work job as a foster care coordinator for Jackson County. I have two older sisters: Shannon is married to Aaron Gulerud and lives in Phoenix, Arizona; and Emily is married to Paul Tiefel III and lives in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

**What hobbies, sports or extracurriculars interest you?**

I enjoy coaching track and field, card games, and playing guitar.

**Tell us one thing about yourself that most people don't know.**

If it were up to me we would sing Gregorian chant in church. But it's not up to me.



**Want to meet the person who may be your next pastor or Christian day school teacher?**



This series profiles the men and women who are preparing for the public teaching and preaching ministry at our Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

**Which academic subjects especially interest you?**

Currently, I'm immersed in church history.

**How did you first come to consider the public teaching or preaching ministry as a career?**

When I began college I was a math major attending the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. I had three roommates, Ross Kok, who graduated from the teaching program two years ago; Tom Naumann, who is currently a second year seminary student; and Luke Schaser. I had never considered going into teaching until one night Ross and Tom said, "You should just come to ILC." My mind was made up in five minutes to transfer schools. I am now in my fifth and final year of college. Ultimately, it is evident that the Holy Spirit has led me to this field.

**What have you appreciated most about your time at ILC?**

I have experienced a wide variety of educational environments, ranging from home schooling to public and private high schools, as well as public and private universities, and I have most enjoyed my time at ILC. It is tough to get an education when you yourself are evaluating what the professors are teaching. At ILC I was able to take on the role of a sponge, for I was no longer concerned about being taught things that were not in accordance with God's Word. I have also enjoyed the small class sizes, the chapels, my Christian friends, and the beautiful campus.

**What qualities do you think will most be needed by the future leaders of the church?**

I think if the next generation can remain aware of how serious the condition of the soul is and how unimportant everything else is, a big battle will have been won. I feel that apathy can destroy a church faster than it took to build it.





TLH = The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941; WS = Worship Supplement 2000; [ ] = Biblical Events Remembered

Date	Biblical Events Remembered	Verse	Reading	Comments
Feb 1		TLH 14	Genesis 45:1-10	Joseph saw clearly how God had overcome the brothers' evil so that good could result.
Feb 2	[The Presentation of Our Lord]	TLH 138	Genesis 48:1-11	God sets the lonely in families. What a blessing for any of us to see our own grandchildren!
Feb 3		TLH 442	Matthew 20:17-28	Let those striving for their own gain first stop to serve others.
Feb 4		TLH 383:1-3	Exodus 1:6-2:10	When His people were in trouble, God raised up His servant Moses to help. Later He would raise up a greater Servant.
Feb 5		WS 728	Matthew 22:23-32	Surely God can raise us from the grave, for He spoke of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as living even though they had died.
Feb 6		TLH 298	Exodus 5:22-6:9	God remembered His covenant even if the people didn't.
Feb 8		WS 781	Exodus 9:13-35	Pharaoh rejected the LORD in impenitence, but the Word of God produced fruit in others around him (v. 20).
Feb 9		TLH 609	Matthew 25:1-13	Why say, "I'll pay attention to Jesus later," when we can delight in preparing now to greet Him in glory?
Feb 10		TLH 195:3-4	Exodus 12:1-20	Everything about the Passover was to put the people in mind of God's deliverance—and of another Lamb.
Feb 11		WS 762	Matthew 26:1-13	The chief priests and the disciples were thinking only of themselves, but Mary wasn't, and neither was Jesus.
Feb 12		TLH 265	Exodus 12:21-36	The wicked opposition Pharaoh had mounted against God ended in failure. Your LORD is stronger than His enemies.
Feb 13		TLH 169	Matthew 27:38-50	The Passover Lamb is crucified for the sins of the people.
Feb 15		WS 746	Exodus 17:1-7	The LORD "proved" Himself again—even when He didn't need to, and even though they shouldn't have insisted on it.
Feb 16		TLH 624	Exodus 18:5-27	God often gives us elders who are blessed with wisdom and understanding. Appreciate them as gifts from Him.
Feb 17		TLH 287	Exodus 20:1-24	The LORD did not give the commandments to scare His people, but to help curb their sin (v. 20).
Feb 18		TLH 3	Mark 2:18-22	Take advantage of any opportunities you have to be with Jesus.
Feb 19		TLH 27	Exodus 23:1-16	Justice is very important to God. By being just in our own dealings, we show that we respect and love the LORD.
Feb 20		WS 758	Exodus 26:30-27:8	Look how beautiful the tabernacle would be! Beautiful churches for a beautiful God.
Feb 22		WS 770	Mark 3:13-30	In what ways are Christians accused today of being filled with "evil spirits?" Jesus' answer still applies.
Feb 23		TLH 490	Exodus 30:1-10	May my prayers be set before You as incense.
Feb 24		TLH 454	Exodus 32:1-14	Moses appealed to God's covenant when He was ready to destroy the people. Jesus successfully pleads on our behalf.
Feb 25		TLH 355	Mark 5:21-43	Whoever trusts in Jesus finds life.
Feb 26		TLH 438	Exodus 35:30-36:7	More offerings than they needed? Can that ever happen? It can when God moves the heart by His love.
Feb 27		TLH 319	Exodus 37:1-9	Pay special attention to the atonement cover (mercy seat). It signifies God, in His great mercy, covering over our sin.
Feb 29		TLH 467	Exodus 40:33-38	God was with His people then even as He is with us now.

# Open Doors

The Book of Acts records the rapid expansion of the early New Testament church. The Holy Spirit worked through the Word, using believers like Peter, John, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, James, and Paul. Of these men, Paul is one of the central figures. Luke describes three of Paul's "missionary journeys" which took him into areas that are now parts of Turkey and Greece. In his travels and mission work, Paul repeatedly looked for what he called "open doors." He says, "When I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord" (2 Corinthians 2:12). Again, speaking about Ephesus, he writes, "A great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Corinthians 16:9). Paul also asks the Colossian believers to pray that the Lord would open up more doors to preach the Gospel in Rome (Colossians 4:3).

Like the Apostle Paul, we too are witnesses of the crucified and risen Savior Who came for all people. As a synod, we seek to preach to all people the good news of sins forgiven in Christ, no matter where those people might be—under the same roof, down the street, on the other side of town, in another part of our state, or across the world. Technology has given us opportunities to reach farther and wider, and to come into contact with more people who are searching for the truth. Over the years of our existence as a synod, the Lord has opened many doors for us to preach the Gospel both here in the United States and across the world.

Consider the doors the Lord has opened for us to support domestic mission congregations in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Seattle, Spokane, Phoenix, Eau Claire, Winter Haven, Cheyenne, Winner, Denver, San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, St. Louis, Corpus Christi, Madison, Sister Lakes, Rapid City, Loveland, Dallas, Fairfax, Bismarck, Sioux Falls, North Port, Detroit, Albuquerque, Fargo, Appleton, Weslaco, Tacoma, Vernon, and Atlanta (yes, all of those congregations either are now, or were at one time "mission congregations"). Over the course of fifty years, the CLC has supported over fifty mission congregations across the United States and Canada. Over half of them are now self-supporting with a full-time pastor. Another fifteen percent are self-supporting with a part-time pastor. Six are still receiving support with a desire to become self-

supporting in the future. About twenty percent of those congregations are no longer in existence (for example: Missoula, Los Angeles, Neenah, and Hendersonville). While this aspect may be discouraging, we remember that it is not up to us to cause the growth. The Lord promises to do that in His good time and way. He simply calls us to cast the seed and preach the Word. He alone grants the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6). We don't always recognize or follow through on the opportunities that the Lord lays before us. Yet His Word continues on in spite of our failures. Thanks be to God!

Consider also the doors the Lord has opened for us across the world. In 1960 we were in fellowship with just one foreign church body, in Japan. In the 1970's the Lord opened the door for us to train men in Nigeria, where we called and sent our first full-time missionary. In the 1980's two more doors opened in India. While one of those doors seemed to shut when a split occurred between the CLC and Pastor Mohan Bas, the leader of the BELC, the Lord has strengthened the men there and has richly blessed the ministry in India, even causing us to call a second missionary to that fertile field. In the 90's opportunities arose in Thailand, and in the 2000's we saw an explosion of opportunity in Kenya, Tanzania, the Congo, Ghana, and Togo in Africa; and in Nepal and Myanmar in Asia. In the last five years we have established fellowship with groups or individuals in Australia, Mexico, Myanmar, Zambia, France, and Germany; and we are in ongoing study with groups in Zimbabwe, Argentina, Haiti, Rwanda, and Liberia. Indeed, the fields are white for harvest and the Lord continues to open doors for us to proclaim His Word of Truth both near and far!

And so we pray that the Lord would continue to open doors through which we would have opportunity to instruct others in the whole counsel of God. Lord, give us the wisdom, the strength, and the zeal to go through those doors, faithfully proclaiming Your truth, trusting



**Nathanael Mayhew** is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, and a member of the Board of Missions of the CLC.



## SEEN IN PASSING

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

**Self-Esteem is the Problem, Not the Solution.** Lutheran pastor and teacher John Pless notes, “We live in a culture where the self is assumed as the center of everything. Think of all the words in our vocabulary prefixed with self: self-esteem, self-worth, self-directed. Nothing is allowed to stand in the way of self-expression, especially when it comes to matters of gender and sex. The self is to be celebrated, not held in suspicion or suppressed and certainly not called to repentance. But for Luther, as for the Holy Scriptures, the self is the problem . . . In his commentary on the Galatians, Luther writes: ‘And this is the reason why our theology is certain: it snatches us outside ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive (American Edition 26:387).’” Pless, John. “I’ve Got to Be Me . . . or Not.” *Lutheran Witness*. Oct. 2015: 14-15. Print.

**Historic Chicago Nativity Scene Can Continue, Court Rules.** In a political and social atmosphere that seems increasingly hostile to Christians, advocates were pleased this past November when a ruling was handed down indicating that a crèche, or nativity scene, could continue to be displayed in Chicago’s Daley Plaza. The crèche has been set up each year since 1985, and will continue for the foreseeable future. “Our points of view, our values have thrived over two millennia and we shouldn’t be afraid to fight for those values now,” said Tom Brejcha, chief counsel for the Thomas More Society, which defended the display. Butts, Charlie. “Nativity scene marks three decades after court win.” *Legal-Courts*. OneNewsNow, 3 Dec. 2015. Web. 5 Dec. 2015.

**Today’s Pastors Disproportionately Affected by Obesity, Stress.** Recent research suggests that pastors in the U.S. are particularly susceptible to certain health issues, some samples reporting 54 % higher hypertension among clergy, 69% higher cholesterol problems, and 100% higher incidence of cancer. Many of these health problems stem from a well-documented tendency to obesity among pastors, which in turn is often caused by an irregular working schedule, and hurried and unhealthful meals. Interestingly, researchers also noted a connection between pastors’ poor health and their *cell phones*: “Today’s pastors face more stress—and the negative health repercussions that come with it—because they are bombarded with messages. They must constantly respond to delicate matters and pressing issues whether by text, email, or voice.” Macdonald, G. Jeffrey. “Sacrificing the Body.” *Leadership Journal*. Fall 2015:41-42. Print.

**American Moral Decline May Be Followed By Renewal—It’s Happened Before** Dr. Allan Carlson, former Hillsdale College professor and a fellow at several pro-family think tanks, says that the current deterioration of the nuclear family and consequent decline in morality is nothing new in the United States. In an interview with *World Magazine* he said, “Going back to 1630, there have been four distinct periods of family strength and renewal and four distinct periods of family decline. Things may look really dark right now, but that’s been true before.” He gave the colonial period as a prime example. In the early 1700’s there was a time when, in more than fifty percent of marriages, women were pregnant at the altar. Men stopped coming to church and frequently abandoned their families. That was followed by a period of moral renewal in the years leading up to American independence, said Carlson, and the cycle has been repeated several times since. Carlson expressed optimism about America’s future: “There’s going to be another renewal because we human beings—not just we

Americans, but all human beings—cannot tolerate a long period of moral incoherence. Something will fill the vacuum. I’m not sure what new form it will take this time around. It probably is going to surprise us, but . . . I can guarantee there will be a form of moral renewal. It’s going to happen because we have to find a way forward as this nation that has a stable social foundation.” Smith, Warren Cole. “Allan Carlson on coming U.S. moral revival.” *Lead Stories*. *World Magazine*, 12 Nov. 2015. Web. 5 Dec. 2015.

**Stones Crying Out.** With studies showing the percentage of Christians in society shrinking, we’re used to hearing the narrative about a former believer becoming a skeptic or atheist. But in an article for *Ministry Matters*, Pastor Drew McIntyre points out that there are many inspiring examples that go the other way—cases in which avowed atheists have become Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Word. He cites Alister McGrath, currently a Professor of Science and Religion at Oxford, as an example. McGrath grew up in Northern Ireland during the 1960’s, a period of conflict he says drove him into “an aggressive atheism.” Holder of an advanced biology degree, he found his attitude toward so-called “pure science” beginning to change: “The arguments that had once seemed bold, decisive, and conclusive increasingly turned out to be circular, tentative, and uncertain. The opportunity to talk with Christians about their faith revealed to me that I understood relatively little about their religion, which I had come to know chiefly through not-always-accurate descriptions by its leading critics . . . I also began to realize that my assumption of the automatic and inexorable link between the natural sciences and atheism was rather naïve and uninformed.” McGrath’s search brought him to the Anglican church, in which he became not only a professing member but a clergyman. McIntyre, Drew. “Stones Crying Out: Listening to Former Atheists.” *Ministry Matters*. *MinistryMatters.com*. 16 Dec. 2015. Web. 18 Dec. 2015.