

September 2018 VOL 61 NO. 3

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

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



CONVENTION

“Behold Your God!”

*“Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand,
And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward
is with Him, And His work before Him.”*

(Isaiah 40:10)



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“BEHOLD YOUR GOD!”

The thirty-third Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession was held at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin on June 21-24, 2018. The theme of the convention was “Behold Your God!”

Pastor David Pfeiffer served as chaplain to the convention, opening and closing each session with the Word of God—where we most clearly “Behold Our God!”

President Michael Eichstadt addressed the convention with his biennial report centered on that same theme, reminding us to recognize and proclaim the power of God in our homes, in our fellowship, in all the world, and in our testimony to the Truth.

The two essays that were presented further divided the convention theme into two parts:

- 1) “The LORD GOD came with a strong hand!” and
- 2) “The LORD GOD comes with a gentle embrace!”

The first essay was delivered by Professor John Ude.

The essay was based on Isaiah 40:9-10 (NIV):

“You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, ‘Here is your God.’ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.”

Professor Ude used several Old Testament Messianic

prophecies to demonstrate our inability to help our own cause and God’s strong hand in accomplishing our goal of life eternal for us.

The second essay of the convention was delivered by Pastor David Ude of Appleton, Wisconsin, and was retitled:

“Behold Your God—The Lamb’s Eye View”

In contrast to the first essay by Professor John Ude, which expounded upon the strength of God’s hands, the second essay drew our attention to the tenderness and gentle embrace of our Savior God. Our heavenly Father is both strong and gentle, perfectly exemplified by the Bible picture of the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd leads, tends, and carries His sheep. He laid down His life for the sheep only to take it up again when He rose from the dead. Our Shepherd–King now rules a Kingdom that will never end, as ongoing dispenser of grace and peace. We are with Him by faith, and He is with us in grace, holding us in His tender, powerful hands.

On Friday evening of the convention, the delegates were treated to a most encouraging report from the Project KINSHIP Committee and our foreign missionaries as they reported on the powerful work that our God is carrying out overseas. “Behold Your God!”

Convention Report
Continued on next page 4

SUMMARY OF CONVENTION COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ACTIONS



Elections

The following were re-elected:

President	Pastor Michael Eichstadt
Vice President	Pastor Mark Bernthal
Moderator	Pastor Paul Nolting
Secretary	Pastor Wayne Eichstadt
Board of Trustees	Mr. Tom Lentz Mr. Sherman Carstensen
Board of Regents	Pastor John Hein
Board of Missions	Pastor Nathanael Mayhew Mr. Joel Krafft
Board of Education and Publications	Pastor David Naumann Professor Ross Roehl
Newly elected	Mr. Jay Sydow as a layman on the Board of Regents.



Top: CLC President Michael Eichstadt (right) and Vice President Mark Bernthal. Above: two of the convention organists, Pastor David Schaller (left) and Pastor Paul Krause.



Above: CLC Moderator, Pastor Paul Nolting (left), and CLC Secretary, Pastor Wayne Eichstadt.

Board of Education and Publications

It was resolved to begin regular printed publication of daily devotions. The Board of Education and Publications was directed to oversee development of an online religion course beginning with updating and adding online Sunday School lessons.

Board of Regents/Immanuel Lutheran College

The convention directed a reinstatement of the compensation plan originally approved by the 2012 Convention (\$75/month increase per year and an annual cost of living adjustment). This budget increase is to be in effect for two years as long as the Reserve Fund balance does not fall below \$100,000. This increase is added into the final FY19 Budget approved by the convention.

Board of Missions

The Convention authorized the Board of Missions to begin calling a third full-time missionary. If the Lord provides a man to serve in this office, 50% of the first year's expense will be an addition to the CLC General Fund budget, and 50% will come from the Mission Development Fund (MDF). Thereafter, a plan will be implemented to move these costs into the regular Missions' budget within three years.



Above: convention chaplain, Pastor David Pfeiffer. Right: artifacts from various foreign mission fields; a drawing was held and they were given away.

Summary of convention committee reports and actions
Continued on next page 6



Doctrine

“Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship”

Much of the time at this year’s convention was taken up with discussion of the “Joint Statement”, a document submitted by representatives of the CLC, WELS and ELS as a possible resolution to one of the historic issues that has separated our fellowships—that is, what Scripture teaches concerning separation from false teachers. After debate that occupied Friday night and most of Saturday, the following resolution failed by a vote of 92 to 69: “Be it resolved that the CLC adopt the ‘Joint Statement’ Regarding the Termination of Fellowship as a scripturally sound presentation of doctrinal principles when dealing with the termination of fellowship.” The resolution that finally did pass on Sunday morning used the word “acknowledge” rather than “adopt,” as follows:

RESOLVED that we acknowledge with joy that the “Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship” is a scripturally sound presentation of doctrinal principles when dealing with the termination of fellowship.

RESOLVED that we ask the President of the CLC to relay our hope that the talks with the ELS and WELS can continue.

RESOLVED that we aim for a final disposition of the “Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship” at the 2020 Convention.

RESOLVED that we direct the 2019 General Pastoral Conference to discuss the “Difficulties that Remain” contained in the 2017 GPC recommendation concerning the “Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship.”

In other work assigned to the Floor Committee on Doctrine, the declaration of fellowship with Grace Evangelistic Lutheran Church in Liberia was ratified.

The Convention directed the 2019 Pastoral Conference to review the 2017 revision of the “CLC Theses and Antitheses on the Role of Admonition in the Termination of Fellowship with Church Bodies” and to report its findings to the 2020 Convention.

“How do things stand now?”

After the convention, CLC President Michael Eichstadt issued the following statement:

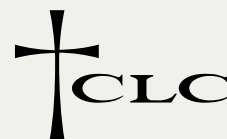
*Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
our loving and living Savior:*

One full day and portions of two other days at the recent CLC Convention were spent discussing the “Joint Statement on the Termination of Fellowship.” It was time well spent as many pastors and delegates expressed their support or concern regarding the document. The Spirit graciously led us as a body to conclude that the “Joint Statement” is scripturally sound. However, the Convention also stated that “it does not resolve all of the issues involving the doctrine of church fellowship. . . .” The Convention provided a path forward in expressing its desire that the meetings with ELS and WELS continue with a goal of a final determination on the “Joint Statement” at the 2020 Convention.

What does this mean for us now? While we all pray that one day there might be God-pleasing fellowship with the ELS and WELS, we are not there now. The representatives of all three synods agree that in order for true scriptural fellowship, there must be complete agreement on all the doctrines of the Bible. We do not have that at this time. Our talks with the other synods have been and will continue to be outside the framework of fellowship.

For more information, speak to your pastor. He will be happy to provide more details and answer any questions you may have.

*In the Savior’s service,
Michael Eichstadt,
CLC President*



THE “JOINT STATEMENT” DISCUSSION

“What are the main differences between the CLC on the one hand, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) on the other?”

ANSWER: From the CLC perspective, the four main theological differences between the CLC and the WELS/ELS are the following:

THE FOUR POINTS

- 1. Termination of fellowship with false teaching church bodies.** The CLC says that Romans 16:17-18 mandates separation, without delay, when a church body is “causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned.” The WELS/ELS claim to hold the same teaching, as evidenced by their adoption of the 2015 “Joint Statement.” However, many in the CLC say that the “Joint Statement,” though not unscriptural, is inadequate as a settlement of this issue. The document was not adopted at the 2018 CLC Convention and is still under study.
- 2. “In a State of Confession.”** This is closely related to point one. This phrase (Latin: *in statu confessionis*) has sometimes been used by the WELS/ELS to declare themselves in a state of “vigorously protesting fellowship” while failing to sever fellowship ties with a false-teaching church body. The CLC says this practice is unscriptural.
- 3. Thrivent.** Thrivent is a fraternal benefit society that offers insurance to its members and engages in extensive church work across many denominations. The CLC has identified membership in Thrivent as sinful unionism. The WELS/ELS view membership in Thrivent as a mere business transaction.
- 4. The role of women in society.** Both the CLC and the WELS/ELS uphold the Bible’s headship principle as regards women’s role in the church and home. The WELS, however, also extends this principle to society in general. The CLC says such a teaching goes beyond Scripture.

The foregoing are the main differences that separate us, though there are other areas of concern, such as triangular fellowship, the incursion of Church Growth methods, the doctrine of church and ministry, the moment of real presence in the Lord’s Supper, and fundraising.

—Professor Paul Naumann

“If the ‘Joint Statement’ is scriptural, why wasn’t it adopted?”

In connection with the debate on the “Joint Statement,” many were troubled by the question above. It is a good question, to which there is a simple answer: even if a statement contains nothing unscriptural, it can still be inadequate to settle the specific matter under discussion. As Edmund Reim once put it, “A confessional document may set forth nothing but Biblical truths in its various individual parts, and yet fail to meet the issue, to serve the very purpose for which it was designed.”

There are many historical examples of this. In 1529, Luther met Ulrich Zwingli at the Marburg Colloquy. The articles drawn up at that meeting were not unscriptural, yet Luther proved that they did not adequately settle the doctrinal issue of whether the body and blood of Christ are really present in the Lord’s Supper.

In the early 1900’s, Lutherans of many synods tried to settle an old controversy regarding the doctrine of election. After more than twenty years of discussions, they finally came up with a document, the “Chicago Theses,” that they hoped everyone could agree to. However, the document was ultimately rejected as a basis of union, not because it was unscriptural, but because it did not adequately settle the doctrinal issue. As one observer put it, “It is possible to read into the wording either the doctrinal conceptions of the Synodical Conference or the opposing conception.”

In 1950, the Missouri Synod adopted another document, the “Common Confession,” as a complete settlement of differences with the American Lutheran Church. But the Wisconsin Synod rejected the “Common Confession,” not because it was unscriptural, but because it had “been officially interpreted as a settlement of past differences which in fact are not settled.”

That is one reason why this year’s convention, while acknowledging the “Joint Statement” to be scriptural, nevertheless failed to adopt it: many felt that it that it was inadequate to settle the doctrinal issue concerning the termination of church fellowship that has separated the CLC from the WELS/ELS for decades.

—Professor Paul Naumann



Installation of synodical office holders.

Summary of convention committee reports and actions

Continued from page 6

CLC Constitution –

The proposed change to Article V-A, allowing laymen to serve as CLC Secretary and Moderator, was adopted. The proposed change to Article VIII-B, allowing pastors emeriti to serve as conference visitors, was not adopted. A proposed change to the title and wording of Bylaw 19 was adopted, as recommended by the CLC Board of Trustees and the Standing Constitution Committee. The title of the “Auditing Committee” was changed to the “Finances Inspection Committee” to better reflect our intent and practice in Bylaw 19.

Conference Visitors –

The Convention ratified the conference visitors as elected by their respective conferences: Great Lakes, Pastor Michael Wilke; Minnesota, Pastor Douglas Libby; Pacific Coast, Pastor David Naumann; West Central, Pastor Michael Roehl; South Eastern, Pastor Matthew Hanel.

Finance –

The following Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) budget was adopted:

Education and Publications	\$15,000
Trustees	\$89,000
Missions	\$377,000
Regents.....	\$550,000
General Fund Budget.....	\$1,031,000
ILC Revenue.....	\$861,000
Total FY19 Spending Plan	\$1,892,000

It was resolved to enact the Trustees’ recommendation to increase retirement contributions from \$170/month to \$180/month beginning 1/1/2019, \$190/month beginning 1/1/2020, and \$200/month beginning 1/1/2021.

Membership –

Teacher Brandan Heinze and Pastors Timothy Daub, Thomas Naumann, Samuel Rodebaugh, and Stefan Sonnenfeld were accepted as voting members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. The dissolutions of Divine Word Lutheran Church, Spring Valley, MN and Grace Lutheran Church, Cape Coral, FL were acknowledged with regret.

Appointments for periodical editors were ratified:

Professor Paul Naumann (*Lutheran Spokesman*)

Pastor Wayne Eichstadt (*Journal of Theology*)

Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer (*Ministry by Mail*)

Pastor Glenn Oster (CLC Webmaster).

(A full list of appointments will be published in the convention proceedings.)

Memorials:

The memorial regarding the joint meetings between the CLC and WELS/ELS was answered by the resolutions from the Floor Committee for Doctrine. The memorial regarding the Board of Doctrine being the sole representative of the CLC in future discussions with WELS/ELS was rejected.

The convention communion service offering was designated for the Mission Development Fund and totaled \$3,147.85. The next convention is scheduled to be held on the Immanuel Lutheran College campus, June 25-28, 2020 (Thursday through Sunday).



Joe Lau is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Also contributing to this article were Pastors Wayne Eichstadt and Michael Roehl, and Professor Paul Naumann.

Labor Day Thanksgiving

“Here is what I have seen:

It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage. As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God.”

(Ecclesiastes 5:18-19).

Labor Day—what does it mean to you?

The last big weekend of summer and the beginning of the school year are perhaps the two most common answers. But it also has to do with recognizing those who labor, and what they contribute to our society. Many feel that working men and women are the fabric of our society. They make, build, sell, or service many of those things that we take for granted as part of our daily lives. At the same time, they are working to support their families so that their dependents have a roof over their heads, food on the table, and clothes on their bodies. Perhaps it's a good thing to have a special day on which those who labor are recognized for the blessings they bring to others around them.

In our text, Solomon observed something a bit deeper than that. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon describes life from two perspectives, one of them as the world sees it—how things are *“under the sun.”* That is the point of view seen in the paragraph above. Solomon also observed God's hand in the way life works. This Spirit-inspired wisdom of Solomon reminds us that we have another and even greater cause for expressing appreciation on Labor Day. It is found in the loving kindness of our God. Yes, we have to work for a living, and the unpleasant aspects of work—from thistles to sore muscles, from headaches to blistered hands—can all be traced back to the fall into sin. However, the Lord

While we labor in this world “under the sun,” the Lord has given us a sense of purpose and accomplishment in using the gifts and strength with which He has blessed us.

has not dealt with us according to our sin, but according to His merciful kindness. And so the Lord also has blessed the labors of our hands (Psalm 90:17). The God Who has delivered us from the curse of sin has also granted us this grace that *“It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage.”* (verse 18) Yes, while we labor in this world “under the sun,” the Lord has given us a sense of purpose and accomplishment in using the gifts and strength with which He has blessed us.

In His providential grace we are allowed to enjoy the fruits of our labors. As we prosper and receive bountifully from our labors, it is good for us to remember what Solomon observed, *“As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God.”* (verse 19)

So this Labor Day, while we take a day off from work to enjoy a little leisure with friends and family in honor of those who labor among us, let us also remember the Lord and what a blessing it is to have a job, whether it be in the home, the church, or the secular community. The Lord has given us the opportunity to work for our own benefit as well as for the good of others. *“This is the gift of God.”* (v.19)



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

TLH 529

I Leave All Things to God's Direction

“What pleaseth God, that pleaseth me.”

(Hymn 529 refrain)

One of the Christian's most important attitudes—and also one of the most difficult to achieve and maintain—is conformity of our will to God's will. This is not simply a matter of *submitting* our will to God's will, like a child obeying his parents and taking a bath when he'd really rather continue playing with his toy trucks in the dirt. Conformity of our will to God's will is instead a matter of *desiring the same thing* that God desires.

Sometimes that's hard. What if God's will is not what we would choose for ourselves? We want what we want, and we want God to desire and provide *those* things for us: good health, faithful spouse and friends, satisfying career with financial stability, good government—it's a long list. We tend to want His will to conform to ours, rather than the other way around. Then we must remember, **“The will of God shall be my pleasure/ While here on earth is mine abode;/ My will is wrong beyond all measure,/ It doth not will what pleaseth God.”** (Verse 3)

We are not wiser than God. We often do not know our own good, and we most certainly do not always know the Lord's purposes in allowing many of the unpleasant

circumstances of our lives. What we *do* know is that whatever our circumstances may be, God's love for us remains steadfast; it is operative even in the hardest of times. So this hymn proclaims, **“I leave all things to God's direction,/ He loveth me in weal¹ and woe;/ His will is good, true His affection,/ With tender love His heart doth glow.”** (Verse 1) We may not understand God's purpose, but we embrace the promise of the text upon which this hymn is based: *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* (Romans 8:28)

Ultimately, it's a matter of faith, isn't it? We often don't understand why we suffer things such as ill health, financial problems, the death of a loved one, relationship difficulties, or other such trying circumstances. In fact, we may never, in this life, know the purpose. What we do know, however, is that the One Who allows these things in our lives does so for good, out of a very personal love for us. **“God knows what must be done to save me,/ His love for me will never cease;/ Upon His hands He did engrave me²/ With purest gold of loving grace.”** (Verse 4)

There is another important thing we do know. We know that any present hardships we may experience will ultimately issue forth—whether in this life or not until the real and permanent one to come—in joy and gladness. **“My God hath all things in His keeping,/ He is the ever faithful Friend;/ He grants me laughter after weeping,/ And all His ways in blessings end./ His love endures eternally:/ What pleaseth God, that pleaseth me.”** (Verse 2)



It is as my friend Don Bishop wrote at the back of his Bible, summing it all up: “We win.”

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

Listen to hymn at: <http://lutherantacoma.com/hymns/194.mp3>

Hymnwriter: Solomo Franck (1659-1725), wrote approximately 330 hymns, of which we have two in The Lutheran Hymnal: “O God, Forsake Me Not” and “I Leave All Things to God's Direction.” Franck collaborated with Johann Sebastian Bach by writing the librettos for some of Bach's cantatas.

Composer: Georg Neumark (1621-1681), is known today primarily as a hymn writer and composer. Like Franck, Neumark also collaborated with J.S. Bach, writing the texts for some of Bach's cantatas and other vocal works, as well as the chorale melody “*Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten*,” (“Whoever only the loving/beloved God lets prevail”—literal translation by Pastor Wayne Eichstadt) which is the melody used in this hymn as well as 194 (“Abide with Us, the Day Is Waning”) and 518 (“If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee”)

¹ *Weal* means “Prosperity” or “Happiness”

² Isaiah 49:16: “See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands.”

God-Centered Worship

You are not a child of God by virtue of being alive. You are God's child because of His devotion and His commitment.

It has been correctly observed that genuine, God-centered worship is not limited to worship services. With their entire lives, God's children worship the God of their creation and redemption. Our worship reveres God, and that includes expressions of exultation, such as "Praise the Lord!" This is much more than emotion. Genuine praise is based on and flows from substance. As we are reminded in Psalm 47:7, "*Sing praises with understanding.*"

Understand that it is the Lord Who gave you life and being, helped you hitherto, and gives as a gift every breath you take. Understand also that you were a lost sinner doomed to eternal separation from God, and that He nevertheless loved you, found you, redeemed you, made you His child, and reserved a place for you in His Father's house. Yes, worship is an expression of praise and joy, and this is based on what He has done for you. You are not a child of God by virtue of being alive. You are God's child because of His devotion and His commitment. Indeed, for you to be a child of God, Christ had to perform the greatest miracle of all—changing someone who was a sinner into an heir of eternal life. To that end Christ lived a perfect life on your behalf in order to impute His righteousness to you, and then on the cross He paid the ultimate price in order to send your sins away as far as the east is from the west. Jesus made you a child of God and an heir of everlasting salvation.

God-centered worship, therefore, will always be mindful of this, whether we're talking about the entire life of a believer or a worship service. In the Psalms we see examples of worship. Proclaim God's Word! Play musical instruments! Sing new songs to the Lord! Clap your hands! Shout for joy! There are also times to bow down our heads. Psalm 32:5 describes a key aspect of genuine worship: "*I said I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD.*" We come before God acknowledging our frailties and failings, but we still come to Him because of His grace and mercy. His Word

invites us and gives us confidence in His goodness. "*And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.*"

An excellent example of God-centered worship is found in the very first worship service held in the temple built by King Solomon (2 Chronicles 6). Time after time, on behalf of the congregation, he confesses their weaknesses and sins. Truly, he even goes so far as to confess sins that he knows they will commit in the future. The comforting refrain throughout the prayer is the message of forgiveness.

"When You hear, **forgive.**" (21)

"**Forgive** the sin of Your people." (25)

"**Forgive** the sin of Your servants." (27)

"Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and **forgive.**" (30)

"**Forgive** Your people who have sinned against You." (39)

In His blessed response to the prayer of Solomon, the Lord says, "*If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will **forgive** their sin.*" (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Repentance and faith are the foundation of genuine, God-centered worship, whether we're referring to the entire life of a Christian or a worship service. "Praise the Lord" has much meaning when offered in the context of beholding the awesome work of God in creation, and it has *far greater* meaning when it is offered in view of the cross and the empty tomb! In order to create the world, God spoke; but when God redeemed sinful men and women, He had to send His Son to seek and to save the lost. The saving of sinners required the bloodshed and life of His Son, and His Son was willing to offer Himself as the sacrifice.



Genuine, God-centered worship is always centered in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Delwyn Maas is pastor of Gift of God Lutheran Church in Mapleton, North Dakota.

Pursue Holiness

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.”

(Hebrews 12:14-16)

When we read the first verse of this passage, we may be tempted to throw up our hands in despair. It's hard enough to pursue peace in a world that is anything but peaceful. But then, we are also called to pursue *holiness*? That seems like an impossible task. We can never hope to be perfectly holy this side of heaven.

But we need to keep the first eleven chapters of Hebrews in mind. They explain how our holiness has been accomplished for us by Jesus. He, as the Savior, is the One Who is holy and perfect and gave that holy and perfect life in exchange for ours. 2 Corinthians 5:21 beautifully states this fact: *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* Now with that exchange having taken place, we are to live in that peace and comfort of the Gospel and pursue that holiness of Christ. It is in that holiness of Christ, won on the cross of Calvary, that you and I now spend each and every day of our lives.

We pursue holiness by *“looking unto Jesus”* (Hebrews 12:2)—by staying connected to Him through the means of grace. As we stay connected to our Savior, we stay focused on the fact that there is nothing more precious than the grace of God. There is nothing more precious than knowing that our sins are forgiven through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pursuing holiness keeps our focus where it should be: on eternity.

Sadly, we see many examples of Christians who become

stagnant in their faith and stop pursuing holiness. They leave behind the daily reading of Scripture. They make do with occasional church attendance. They are satisfied never to speak the name of God save in the rote recitation of table prayers. Such an attitude is not fitting for children of God and will almost certainly lead to problems that were experienced by others who did not pursue holiness.

An example of such a person is Esau, *“who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.”* This may not seem like much of a sin, but consider the importance of this birthright. This birthright included

more than just material blessings, it included spiritual blessings. Esau did not consider how the birthright was a special blessing that would pass down, in his family, the promise of the coming Savior. He was more concerned about the immediate satisfaction of his physical needs. The *“here and now”* was more important to him than the far-off future. The things of God did not interest Esau, and so he is rightly called a *“profane person.”*

Be on guard lest you find yourself to be a profane person concerned more about the things of this world than the things of God. Pray that the Holy Spirit would lead you to pursue holiness by treasuring Jesus as your Savior, considering Him and His Word your number one priority, *“lest anyone fall short of the grace of God.”*

Robert Sauers is pastor of Luther Memorial Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and a member of the CLC Board of Missions



READY TO GIVE AN ANSWER (WORK RIGHTEOUSNESS)

Passages that will help you respond when people say...

“I try to be a good person.”

“I can do it mySELF!” said the young daughter to her daddy as she made her case for independence. After a few minutes, the first statement seemingly forgotten, and a somewhat impatient girl cried, “Daddy, will you help me?”

This vignette of child development also offers a glimpse into human nature. The same “I can do it myself” attitude is every sinner’s natural response to God. The problem is that, unlike physical and emotional development in which a child does mature and become independent, there is no way for a sinner to save himself or even contribute to his own salvation.

A sinner’s conscience testifies that he fails and cannot live up to perfection. In order to reconcile this fact with a “do-it-myself” mentality, the standard has to be lowered.

Human nature attempts to diminish the expectation by creating a *comparison* (between my life and someone else’s) instead of using *evaluation* with God’s Law as the standard. Human nature also attempts to diminish expectation by making “try” equal to “accomplish.” The foolishness of this ploy is obvious. You can imagine how the conversation would unfold if a speeding driver told the officer, “I know I was going 50 mph in a 30 mph zone, but I was *trying* to follow the speed limit.”

Scripture enables us to answer the “I try” arguments and any concept of work-righteousness. It begins with affirming God’s expectation. Where there is conviction of sin, it ends in the joy of the Gospel.

God’s Expectation

“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”
(Leviticus 19:2)

“If you love those who love you, what reward have you? . . . Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:46,48)

“As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’” (1 Peter 1:15-16)

God declared His Law standard in the Old Testament, Jesus repeated it in His preaching, and Peter applied it in his teaching. There is no truthful way to diminish, revise, or otherwise lessen God’s demand: “Be perfect!” End of story. No discussion. Bottom line.

This divine expectation leaves “try to be a good person” like a limp wash rag on the “do-it-myself” rack of pride.

Universal Failure to Live Up to God’s Expectation

“There is none who does good, No, not one.”

(Psalm 14:3)

“O my soul, you have said to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You.’”

(Psalm 16:2)

David declares sinners’ universal inability to please God (Psalm 14) and the emptiness of whatever we might call “good” if it is not rooted in and growing from the Lord (Psalm 16).

Genuine Accomplished Salvation

“When we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:6,8)

On our own, we are without strength, and every effort to try will fail. God loved us and sent Jesus to rescue us.

The sinner convicted of his sin cries out, “Daddy will you help me?” The Father replies, “I have and I will.”

We are entirely dependent on the Lord for salvation. Folded safely in my Father’s bosom, I have an entirely different kind of independence—independence from sin and its condemnation. There I have independence from the pressure of trying to be a good person; in its place I have the confidence of actually *being* a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).



Wayne Eichstadt is pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Spokane Valley, Washington.

The ROAD TO REFORMATION

In observation of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, we are presenting a brief survey of the life of Martin Luther. The series continues with major events in the life of the Reformer that took place after 1517.

—1534—

Found in Translation

Have you ever been frustrated when listening to a customer service representative, teacher, or doctor who has difficulty with the English language? You know what they have to say may be very important, but you can't understand it. Think of how much more important it is to understand what God has to say. For most of us, that has not been a problem. From childhood we have had access to Scripture in our own language. In fact, the Bible Gateway website offers fifty-five English translations of the Bible. In our foreign mission fields, however, providing access to God's Word in the indigenous language is critical to the work.

Luther faced a similar challenge in sixteenth century Germany. The few translations of the Bible available in German were not very complete or reliable. German states also had regional dialects that made even verbal communication difficult. Luther sought to produce a German Bible in the vernacular, the contemporary language of the common people. He wanted to liberate Germans from being subject to the elite or priestly class when it came to Bible interpretation. The Catholic Church had long been the filter through which the Word was accessed, skewing the fundamental Bible teaching of justification by faith alone.

God had prepared Luther for this work. As a youth in Magdeburg, he was one of few in Germany who had learned Greek. While hiding in the Wartburg following his being declared an outlaw heretic at the Diet of Worms, he translated the New Testament in just eleven weeks, using Erasmus's second edition of the Greek New Testament (1519). Called the *September Bibel*, it was published in 1522 and sold nearly five thousand copies within the first two months. One thing that made Luther's version superior was that he keenly observed conversations throughout the



German world to capture the most precise usage of words. In fact, because of this work on the German Bible, Luther is often credited for having developed the standardized written German language.

Producing a German Old Testament proved to be a much more difficult and time-consuming task. Poor health and other responsibilities often delayed this work as well. Luther knew Hebrew, but it would require a team of linguists and experts over the course of ten years to complete the job. In May of 1528, Luther referred to the difficult work of translating Jeremiah as "giving birth." Getting Hebrew writers of old to speak German was compared to the story of the nightingale that tried to teach her song to the cuckoo.

Luther's Old Testament came out in parts from 1523-1532. The entire canonical Bible (as well as the Apocrypha) was published by Hans Lufft in Wittenberg in 1534. It included 117 woodcuts for illustrations, as well as introductions to the books of the Bible, and Luther's commentary notes. During the next forty years, over 100,000 copies were made. It was read by millions. To aid those with vision problems, large print editions were produced.

Printing the Bible was a profitable business. In fact, in 1543, the three booksellers were the richest men in Wittenberg. Luther, however, did not benefit financially. He said, "For I have received it for nothing, and have given it for nothing, and also desire nothing for it. Christ my Lord has paid me for it many hundred thousand-fold."

In the years preceding his death, Luther made numerous revisions of his translation, always striving to do better. May we all have this same attitude toward our work for the Lord!



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

Malaria Misadventures

The little fella pictured on the right is your basic East African mosquito. He looks harmless enough, but he's got a dirty little secret that he's all too willing to share. He can't help himself; he gets hungry, like any other creature might, and he goes on the hunt—for blood. In the process, unbeknownst to him, he ends up spreading his disease to those from whom he feeds. Yes, that's right, *malaria*.

For general consumption of this tale, I will omit the graphic details of what malaria can do to a person. I'll just say that, when I contracted malaria, those were a few of the longest days I have experienced. However, I am thankful that it was detected early on and that I was blessed to have the means to pay for the doctor visit, lab fees, and treatment (about twenty-three US dollars.)

I will share a few other things about the day I went to the doctor, because I can laugh about it now. There I was, having been up for about thirty-six hours and doing the malaria mambo for a greater part of the night. With a delicate system, I boarded a crowded *matatu* (minibus taxi) for the "half hour" trip to the doctor. Mind you, anywhere you go, people will tell you it's only "thirty minutes." By the good Lord's grace, the trip was incident free, and I made it to the doctor. No insurance forms, short wait-time, and pay-per-service! A quick blood test showed signs of malaria and they loaded me up with about 30 tablets to take and a needle shot for the road. This is where the story really starts to take off.

On the way back home, the fever was starting to kick in. I was sitting in the *matatu* dripping in cold sweat. Little did I know the driver was in a bit of a hurry this day and

he ended up cutting off a couple other *matatu* drivers in the process. Usually this is not a big deal, but on this particular day, one other driver would have none of it, and he succumbed to road rage. We were taking a right turn

around the bend when the one who had the rage building in him took his vehicle up to ramming speed and smacked us off the road and into a pole. Thankfully, it ended up being more of a glancing blow, and no one was hurt. At this point everyone was piling out of their respective *matatus* and yelling at each other. I just sat there, not really being able to process what had just happened. To make a long story short, I hopped on another, less dented *matatu* and made it home, cooked up a couple of big pots of water for a much needed bath and slept the whole night through, feeling three hundred percent better the next day. Three days later I was back at it, preaching and teaching on Sunday. There was an announcement made after church that Sunday that I had succumbed to malaria, and there

was a round of applause as if it were some rite of passage and I was one step closer to becoming a true Kenyan.

This story may be humorous, and I can laugh about the idea of having a parasite in my liver to keep me company the rest of my days. However, there are many who are affected by malaria that simply cannot afford the treatment. For our brothers and sisters in Christ and all throughout

East Africa and beyond, malaria and its attendant suffering is just a fact of life.

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



There was an announcement made after church that Sunday that I had succumbed to malaria, and there was a round of applause as if it were some rite of passage and I was one step closer to becoming a true Kenyan.



Bethel Lutheran Church Humble, Texas

“Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.”

(Genesis 28:10-11)

The event is familiar. Jacob, fleeing from Esau, spent the night and saw in a dream the ladder reaching to heaven. There the Lord standing above gave to Jacob the same promise that had been given to Abraham and Isaac. Upon waking, Jacob declared, *“Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it. . . . How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God [‘Beth-El’], and this is the gate of heaven!”* (Genesis 28:16-17)

Fifty-three years ago, a parochial school teacher, resting his head upon the rock of Scripture, severed ties with the synod he had known. At the request of a few families, he served them as pastor. He was led to the CLC, and took some courses at Immanuel Seminary. He returned to Houston and was officially installed as pastor. Max Goeschel, with a few others, heard the promise of the Lord, *“I am with you and will keep you wherever you go.”* (Genesis 28:15) The congregation took the name *Bethel*, “House of God,” and so it has been through all the years which have followed.

They worshiped in a private home and an elementary school for the first four years. There were only a few who gathered there, but they valued the Word above all else. Having moved into to a renovated garage, the Lord was with them—as evidenced by the need to expand not long after. Due to an encroaching highway project, that property was sold, and the Lord went with them to a new location in Spring, Texas. Here he granted them a large “House of God” and a school.



Through the years, the outward numbers have dwindled for many reasons. Once more, Bethel appears to have returned to where it began fifty-three years ago. A stone, a house where a few faithful individuals rest their heads with joy. For through all the years, from one pastor to another, "The Rock" was with them, ever keeping His promise, "I will be with you wherever you go." For it is not the building, whether simple or magnificent, nor the size of the congregation which makes Bethel the "House of God." It is, as it always has been, the Word of the Lord, the ladder which reaches to heaven and reveals standing above all, the Lord, the Lamb of God, Jesus Who was crucified and Who lives forever. Though in the eyes of the world it may seem a small thing, still the promise of the Lord stands true today as it did when this congregation began, as it did in Jacob's day, "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go."

This, too, can be seen not only in that He has kept this congregation going, but also has provided the temporal means to do so. The original property was sold and that money was used to buy and build the church/parsonage which was dedicated in 1976. That new property, due to finances, was sold by decision of the congregation, and the proceeds used to relocate and begin again. The Lord blessed His people with an abundance to do so. In March of 2017 the congregation relocated to Humble, Texas, about seventeen miles east of Spring, purchasing a house on two lots. Above the garage is an "Elisha" apartment. A room, with a table, a chair, and a lampstand (II Kings 4:10) where the pastor resides. Who but the Lord would have thought that the land and buildings, purchased and raised in each place this

congregation has called home, would one day be the means by which the congregation could now continue. How gracious and wise the Lord is, Whose thoughts and ways are not our thoughts or ways. Who but the Lord knows whether, in another fifty-three years, those who are members here may look back upon what this congregation has done in simple faith, and see that the Lord's promise, "I will be with you wherever you go," remains unchanged.

The property that was purchased consists of two lots on the corner of Fourth Street and D Avenue in Humble, Texas. The house was built in 1948 and is used for church purposes: the living room as the chapel, one room for the pastor's office, and another for storage. The area in which it is located is a nice quiet neighborhood. The long-range plans of the city are to improve the area. It seemed wise to the congregation to get in on the "ground floor" so that as the homes are remodeled or torn down and new ones built, we are already here. The congregation also needed to find an area with no deed restrictions. The versatility of the home and property also attracted the congregation to this site.

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, of Humble, Texas goes forward resting its head upon the Rock, and as Jacob said, years later when he was returning to Canaan and wrestling with the Lord, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" (Genesis 32:26) Bethel now goes forward with confident faith in the promises of her Lord and Savior.

Roland Gurgel is pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church in Humble, Texas.

Bethel appears to have returned to where it began fifty-three years ago. A stone, a house upon which a few faithful individuals rest their heads with joy.



Still the promise of the Lord stands true today as it did when this congregation began, as it did in Jacob's day, "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go."



“BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS SEPTEMBER 2018

TLH = The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941; WS = Worship Supplement 2000; LSB = Lutheran Service Book, 2006

Date	Verse	Reading	Comments
Sept 1	TLH 141	John 11:45-53	Caiaphas was right that one man needed to die for the people, but not in the way he thought. Jesus needed to die for the sins of all people.
Sept 3	TLH 502; LSB 830	2 Timothy 1:8-14	Even if it brings us suffering and trouble, we need not be ashamed to testify about our Lord. The Spirit will help us in this.
Sept 4	TLH 488	Numbers 12:1-15	Miriam and Aaron should have thought twice before speaking rashly against God’s called servant. We should respect our called servants, too.
Sept 5	TLH 633; LSB 610	1 Chronicles 22:2-16	David (who made his reputation by fighting) was not to build the temple because it was supposed to remind the people of the peace and rest God gives.
Sept 6	TLH 26	Psalms 105:1-5	Remember the wonders God has done for you. You will be comforted as well as strengthened in your faith.
Sept 7	TLH 650	Joel 1:2-15	The locust plague in Judah was a foretaste of a greater judgment. For us it is a call to repent and believe the Gospel while there is still time.
Sept 8	TLH 27	Joel 2:28-32	How do we escape the Judgment of God? All who call on the name of the Lord (believe in Jesus) will be saved.
Sept 10	WS 739	John 14:15-27	The work of the Holy Spirit is to put us in mind of the Word of Christ (v. 26).
Sept 11	TLH 292	2 Timothy 3:1-5, 10-17	We are surely in the “last days” now, for everything Paul says is already happening; but the Scriptures will equip us for everything that is good.
Sept 12	WS 784	Numbers 13:26-33	Except for Caleb and Joshua, the Israelites were afraid to enter the land God had promised to them. Things never go well for those who distrust God.
Sept 13	TLH 427; LSB 727	Psalms 108	The psalmist (David) expresses confidence in God’s love and in God’s ability to overcome his enemies (contrast this with Israel in the previous reading.)
Sept 14	TLH 213	Psalms 110	Our Lord Jesus Christ rose again from the dead, winning the victory over all His enemies (and ours).
Sept 15	TLH 23	Amos 5:25-27	Israel did not love the Lord in their hearts, but worshiped other gods who could not save them. May we never do likewise.
Sept 17	TLH 142	John 18:1-11	Jesus was willing to suffer hell and death on account of the sins of everyone in the world. What great love!
Sept 18	TLH 421	Titus 2:1-15	While we wait for the Lord Jesus Christ to come again, we teach and live according to the way He taught us.
Sept 19	WS 753	Titus 3:1-11	Why do what is good? Because we have been saved through our Lord Jesus Christ and made heirs of eternal life!
Sept 20	TLH 235:1-2, 6; LSB 913	Psalms 111	Those who follow the Lord have “good understanding” and are blessed. Holy and awesome is His name!
Sept 21	TLH 346	Psalms 112	The world tells us we would be better off heathen than Christian. Is it true? This psalm says, “No!”
Sept 22	TLH 75; LSB 338	Amos 9:11-15	The people of Israel would be restored spiritually by the coming of Jesus Christ—Who restores each of us, too.
Sept 24	TLH 204	John 19:38-20:9	Christ was buried but rose again from death, setting a pattern which all His children will follow.
Sept 25	TLH 367; LSB 531	Philemon 1	Paul shows love for Onesimus by pleading for him before Philemon. Be reminded then of how Christ, in love, pleads for us when we sin.
Sept 26	WS 747	Psalms 115	Our sinful natures like to take the glory away from God, but—led by the Spirit—we give it all back. Praise the Lord!
Sept 27	TLH 20	Proverbs 27:1-2	Don’t praise yourself. Praise others. Praise the Lord!
Sept 28	TLH 618	Obadiah 15-21	The day of the Lord is near—that means judgment for those who have turned from Him, but deliverance for those who trust in Him.
Sept 29	TLH 486; LSB 950	Acts 1:15-26	Jesus called Matthias through the other apostles, just as he calls pastors and teachers through congregations today.

CLC Certification for Elementary Education Through ILC

“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

Jesus' words are here speaking about pastors, but apply equally to Christian day school teachers and would in that sphere include women. It is because of Jesus' words that our church body has a standard for the CLC Certification for Elementary Education in place.

Sometimes people wonder why our church body thinks there is a need for someone who has an elementary education degree from a secular university to take these additional courses to be CLC certified. Every one of the required classes is a religious study, even the few that don't seem to be so directly. These courses are Old Testament and New Testament Introduction, Dogmatics, Symbolics, Church History, History and Philosophy of Education, Religion Methods, Practical Theology for Teachers, and a teaching internship conducted in a CLC parochial school. If any of these classes were taught at a public college, they would undoubtedly be taught in a manner which attacks and undermines what the Bible teaches. Public college classes, in addition, regularly attack Biblical teachings such as the reality of only true God, the Trinity, creation taking place in six regular days about six thousand years ago, salvation through Jesus Christ alone, the total depravity of man's sinful state, man's reason not being the arbiter of truth, absolute truth revealed in the inspired and inerrant Word of God, and redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, the God Man.

Thus the purpose of the certification requirements is to provide thorough training in the Word of God. The church body has the responsibility of knowing that its full-time public ministers of the gospel have had such training. This certification process, then, is not raising a challenge against non-CLC-certified teachers, as if to indicate that they have not had sufficient training to teach elementary grades. Rather, as a church whose single purpose is to teach the Word of God faithfully, we properly and legitimately

encourage and provide for the religious training of those teaching the Word of God in our name. The form for providing and accomplishing such training may vary, but this standard is established in God's Word.

We ask those called as full-time teachers in our schools to indicate their confessional subscription to the *Book of Concord*, “The Brief Statement,” “Concerning Church Fellowship,” and “Concerning Church and Ministry.” Individuals can certainly read these on their own. But most individuals, reading them on their own, are not going to gain a comprehensive understanding of the history, context, and implications of these confessions, nor of the current examples of the errors exposed. So those who would be public teachers of the Word in our schools are encouraged to study them comprehensively.

Ongoing personal study and Bible Class studies certainly may bring an individual to the same goal. We do not deprecate the understanding of a layperson. And this certification standard of the synod does not dictate what a congregation must do. Each congregation, knowing the qualifications of its own members or others, can nominate qualified individuals to their call list, call and install them, and—if desired—later assist them in seeking CLC certification, even at a distance from ILC.

Some have asked what Immanuel Lutheran College is doing to assist teachers in becoming certified. As of this year, all but two of the classes are available online through ILC. Professors have also made special arrangements for such classes by assisting qualified pastors and teachers in the congregation to teach such classes under ILC supervision.

For more information about the online courses available, sample classes, or the CLC Convention Guidelines for Certification, go to the three relevant links on the ILC website at <http://ilc.edu/academics/> and <http://ilc.edu/academics/college/>.



John Ude is a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Lutheran Spokesman

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

In accord with our usage and order, **Heidi Nelson**, who was called by Grace Lutheran Church, Fridley, Minnesota, to be its teacher, was installed on July 22, 2018.
—Pastor John Hein

Great Lakes Pastoral Conference

Living Hope Lutheran Church, Appleton, Wisconsin

September 25-27, 2018

Agenda:

- Evangelical Answers to Modern Questions From Young People—Pastor Andrew Schaller
- What is the Kingdom of God?
—Pastor David Schaller
- Homiletics (Essayist's Choice)
—Pastor Michael Eichstadt
- Evangelism (Essayist's Choice)
—Pastor Thomas Naumann
- New Testament Exegesis (Romans 5:12ff.)
—Pastor Michael Wilke
- Old Testament Exegesis (Job 2:1ff)
—Pastor Norman Greve
—Submitted by Pastor David Ude,
Conference Secretary

Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Mountain View, California

October 2-4, 2018

Agenda:

- Old Testament Exegesis (Essayist's Choice)
—Pastor Luke Bernthal
- New Testament Exegesis (Revelation 3:7ff)
—Pastor Mark Tiefel
- Tract/Pamphlet to Assist Members in Dealing with Grievances in the Congregation
—Pastor Ben Libby

- Christian Day School as an Outreach Tool— Blessings and Challenges
—Pastor Michael Gurath
- Types of Christ in Scripture
—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer
- The Danger of an Unconditional Gospel Without the Law —Pastor David Naumann
- Chaplain—Pastor David Reim
- Communion Service Speaker
—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt
—Submitted by Pastor Mark Tiefel,
Conference Secretary

Comments Invited for ILC Professor

Call. The Board of Regents announces the following nominations to fill the professorship vacated by the impending retirement of Professor Paul Schaller at the end of the 2018-19 academic year: Teacher Neil Bernthal, Pastor Timothy Daub, Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, Mr. Michael Naumann, Mr. Karl Olmanson, Mr. Peter Reim, Dr. Daniel Schierenbeck, Mr. Stephen Sydow, Pastor Mark Tiefel, and Pastor Mark Weis. The position would require the ability to teach in a variety of areas, which may include courses in English (high school and college) and history (high school, college, and possibly seminary). This person may potentially serve as the Dean of Students, one who counsels and disciplines students on campus. All comments from members of CLC congregations regarding these candidates are to be received by email or letter no later than midnight September 15, 2018 (letters postmarked September 1, 2018) to: Pastor John Hein; 460 75th Ave NE; Fridley, MN 55432, email: john.p.hein@gmail.com.



After serving the *Lutheran Spokesman* and the *Journal of Theology* for over forty-five years, business manager Benno Sydow has retired.

Benno started out as assistant to his brother Peter in the early 1970's, while their father, Rev. Gilbert Sydow, was editor of the *Lutheran Spokesman*. At that time much of the magazine's subscription and circulation work was done with key-punch cards and use of the computers at the University of Minnesota, where Benno would often go at 3:00 A.M. in order to get the lowest rate for computer time. The printing was done at New Ulm. With the advent of personal computing, operations moved to Benno's home in Roseville, Minnesota, from which location he has served the synod ever since. He and his family are longtime members of Grace Lutheran Church of Fridley.

There exists no estimate of the number of hours of faithful and unsung labor that Benno contributed to the work of the Lord as business manager for the *Lutheran Spokesman* and *Journal of Theology*. What is certain is that his steady hand and untiring enthusiasm for the work will long be remembered with gratitude by his brothers and sisters in the faith.