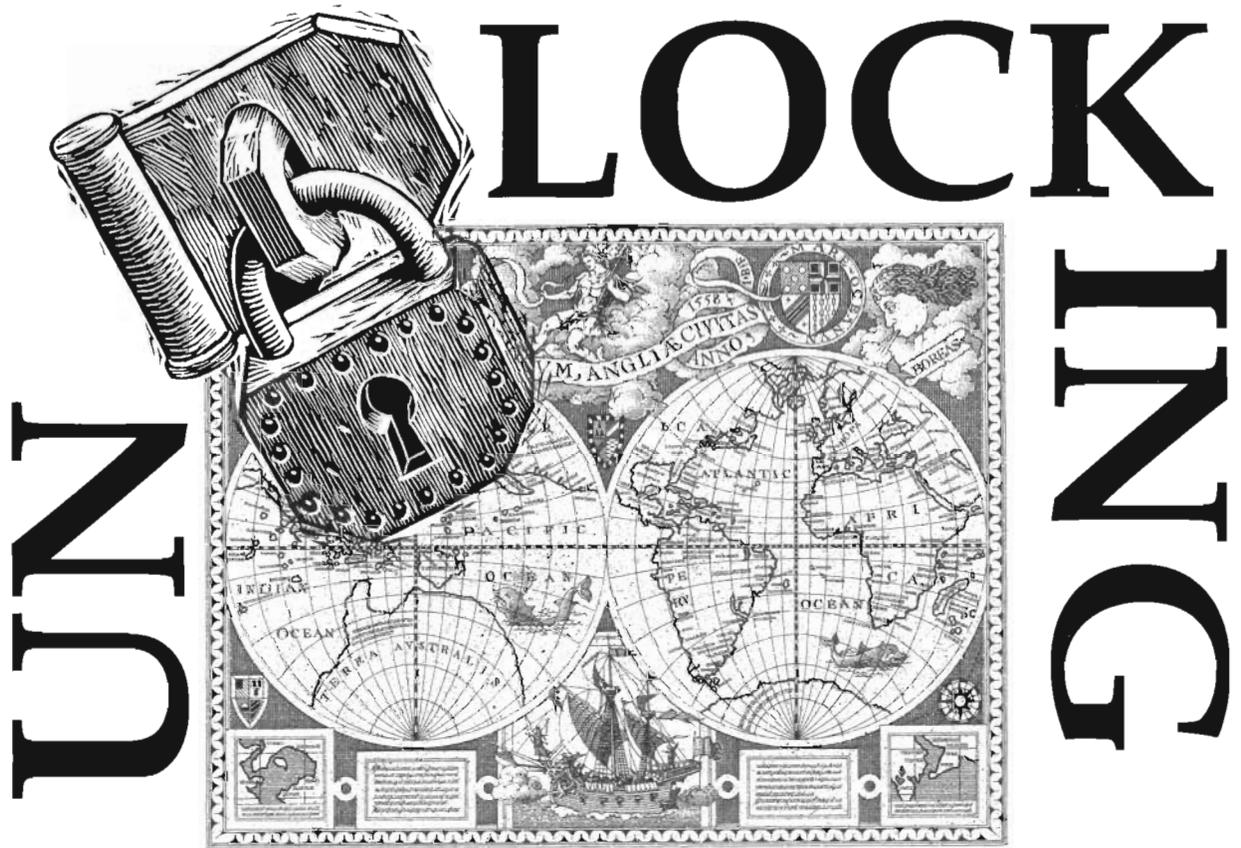


The Lutheran
AMBASSADOR

November 3, 1998



the past and seeing
God's
faithfulness

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

November 3, 1998
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Back to Reality

“Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. ... The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. ... He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. ... As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more” (Psalm 119:1-5, 10, 15, 16).

There are situations in life that bring us back to reality when we have been drifting along. When driving along a stretch of highway I will turn on the cruise control and without realizing it, my mind will drift off to another place. I may not remember anything about the road because I am somewhere else mentally. Then suddenly I go over a hill or around a bend in the road, and there sits a patrol car. Instantly I am shocked back to reality. I look down to the speedometer and think, good, the cruise control kept it below the speed limit. My mind is back on my driving.

There are situations that bring us back to reality spiritually as well. One of those is worshipping God. Our mind and attitude may have been drifting. When we hear God’s Word and communicate with Him in prayer, we’re brought back to reality.

The psalmist speaks to himself and reminds his soul to come back to reality and remember the Lord. He says, “Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” (vv.1, 2)

He comes back to the reality of sins. He remembers that he is a sinner, that his sins deserve something, and what he deserves is death. Coming to the reality of sin can be very discouraging.

The psalmist also reminds his soul of the reality of God. The reality of God is this, in spite of our sin, in spite of what we deserve, God loves us because of Jesus’ sacrifice. God forgives all our sins. He does not treat us as our sins deserve. The one who trusts in Jesus is redeemed from hell and satisfied with good things.

Worshipping and communicating with God brings us back to reality spiritually. Are you drifting along or are you spending time meeting with God so He can bring you back?



— *Pastor Del Pamer
Faith Lutheran
Shakopee, Minnesota*

sound bites

Neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe in him and take him as our Lord,

1 unless these were first offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit.

— *Luther's Large Catechism, The Creed, The Third Article*

In these matters, which concern the external, spoken Word, we must hold firmly to

4 the conviction that God gives no one his Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word which comes before.

— *Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article VIII, Confession*

6

It is necessary to urge and to maintain with all diligence the true and proper distinction between law and Gospel, and diligently to avoid anything that might give occasion for a confusion between them by which the two doctrines would be tangled together and made into one doctrine. ... the Gospel is the promise of forgiveness of sins and justification through Christ, whereas the law is a message that rebukes and condemns sin.

— *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law*

2

Far above our purity — yes, far above the law itself — should be placed the death and satisfaction of Christ, bestowed upon us to assure us that because of this satisfaction and not because of our keeping of the law we have a gracious God.

— *Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV, Justification*

3

God would encourage us to believe that he is truly our Father and we are truly his children in order that we may approach him boldly and confidently in prayer, even as beloved children approach their dear father.

— *Luther's Small Catechism, The Lord's Prayer*

5

The conscience cannot come to rest and peace through works, but only through faith, that is, when it is assured and knows that for Christ's sake it has a gracious God.

— *Augsburg Confession, Article XX, Faith and good works*



Digging

**Finding
inspiration
from studying
history**

— Jesse Rieth
Medicine Lake Lutheran
Plymouth, Minnesota

Grandpa's farm was a mystery to me as a child. The fields often kept him busy from sunrise to sunset, and when he came in at night he was sweaty and dusty and smelled like exhaust, but he was smiling. I never knew exactly what he had been up to all day, but I did know that it almost always involved tractors — big tractors, that I wasn't allowed to drive, sit on, or play around. This often left me with little to do but explore. I must have spent hours poking around Grandpa's farm and digging through piles of junk.

I liked to dig. I dug behind the barn. I dug inside the barn. I dug under the tree house, and I dug in Grandma's garden. Usually all I ever uncovered were old machinery parts, broken arrowheads, and an occasional animal bone. Much to my dismay, my findings never won me archeological fame, but those early childhood experiences lit a tiny flame of curiosity and fascination with the past.

I soon discovered that history was all about digging. Finding the interesting facts about a nation or the humanizing features and failures of a hero was often hard work.

Sometimes what existed on the surface was nothing short of mundane, and it was to require more than just a passive interest to unearth precious nuggets of information.

In all honesty, my appreciation for the past took some time to develop. History classes in elementary school were not exactly riveting. Most of the time my teachers were lucky if I paid attention long enough to remember what page I was supposed to turn to. Of course, the mere mention of the words "recess" and "lunch" always brought me back to reality, but it was about the only way to fill my youthful heart with exuberance and anticipation ... with one exception: I would happily endure hours of torturous class time just to hear about ancient civilizations that time had almost forgotten. Though this didn't happen often, when it did I was thoroughly captivated.

I learned about the ruined Aztec city, Tenochtitlan. As my teacher showed the class illustrations of an exotic island city whose road had been replaced by waterways, I slowly fell in love with its great stone pyramids and floating gardens. All modern cities I had ever seen utterly failed in comparison. I was hooked. This brilliant wonder of the ancient world sparked my curiosity and tugged me into its rich history and tragic fate.

At the time I didn't really understand all the factors involved in its destruction — how Spanish explorers had besieged the city, murdered its citizens, and looted all the gold, but later I began to realize how horribly cruel the Europeans had often been. Sometimes they seemed more like mercenaries than missionaries, and there were impor-

tant lessons to be learned from such atrocities. I began to realize what a deep tragedy it was for works of antiquity to be ruthlessly destroyed, and the voices of an entire people brutally silenced.

In later years, I was reminded that true disciples were called to go forth in love, bringing unbelieving peoples the Word of God and compassion of Christ. There had been times that men and women in the Church had failed severely to keep their lust for wealth and power at bay. I was challenged not to repeat their mistakes.

With the help of the ancient Aztecs, Incas, and Egyptians I somehow managed to make it through the trials and tribulations of history class; however, I knew all too well that there were other subjects to be reckoned with.

As far as I was concerned, math and science classes were relatively useless, and I could get along just fine without them. Needless to say, the homework I accumulated from such classes was never very high on my list of priorities. I daydreamed a lot, so as my interests slowly drifted toward the fine arts, I happily villainized anything that required the use of the left side of my brain. Indignantly, I griped my way through algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and physics; but eventually art history class changed my attitude.

I was deeply inspired when exposed to the life and accomplishments of Leonardo da Vinci. His God-given talent as a painter and sculptor earned him tremendous success, but his interests extended far beyond the artistic world encompassing the realms of mathematics, physics, and anatomy. He poured his energies into designing aqueducts, viaducts, buildings, and bridges in addition to his drawing, painting, and sculpting. Knowledge of his life and interests had a profound impact on me as my antagonism towards the sciences dwindled. I was encouraged to explore areas of study, like architecture, that I had never seriously considered before.

By the time I finished my first year of college, I felt like a human sponge. Having been exposed to the infinite past, I longed to absorb all the information I could. My classes rarely seemed pointless or mundane. Instead they fueled my curiosity and kept me excited about learning. I decided that even if I finally had the opportunity to drive one of those big tractors Grandpa used to drive, I'd rather go digging any day.



**“... the Most High
is SOVEREIGN
over the
kingdoms
of men
and
gives them
to anyone
he wishes.”**

– Daniel 4:32b



John Wycliffe
(1329-1384)
pointed out many errors in the Church of Rome as a professor at Oxford University. He translated the Bible from Latin to English. That was perhaps his most outstanding work. The Wycliffe Bible was released about 1382.

Theophylact

*a witness to
Christ in Bulgaria*



— *Pastor
Michael W. Peterson
St. Mark's Lutheran
Whitestown, Indiana*

Reformation Day is a celebration of rediscovery. At this time of year we remember how “times of refreshing” came to Europe in the 16th century when Martin Luther and others uncovered the biblical message of salvation by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ. We hear much of Luther and Melancthon, and their forerunners, Wycliffe and Huss, as well as Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox. But are there other witnesses to the free grace of Christ in other places and times?

We often get the impression that between the early church and the Reformation, there were only a handful of lonely believers who understood and accepted God’s free grace. Could we be viewing that with a “depressed Elijah” attitude? When Elijah was in a despairing emotional state, he thought he was the only God-believer left (I Kings 19:10). But the Lord reminded him that there were 7000 who had not bowed to Baal. The Western European reformers were not the only ones after the first or second century to comprehend God’s grace. It is a profitable study to discover these other witnesses.

Buried in the writings of the reformers are occasional references to someone named Theophylact. He is mentioned in the Lutheran Confessions (in some editions of the *Book of Concord*, he is called “Vulgarius”). Melancthon gives him a backhanded compliment, saying he “seems to us to be not a silly writer.”

Indeed! Luther says, “Theophylact is the best interpreter of Paul.”

That’s quite a statement, considering that Luther leaned so heavily upon Paul for his understanding of God’s grace. Also Luther was very sparing in his praise for fathers of the Church, preferring to rely upon the Bible alone. So who was this Theophylact?

Born on the Greek island of Euboia sometime between 1050 and 1060, Theophylact studied in Constantinople (now Istanbul) under some of the finest teachers of his time. For a while he ministered as a deacon

The value of learning about how we got here

Why study church history? Is it relevant to us today? Can it bring us in touch with our spiritual ancestry and make us better equipped to contribute to the Church as we enter a new century?

Church history in its broadest sense is the history of God’s Kingdom upon the earth. It deals with the congregation of saints and true believers, including the Old Testament believers as well as those of the New Testament and extends from Creation to the present.

The main event of this long record is the coming of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. He is the center of all history and the keystone of the universe. John 1:3 reminds us, “He created everything there is — nothing exists that he didn’t make.” Colossians 1:18 says, “He is the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.”

in the great Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople, and became well known as a preacher of the gospel and a master of rhetoric. The Byzantine emperor hired him to tutor his future son-in-law, the next emperor.

Around 1090 he left the cosmopolitan surroundings of Constantinople to serve as archbishop in rugged Bulgaria. The Christian faith was still very new in that region and Theophylact (whose name means “Guarded by God”) worked tirelessly to guard the young Christians from heresies. He was asked by Princess Maria, the mother of the royal boy he had tutored, to write an *Explanation of the New Testament*. Before his death sometime after 1108, Theophylact succeeded in writing on every book in the New Testament except Revelation.

Unfortunately, the writings on Paul which drew Luther’s praise are not yet available in English. However his other *Explanations of the New Testament* books are written in a clear, easy-to-understand, practical style.

Why study church history?

— Jemina Mork
Hauge Lutheran
Kenyon, Minnesota

One of the primary values of studying church history is that it links the past factual data of the Christian gospel and creates an understanding of our great heritage. What a thrill it would be to walk back through the years to St. Thomas Lutheran Church in Leipzig and hear the organ prelude composed and played for that Sunday's service by J. S. Bach himself! The study of history offers edification, inspiration, and enthusiasm that will stimulate high spiritual life. We become more hopeful as we realize the indestructible character of the Church in the past. We are rooted and securely established in our faith in Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today and forever!

The cultural value of Church history must not be overlooked. The history of Western civilization is incomplete and unintelligible without some understanding of the role of the Christian religion in the development of our civilization. Today the Christian is entangled with the culture of the day. There are many voices saying, "This is the way...." Skepticism increases and the very foundations of Christianity are challenged and shaken. Yet to understand how the people of God have, from age to age, struggled and suffered and triumphed will prepare us to meet the

challenges as we trust in our faithful and all-powerful God.

Without knowing something of the history of the Christian Church, it is impossible to understand the present condition of Christianity with its many groups, complicated doctrinal systems and varied forms of organization, life, and worship. Patterns or parallels do exist in history.

Ignorance of the Bible and the history of the Church is a major reason why many advocate false theology or bad practices. Romans 15:4 says, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Paul reminds the people in Corinth, "Now these things are warnings for us, not to desire evil as they did" (I Corinthians 10:6).

We are living in a changing world. We are being stretched in many directions. How encouraging it is to study the noble lives and the great ideals of apostles, evangelists, martyrs, reformers, and other saints of God! What Christ has done for the people in the "yesterdays" He will do for us today and forever! He is faithful. He is God.



Like Luther's *Small Catechism*, it was intended to help make sound Christian teaching available to everyone, not just a privileged few.

Some of Theophylact's comments on Matthew are similar to the spirit of the Reformation. He wrote, "That Matthew is converted by word alone is the work of God." He even uses the phrase, "grace alone" at one point. Speaking of the wedding parable in Matthew 22, he wrote, "The entry into the wedding takes place without distinction of persons, for by grace alone we have all been called" True, not all his statements are as clear on grace as the ones I selected. Not all of the teachings and practices of his Eastern Orthodox Church are acceptable to Reformation churches. Yet much of what he writes in his Bible commentaries has a very evangelical tone. It is easy to imagine how Luther could quote Theophylact approvingly when we read statements like this, in Theophylact's Preface to *The Gospel of Matthew*:

"It is called 'Gospel' because it announces to us things that are good, namely, remission of sins, being counted as righteous, ascent into the heavens, and adoption as sons by God. It also announces that we can receive these things easily. For we ourselves have not labored to obtain these good things, nor have we received them as a result of our own accomplishments, but by God's grace and love for man we have been deemed worthy of such good things."

These words, so reminiscent of the biblical Reformation in Western Europe in the 16th century, were written in Bulgaria at the beginning of the 12th century! Praise God that through the history of His Church he has preserved witnesses to His truth and grace. May Jude 3 also be our desire, "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."



“If we could learn from history,
what lessons it might teach us!
But passion and party blind our eyes
and the light which experience gives
is a lantern on the stern,
which shines only on the waves behind us!”

— Samuel Taylor Coleridge

— Todd Erickson
Free Lutheran Seminary student
Plymouth, Minnesota

What a true statement! Yes, our Christian life is not based on our experiences, but on the undeniable truths and promises of God and the need for faith in Him. Yet learning

from history and our experiences is something God wants us to do. “Therefore gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:13,14). Does He not remind the Hebrew people in the Old Testament of their need to follow Him and Him alone as He points them back to their history (Psalm 105)? We can learn many valuable things from history, but most importantly that with a living relationship with Jesus Christ, we have hope!

Read the Bible. It is God’s inspired Word. It is full of history of the world, of God’s chosen people, of the Church, and of Jesus. John tells us of the primary reason for God’s Word: “But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).

Why read about Christianity and Church history?

1. To gain insight and learn from these people (just like us) who have gone on before and faced the trial of life with Jesus at their side. Know that God hasn’t forsaken us. As a history professor once told a student, “If you do not learn from history you will be doomed to repeat it!”

2. To be ready to make an account of the hope that is within or perhaps defend that hope. One may even discover as did the author of Ecclesiastics, there is “nothing new under the sun.”

3. To be inspired by God’s working in these people’s lives as well as in the course of the history of this world.

Look at some of the stories of dear saints gone by, their journals, perhaps even the story behind a hymn. I believe God can give helpful insights and blessings in considering those who have blazed the trail for us through thick and thin.

Following is a brief list of books I have found interesting or have been recommended to me. They’re good for people of all ages. Have a blessed time reading!

Great Moments in Church History, by Frederick A Norwood, 1962. (Brief, but effective and interesting rendering of Church history after the New Testament.)

The Church of Our Fathers, by Roland H. Bainton, 1950. (Again, a well-written and brief Church history.)

The New Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, by John Foxe, rewritten and updated by Harold J. Chadwich, 1977. (This will challenge you as you read of those who have paid the ultimate price for their faith in Jesus Christ.)

A New Springtime, by Pastor Robert Lloyd Lee, 1997. (Have you ever wondered about our beginnings in Scandinavia and the spiritual awakening among Norwegian-Americans in the late 19th century? Well, here you go!)

A Bunch of Everlastings, by Frank W. Boreham, 1963. (This book will only take you one evening to read and has a bunch of historic goodies and insights.)

Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians, by James Gilchrist Lawson, 1911. (This book gives a great look into the lives of people with living relationships with Christ.)

Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions, by Kenneth W. Osbeck, 1990. (Wonderful collection of the history and situation which brought about many of our dearly beloved hymns.)

Notebook of a Colonial Clergyman, by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. (An insight into the life of colonial Lutheranism.)



Learn from and about Luther

The following writings by Martin Luther are available from the AFLC Parish Education office. Contact them at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441; phone (612) 545-5631; e-mail parished@aflc.org.

The Bondage of the Will

Fundamental to an understanding of the primary doctrines of the Reformation. Luther affirms our total inability to save ourselves and the sovereignty of divine grace in our salvation. (\$14.95)

Christian Liberty

“A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” One of Luther’s quotes in a famous treatise that makes clear that a believing Christian is free from sin through faith in God, yet bound by love to serve his neighbor. (\$3.50)

Commentary on Galatians

Verse-by-verse exposition with careful analysis and clear presentation of Paul’s letter, written for all to understand. (\$15.95)

Commentary on Peter & Jude

Luther brings to light the important message of this often neglected portion of the New Testament. Emphasizes the eternal hope of the believer along with a call to radical Christian living. This volume is invaluable to those seeking a closer walk with Christ, as well as to the pastor or teacher seeking unique insights into God’s Word. (\$10.95)

Commentary on Romans

Luther’s famous exposition of the epistle he loved most. This classic commentary is significant not only for its biblical insights but also for its historical perspective. A valuable introduction to the study of Luther’s own spiritual pilgrimage and the roots of the Reformation. Practical and easy to read, translated by J. T. Mueller. (\$10.95)

Daily Readings from Luther’s Writings

Year-long devotional sampling from many sources of Luther’s writings at various times during his life, including vocation, God’s Word, prayer, faith alone, good works, music, and the church. (\$21.95)

Day by Day We Magnify Thee

Luther’s classic daily readings for the church year. Meditations concentrating on Christ and the Christian life. (\$18.00)

The Gift of God

Brief exposition of John 3:16-21. “This Gospel is one of the most precious passages in the whole New Testament ... for our consolation and the strengthening of our faith.” (\$5.00)

Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses

This famous document triggered the Protestant Reformation. Explanatory notes help interpret the text. (\$3.95)

Luther’s Prayers,

edited by Herbert Brokering
A collection of Luther’s prayers based on the catechism for specific needs and occasions, includes devotional writings on *A Simple Way to Pray*. (\$9.95)

Luther’s Small Catechism (for Sunday School)

Contains the five parts of the catechism and meanings, as well as prayers for various occasions. Questions and answers are not included in this publication. For use with all the graded Sunday school classes. (\$9.95)

Luther’s Small Catechism Explained

This hardcover book includes the five parts of the catechism, meanings, and questions and answers. For confirmation students, Sunday school, and those studying *The Adult Class Manual*. (\$4.95)

Luther’s Works Volumes 1-30

These volumes open wide the doors to Martin Luther’s understanding of the Bible and theology. An accurate translation of Luther’s exposition and preaching by well-qualified scholars. Each volume in red buckram with Luther’s signature stamped in 24K gold. Hardback with jacket. (\$28 each — \$745 set)

Luther’s Works Volumes 31-55

These volumes have other representative writings of Luther’s life including historical debates, books and tracts. Hardback with jacket. (\$28 each — \$680 set)

Martin Luther’s Christmas Book

Contains 30 meditations from Luther’s Christmas sermons, nine elegant illustrations by Luther’s contemporaries (four by Albrecht Durer) capturing timeless scenes from the Christmas story, and two of Luther’s beautiful Christmas carols. (\$10.95)

Martin Luther’s Easter Book

Sermons exploring events from Holy Week through the Resurrection portraying Luther’s thoughts on faith, human imperfection, salvation through grace, and the wonder of God. Illustrated with 18 woodcuts by Virgil Solis, a contemporary of Luther. May be read as a daily devotional during Lent and Easter. (\$10.95)

The Method and Fruits of Justification

Brief exposition of Galatians 4:1-7. “The Lord in His Word defines all works that go before justification to be evil, and of no importance, and requires that man before all things be justified. The law with all the works thereof makes us but mere servants, if we have not faith in Christ; for this alone makes us sons of God.” (\$5.00)

A Simple Way to Pray

Based on the Word of God, Luther shows how to use the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles’ Creed in daily prayer. (\$1.75)





Peter Ward

Second-year seminarian, Peter Ward offers a testimony during an orientation session. Ten students are registered at the Free Lutheran Seminary this year. Seminary classes this fall include General Epistles and Hebrews (Pastor Jerry Moan), Soteriology (Dr. Francis Monseth), Poetical Books (Pastor Jerry Holmaas), Lutheranism in America (Pastor Robert Lee), History of Christian Doctrine (Moan) and Lutheran Symbolics (Dr. Monseth)



Norwegian church historian Erik Kjebekk lectured to students at the AFLC Schools on September 18. Dr. Kjebekk (second left) is pictured with Pastor James L. Johnson, Dr. Francis Monseth and seminarian Steve Carlson.



Dr. Eta Linnemann

Dr. Eta Linnemann lectured at the Free Lutheran Seminary on October 1. She was a student of liberal German theologian Rudolf Bultmann, and now teaches at a Bible institute in Batu, Indonesia. She broke with liberal Lutheran theology in the 1970s after she experienced a conversion to Christ. "To my former colleagues, I am now dead," said Dr. Linnemann, 72. Her recent books, "Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology?" and "Is There a Synoptic Problem?"



AFLBS seniors

AFLBS seniors have proven to be spiritual leaders on campus this fall. "I'm impressed with their quiet

have received excellent reviews in the evangelical community and her testimony of faith has brought much glory to God.

A prolific liberal author before she was saved, Dr. Linnemann encourages people to "burn" her old books. Reflecting on her former theology, Linnemann says, "I am shocked when I look at the books of my former colleagues and examine the justification for their position. Instead of proof I find only assertions. Instead of arguments there is only circular reasoning."

intensity for the Lord," said Dean James L. Johnson. Several of these students testify to sensing a call to full-time ministry. "They have truly embraced the 70 juniors on campus," he added. Surrounding Women's Resident Head, Michele Deubner (in the center at the table) are: Nate Jore, Brasilia, Brazil; Anna Mattson, Greenbush, Minnesota; Dan Keinanen, Cloquet, Minnesota; Matt Bruce, Fosston, Minnesota; Josh Fish, Everett, Washington; Annie Olson, Fosston, Minnesota; Genoveva Duran, Lake Stevens, Washington; Ben Hagenbuch, Ottawa, Illinois; and dorm staffer Shawn Danielson, a 1998 AFLBS graduate.

Seminar hosted by Free Lutheran schools in Brazil

The AFLC Bible School and Seminary in Brazil hosted a weekend seminar, September 5 to 7, 1998 on its campus. The theme of the seminar was "Evangelizing the Largest Catholic Nation in the World" (Brazil).

One of the three main speakers was Pastor Paulo Cesar Pimentel, director of the "Center on Religious Research." He gave a wonderful study on the theme of the seminar which was reaching and evangelizing the largest Catholic nations for Christ.

Our second speaker was Pastor Helio Eduard, a converted Jehovah's Witness and now professor at a Methodist seminary in Rio de Janeiro. He shared on some of the



Brazil Bible school seminar participants.

sects, concentrating on the Jehovah's Witnesses and the New Age movement.

The third speaker was Pastor Connely Dyrud, Dean of AFLC Bible School and Seminary in Campo Mourao. Pastor Dyrud shared on the differences between the Catholic

Church in Brazil, the United States and around the world.

The whole seminar was very enlightening. The time went by quickly, leaving us wishing for more.

— *Missionaries Connely and Carolyn Dyrud
Campo Mourão, Brazil*



Faith Lutheran, Metropolis, Illinois.

Metropolis, Illinois — Faith Lutheran will dedicate their first church building on Sunday, November 8, 1998, at 2 p.m. AFLC President Robert Lee will officiate.

The young congregation broke ground last March and by July, the volunteer laborers had the sanctuary usable for worship services and Bible studies. Four

men from St. Johns Lutheran in Milford, Illinois traveled five hours one way to work part of a week on the construction. God has blessed the efforts of all the workers. It is the goal of Faith Lutheran to glorify God with their new church building and use that house of the Lord to win souls to Christ.

Pastor Martin Horn, Astoria, Oregon, has resigned as pastor of Bethany Lutheran where he has served since 1990, in order to accept the call to Calvary Free Lutheran in Fosston, Minnesota. He expects to begin his new ministry in the spring of 1999.

Pastor Dennis Gray, Greenbush, Minnesota, has resigned as pastor of United Lutheran where he has served since 1990. His new address is: R.R.2 Box 149A, Newfolden, MN 56738.

Lincoln, Illinois — Good Shepherd Lutheran celebrated its first anniversary on September 27, 1998. The young congregation also broke ground for their building. Pastor Mel Meyer from St. Johns Lutheran in Milford, Illinois said, "Our people were thrilled to help with the construction of the Metropolis church and have our labor matched with an \$800 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans. Now we have the opportunity to volunteer again, and the Lincoln community is only two hours away!"



Thief River Falls, Minnesota — Our Saviour's Lutheran held their first worship service in their new sanctuary on Sunday, October 4, 1998. The congregation expects to dedicate their building on November 22.

The 10 foot, bright blue, green and white AFLC logo distinguishes the new church as seen from the highway.

**Pray for the
Evangelism Blitz
in Gilbert, Arizona**

November 8-11, 1998

Calvary Free Lutheran Church
601 N. Key Biscayne, Gilbert, AZ
call 602-855-3612
or 602-917-7867

**Join with us to help
start this ministry!**

Tucson, Arizona — Body of Christ Lutheran recently made a full-price offer on property but the offer was rejected as the owner decided not to sell. Costs continue to rise as the congregation searches for suitable possibilities. Estimates on property costs start at \$175,000. Continue to pray with this home mission congregation as they seek God's will.

Pastor Jay Eberth, Wyoming, Minnesota, was removed from the AFLC Clergy Roster by his own request and is affiliated with another church body.

The Lutheran Ambassador

Schedule for 1999

Below is the 1999 Lutheran Ambassador schedule. Please be in prayer for each issue. Note the deadlines and special emphasis of each issue. If you have an idea regarding a general article, a certain issue or an interest in writing, please contact the editors.

<u>Date of Issue</u>	<u>Editor's Deadline</u>	<u>To Printer</u>	<u>Special Emphasis</u>
January 5	November 27	December 10	Evangelism
February 2	December 29	January 7	AFLBS & AFLTS
February 23	January 15	January 28	Lent
March 16	February 5	February 18	Easter
April 6	February 26	March 11	Ethics
April 27	March 19	April 1	Pre-Conference
May 18	April 9	April 22	Repentance
June 8	April 30	May 13	Children & Youth
June 29	May 21	June 3	Preparing for the Year 2000
August 3	June 25	July 8	Conference/ FLY Review
August 24	July 16	July 29	Sunday School
September 21	August 13	August 26	Lay/Pastor Roles
October 12	September 3	September 16	Missions — Home & World
November 2	September 24	October 7	Reformation
November 23	October 15	October 28	Thanksgiving & Advent
December 14	November 5	November 18	Christmas

**Two congregations
join the AFLC**

Omaha, Nebraska — Community of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church was accepted by the AFLC Coordinating Committee at their September 21, 1998 meeting. They had been an independent congregation. They are served by Pastor Bradley Hoefs who was also placed on the AFLC Clergy Fellowship Roster.

Burleson, Texas — Word of Truth Lutheran was accepted by the AFLC Coordinating Committee at the September meeting. They are served by Pastor Ray Ballmann who was also placed on the Clergy Fellowship Roster at the same meeting.

Pastor Clyde Grier, Dickinson, North Dakota, has resigned as pastor of Our Savior's Lutheran.

Mark Skogerboe, Robbinsdale, Minnesota was approved as a licensed lay pastor in the AFLC at the September meeting of the coordinating committee. He is serving Faith Lutheran Church of Running Valley in Colfax, Wisconsin.

Gary Simons, Fargo, North Dakota, was approved as a licensed lay pastor in the AFLC at the September meeting of the coordinating committee. He is serving Grong Lutheran Church of Rollag, near Hawley, Minnesota.

Need help?

Come to the Youth Workers Retreat

January 15-16
at the ARC
call 612-544-9501



Mark your calendars for December 6, and plan to attend the annual AFLC schools Christmas concert. Afternoon and evening performances are scheduled. The concerts conclude the Parents' weekend at AFLBS. Pictured is Rhoda Monseth at the 1997 concert.

AFLC memorial gifts

September 1998

AFLC Department
given in memory of...

Home Missions

*Betty Haverland
Luther Monson
Viola Strom
Donald Jacobson
Louise Heinemayer
Inga Raaen
Nora Evavold
Bruce Skramstad
Margaret Johnson*

AFLBS

*Viola Strom
Donald Jacobson
Adelia Anderson
Margaret Johnson
Richard Snipstead
Helen Aasand
LaVerne Solberg*

World Missions

*Bruce Skramstad
Ledale Johnson*

AFLTS

*Lois Christofferson
Donald Jacobson
Erling Skarderud*

General Fund

Donald Jacobson



The new chapel building at the Wilderness Bible Camp near Lake Park, Minnesota.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (9 months) – January 1 - September 30, 1998

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN SEPTEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$224,870.00	\$12,289.48	184,121.94	82
Seminary	112,558.00	13,920.74	69,596.72	62
Bible School	180,678.00	12,867.16	103,501.86	57
Home Missions.	260,263.00	25,003.56	163,887.32	63
World Missions.	420,686.00	27,707.98	268,496.27	64
Capital Investment	16,276.00	453.60	11,094.11	68
Parish Education	50,335.00	9,345.89	44,605.65	89
Church Extension	18,092.00	2,484.89	17,668.70	1.35
TOTALS	\$1,278,758.00	104,073.30	862,972.57	67
TOTALS 1997	1,223,905.00	70,428.62	724,608.96	59
Goal 75%				

Remembering the Augustana Synod

This year is a time of celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first Swedish Lutheran congregation in America, started in New Sweden, Iowa. This led to the forming of the Augustana Synod. The official



— *Pastor Laurel M. Udden
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

** The first Swedish Lutheran congregation in America was started in New Sweden, Iowa, in 1848. **



Pictured is the first school home in Chicago of the Augustana Synod. It opened in 1860 with Lars P. Esbjorn as president and twenty-one students.

beginning of the synod was at a meeting of Scandinavian congregations, formerly associated with the Synod of Northern Illinois in the Norwegian Lutheran Church at Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin, in June 1860. They represented 49 congregations of both Norwegian and Swedish membership. They were together for some ten years before the Norwegian part formed the Norwegian-Danish Augustanan Synod in 1870.

Social missionary work was a vital part of the Augustana Synod. Two early institutions formed were children's homes in Red Wing, Minnesota, and Andover, Illinois. The synod founded hospitals, homes for the aged, invalid homes, hospices and immigrant and seamen's centers.

Foreign missions were also a vital part of the ministry of Augustana with work especially in China and Africa. There were some wonderful missionary families on these two fields. Dr. Daniel Friberg grew up on the China field and served both fields himself. He has taught at the Free Lutheran Seminary on several occasions.

There was a time when a theological crisis developed within the church over what was described as "hyperevangelicalism." With an emphasis on the experience of conversion the contention was that the church must be composed exclusively of "believers." With the goal of having a "pure" church, small groups within the church were formed, building their own private chapels and meeting houses. The Hauge movement in Norway on the other hand chose to work within the state church to be a salt and light to the church as a whole.

The group in Sweden that had difficulties with the state church looked to C.O. Rosenius as the source of their zeal. Paul Peter Waldenstrom became the leader of this movement, pushing, as some observed, farther than he ever intended to go. So the "Mission-

Friend movement" was started in Sweden and soon came to America with a definite anti-Augustana bias. This became the Mission Covenant Church in America. Another group called the Mission Free Church started which was the beginning of the Evangelical Free Church in America.

When the Dean of the Augustana Seminary died in the summer of 1930 changes in the seminary were imminent. With pressure from both inside and outside the seminary, four professors were relieved of their duties at the end of the school year 1930-31 and replaced by four new teachers. The reason given for such drastic action was that the former teachers did not have earned advance degrees. The four new men all had these earned advance degrees. One of the four who had been relieved of his position apparently did have such a degree and protested his being fired but to no avail.

Some of the new professors were regarded as good instructors, some as mediocre and some as ineffective. The conclusion is that an earned advance degree does not necessarily guarantee a teacher's effectiveness.

Much could be said about other areas of Augustana such as the good youth work under Wilton E. Bergstrand. Many youth heard the call into full-time work in the church through the youth program. Several free movements in the Lutheran Church had their original beginnings in Augustana but quickly included all Lutherans. These include the Lutheran Bible school movement and the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement, both of which are still in existence today.

I personally received many spiritual blessings from my being a part of Augustana for which I am grateful. My prayer is that we will keep that genuine pietism that knows that a personal, living relationship with Jesus Christ is the heart of eternal life.



Good theology makes a difference

The girl in the Peanuts comic strip was concerned as she was looking out the window on a rainy day. She wondered if it would ever stop raining. And what would happen if it didn't? Would a flood come and wash them away? Linus told her the Bible tells of God's promise to Noah after the flood. The rainbow would be a sign that He would not wipe out the earth with a flood again. "That's comforting to know," she said. Linus said, "Good theology has a way of doing that."

Good theology, right teaching, knowing and believing the truth brings comfort and transformed living. Sadly, however, according to a recent "Survey of Lutheran Beliefs & Practices" done by Lutheran Brotherhood, many in the Lutheran Church have a rather weak grasp of good theology.

The survey conducted this past summer involved people from various Lutheran church bodies, regions of the country, ages, educational and economic backgrounds.

The Lutheran Church originated with the discovery God granted Martin Luther that justification, forgiveness of sins and a right, saving relationship with God happens by faith alone, and not faith plus works. Luther was transformed by Romans 1:17: "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"

The survey shows that Lutherans today are not clear on this fundamental truth. Nearly half (48.3%) agree or probably agree with the statement, "People can only be justified before God by loving others."

Jesus did teach, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39, NIV), but not as the means of salvation. In the book of Acts, when the jailer asked Paul and Silas, "what must I do to be saved?" the response given was not, "love others, and you will be saved." They said, under the inspiration of God, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:30, 31, NIV).

Many are trying hard to love others. That helps in their human relationships, but it doesn't put them in a right relationship with God. For that faith in Christ is necessary.

Confusion about justification can be traced to a confusion about the nature of the gospel. A majority (60.5%) agree or probably agree that "The main emphasis of the Gospel is on God's rules for right living."

The word gospel means good news, not good rules. The gospel is not God's instruction for how we should live, but the beautiful declaration of who God is and what He has done.

The verse that has been described as "the gospel in a nutshell," John 3:16, begins, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ..." It is not about the rules we are to follow, but about the actions God has taken in giving His Son who gave His life so that we might be saved.

Other religions have good rules. It is only God's Word that has the gospel. People need more than guidelines for living. A lot of instruction and no gospel leads to frustration, discouragement and death. People haven't heard the gospel enough. They don't already know it. They can't figure it out on their own. They need to hear what Jesus has done, for that is what gives life.

Jesus said, "Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14, NIV). It appears many Lutherans do not agree with that statement. Two-thirds (67.1 %) agree or probably agree that "Although there are many religions in the world, most of them lead to the same God."

Jesus did not describe many roads leading to the same place. He told of two roads: one leading to destruction and another to life. Those who are religious, sincere, good and kind, but not trusting in Jesus for their salvation, are not just taking a different path to life with God. They are lost and in extreme danger.

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6, NIV). That may not always be popular theology, but it is true theology. It is life-giving theology. It is the theology the Lutheran Church was founded upon, but sadly not the theology of many today.

Let us not in the AFLC say, "It is just those other Lutherans." Let us instead check our own theology. Am I trusting in what Christ has done and not in what I do? Is the main emphasis of what I share with others what Jesus has done and will do, and not simply what they need to do? Am I clear on the fact that Jesus is the only hope for salvation?

Let's not abandon good theology, but let's cling to it, for it makes a great difference.

— *Pastor Craig Johnson*

... many in the Lutheran Church have a rather weak grasp of good theology.

SOMETHING TO SHARE

Overlooking

Opening fishing weekend I stayed close to home, but not close enough. I only went five miles to fish, but I should have gone two miles. As I was cleaning my little walleye, my son came to tell me to call back some teens from our church who wanted me to help clean a northern and get those infamous Y-bones out. I called and told them I wouldn't drive to their house at 9:30 p.m. to do it, but if they wanted to come to my house where I was cleaning my little prize, I would gladly do it. When they arrived, they had not only one northern — they had SEVEN northerns from two to four pounds! (Unfortunately they hadn't checked their game laws to know they were one over their limit).

"Where in the world were you fishing?" was my obvious question. They said, "Shh ...," and whispered the name. (Sorry I'm still not free to tell you.)

I proceeded to clean a couple of fish and then teach them how to get

those bones out and let them try it themselves. The next night I felt the urge to try this lake along with my son and one of those boys, and yes, we caught fish! I believe the final count was seven northerns and 12 bass — all of which we released.

As you seek to be faithful to your Lord as His lips in this world, could it be that you are always thinking about witnessing to people that are farther away from you? Yes, it is to be done on the mission field, and at work, and when you are on vacation in another part of the U.S., but what about right at home? Don't forget the battle for the souls of your children that is going on daily. And what about those neighbors whom you walk by? Do you take time to stop and converse, or are you too concerned about getting another project done at home? I was so encouraged when my neighbor just up the street came to our church golf tournament. We had a man do a golf clinic for us and share his testimony of how he came to Christ. I had invited my neighbor to come about a

week earlier and he came! A few days later, he told me how much he had enjoyed the morning.

Be careful you don't think of soul-fishing too far away from home. It takes place as you tuck your ten-year-old in at night, and as you walk or run around the block. Don't overlook that opportunity to lend a helping hand to a neighbor in need, or inviting their family to your house for a meal. There are opportunities all around you to share the love of Jesus. Keep praying! Keep fishing for souls.



— *Pastor Lyndon Korhonen*
Good Shepherd Lutheran
Cokato, Minnesota