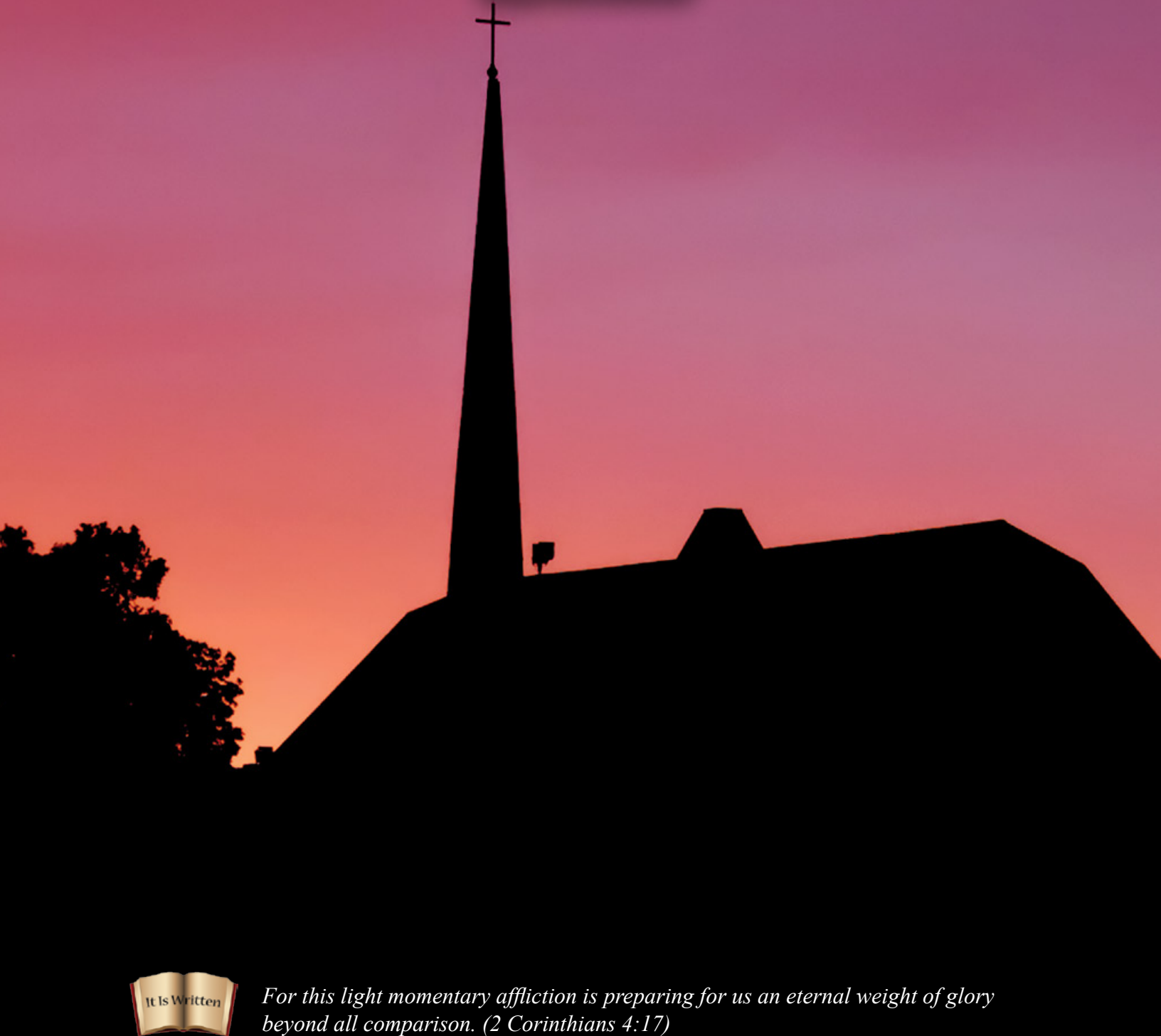


July–August 2014

Lutheran Sentinel

A Publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

"Engage Others with Jesus."



For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. (2 Corinthians 4:17)

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From the President

Dear members and friends of our ELS:

The dates of May 30 through June 2, 2014, were important ones for the triennial gathering of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC). This worldwide fellowship now comprises 29 church bodies (member churches with voting privileges and associate member churches with participation privileges). Leaders of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and of our Evangelical Lutheran Synod established the CELC in 1993. Those from the United States who attended from our own synod this year included: the Rev. Steven Petersen, the Rev. Gaylin Schmeling, the Rev. Michael Smith and Anita Smith, Pres. John Moldstad and Vice Pres. Glenn Obenberger; guests were: Dan and Kathy Bruss, and the Rev. Thomas and Judy Kuster.

Since the purpose of the conference is to strengthen and encourage member churches in the promotion of confessional Lutheranism, a major portion of each meeting consists of hearing and discussing essays (usually five). This year's papers addressed the main theme, "**We are God's workmanship – created in Christ Jesus for good works**" (Ephesians 2:10).

In his opening remarks, CELC President Dan Koelpin said, "The papers presented at this convention will make it evident that good works are something that God desires, but not as a condition for salvation, instead as an expression of our faith and love for God who has already provided salvation through his Son Jesus... These truths strengthen us to see that acceptable good works, works of faith in Christ, are part of God's plan for us to relate in a wholesome way to him and others, a plan that fits very well with our work of bringing the gospel to all nations."

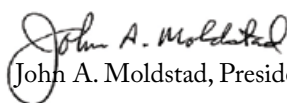
A side benefit of the sessions was the opportunity for a number of the smaller churches to consult with sponsoring and/or supporting churches on issues confronting those in the various mission fields and reporting first-hand on successes as God's Word is proclaimed.

This year especially provided our ELS leaders with the chance to visit personally with the brothers and sisters in Christ from the host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru. Our Peru mission was established in 1968. It now has about 2,000 souls in three major areas: Lima (where the seminary is located), the Andes mountain congregations, and those along the Amazon River. A good contingent also was on hand from our mission church in Chile, led by the Rev. Timothy Erickson and his wife, Ellen.

On Sunday, June 1, 2014, your president had the privilege of preaching to an audience of 270 (seventy of whom were CELC delegates and guests, and about 200 Peruvian members), with the liturgy conducted by the Rev. Segundo Gutierrez, the president of the Martin Luther Seminary. The Rev. David Haueser provided the translation of the sermon.

Let us pray fervently for the wonderful fellowship we have with many Christians around the world who confess the same Savior and doctrine that we do and who are seeking to promote the holy Gospel of Christ in their own communities. It is very moving to hear about their steadfast dedication to this mission, in spite of many persecuting challenges to the faith in countries where freedom of religion is an anomaly. May God give all of us the boldness that was characteristic of the early Christians (Acts 4:29).

For more information about the CELC, the conference essays, and also a large supply of pictures, visit www.celc.info.


John A. Moldstad, President of the ELS



Through Word-and-Sacrament Worship God Motivates His People in Their Vocations

“I can’t go on like this!” This sentiment may be our thought when the cross becomes so very heavy to bear. The mom, who has so much to do and with children demanding much of her time and energy, can reach a breaking point. A husband and wife can feel frustrated with each other when expected changes do not happen. At such times, people may be tempted to just quit the job, leave the church, give up on the family, and stop caring about other people in their lives and in their vocations.

Should we confess that loving zeal for others is often not on the front burner of our conscience? We are very apt, due to our sinful nature, to complain, be sluggish, and be—well—unmotivated. And we all would like to be more loving, caring, and less self-centered in our vocations. How do we do that? What can motivate us to serve others with the love of God?

Listen to the Word, to the voice of God speaking to you today of His eternal love for you. You can know it and believe it. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, emphasis added). Jesus has declared you forgiven through His blood. You are decreed and certified to be clean and righteous in the name of Him who was dead but now is alive. Jesus says this to you so you can hear and also believe. He wants you to have confidence today in the love of the Holy triune God. This Good News is the divine power that motivates, energizes, renews, and strengthens our faith.

In the Holy Sacraments, Jesus motivates us to serve others in love by His love: “According to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:5). Connected with God’s love in Baptism, you are His child, who has this Christian motivation from the

Word and Sacraments to show forth Christ’s love.

In the Lord’s Supper, Jesus gives you His body and blood in the bread and wine for the remission of your sins. You have perfect salvation in Christ. Now you have boldness, energy, zeal, freedom, and power to love others. St. Paul states, “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:17–18). Now you are made to be brave and confident, to be more loving, patient, and kind. That’s divine motivation to be bold and sure, to even say to someone, “I love you” and “Jesus loves you.”

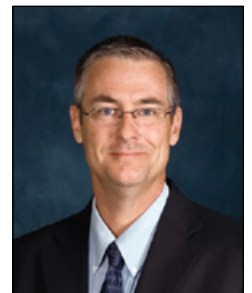


This love of God in Christ is given to us in Word and Sacrament and is that divine power that motivates us even when it is hard to go on. It empowers us to grow in His love—trusting our Savior even in times of darkness, praying when it is hard, hearing

His Word when it may be easier not to, honoring our parents when they are unreasonable, helping others out when we don’t have time and we are tired, loving and cherishing our spouse when they are not so lovable but downright difficult, being honest when it will cost us dearly, speaking not at all or defending others and speaking well of them when it would be so delicious to gossip and slander.

In Christ’s love, bestowed upon you in the Means of Grace (Word and Sacrament), you have the motivation to take up your cross daily for loving service in the vocations God has placed you.

Robert Harting is pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Indianola, Iowa.



Use Bible and Devotional Materials To Warm the Heart

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

Every night, after supper, my father would read devotions to the family. As a boy I sometimes thought, “The sun is going down! My precious play time is vanishing! None of my friends’ dads read a devotion. Why do we have to do this!” I remember verbalizing these thoughts once—just once. My father made it unequivocally clear that as the head of the house this was part of his job. Even though there were times I did not appreciate our family devotional times, the great majority of the time I did. In fact I longed for the warmth that accompanies God’s Word.

The word “cold” is often defined as “the absence of heat.” Our world can be a very cold place in that it is absent of the warmth of God’s love. As a child in school, I often remember being cold, even on the nicest of days. The teachers sometimes made school harder than it had to be. Other kids at school would often make life miserable. The subject matter was sometimes blatantly void of warmth. Those of us who were publically educated had to listen to godless evolution taught as fact. Oh, how cold the classroom could be.

The world has only gotten colder in the area of education, especially in higher education. Many colleges and universities are some of the coldest places on earth due to their open and most of the time unopposed rejection of Christianity and the Bible. We experience the cold world in other places as well: the work place, in our commutes, at home, in our own sinful minds, and even in some churches. Coldness can be everywhere, and it is not age-discriminatory.

There is a story about an old man who got tired of practicing his Christian faith. The dutiful pastor called on him to inquire about his spiritual well-being. The old man replied, “It’s just the same thing every Sunday. Same old hymns. Same old Bible lessons. Same old hypocrites sitting in the pews. I’m sick of it. I don’t need it anymore!” The pastor did his best to get him to

see the importance of continual practice of his faith. No matter how many times the pastor tried talking to the man, he still wouldn’t come back to church or even open his Bible. On a cold winter’s day the pastor dropped by the old man’s house unexpectedly. The man let him in, but the pastor said nothing. He simply sat on a chair and stared into the fireplace. The old man, a little perplexed, sat down by the fire as well saying nothing. After several minutes of silence, the pastor grabbed the poker and pushed a red-hot ember onto the hearth and then sat back down not saying a word. Gradually the ember lost its glow and became black. The pastor pointed at it and left. The man was back in church the next Sunday, having realized that apart from God’s Word and Sacrament we live in the cold.

Are you or is someone you know living in the cold? A wonderful way to warm up is to have an active devotional life. Fathers, read devotions with your family. Even if they complain, don’t be fooled — they long for the warmth that only Christ’s love can give. Mothers, if your husband is not living up to his responsibility as spiritual head, you certainly should read the devotions. Young adults, set aside ten minutes of your day to be warmed by God’s comforting Word. People in the fourth quarter of life, read your devotions and be assured that God is with you now and that you will be with Him for eternity.

If you are wondering what to use for devotions there is a plethora of great material available. I’m sure your pastor would love to recommend appropriate materials for you.

Greg Schmidt is pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Naples, Florida.



“These Little Ones”

[Jesus said] *“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”*
(Matthew 18:6, ESV)

Pastors hear a lot of excuses from people who haven't been attending church: “I have to work on Sundays.” “The weekend is my only time to get away.” “I know what Jesus did; I don't need to hear it every week.” “I'm too tired.” “Sundays are the only days our family can be together.” “Our kids are too distracting. We can't focus on the sermon, and the kids aren't getting anything out of it either.” There is no God-pleasing excuse to neglect the Means of Grace.

But even some with perfect church attendance (including pastors) make excuses when it comes to the responsibility of cultivating a rich devotional life in the home. “I have to work.” “There isn't time for a devotion today.” “We need to get back to the game/movie/etc.” “I'm too tired.” “The kids and I already know what Jesus did for us.” “It's too loud and chaotic to have a devotion. No one can concentrate on it anyway.”

When parents fail to nurture their children in the Christian faith by teaching them at home and taking them to church, they sin greatly. They cause their children to stumble in the faith by their bad example and wrong priorities, and they sin against God by failing to raise *His* baptized children according to His Word.

On account of our laziness, ineptitude, and selfishness, everyone who interacts with children deserves “to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

But the Lord has had mercy upon us. God the Father punished His only Son for our offenses. Jesus was cast into hell's fiery lake and was drowned in death with the millstone of our sins around His neck. Our

sins sank to the depths never to resurface, while Jesus rose again in glorious victory.

He forgives our failures toward His “little ones.” He encourages us to walk confidently ahead in His grace. We cannot get back the hours lost in fruitless pursuits. We can commit ourselves to do more for the smallest saints among us.

Training children is a serious responsibility. Some pastors underscore this responsibility by wearing a

clerical collar, which is a symbol of the millstone Jesus talks about. Parents, pastors, and any others with the task of spiritual care must above all else point children to their Savior. Through the Gospel, they and we grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

As children grow in the faith, they can surprise their elders with how dearly they treasure the Gospel and how clearly

they confess it. They are often the ones urging prayer, devotions, and church attendance. God encourages you through them, just as He wants to encourage them through you.

Through the hearing, learning, and sharing of His Word, our Lord and Savior will continue to be honored, and you and the little ones in your care will continue to be strengthened and kept steadfast in the true faith.



Peter Faugstad is co-pastor of Parkland Lutheran Church in Tacoma, Washington.

Practical Stewardship

Seeking to meet the challenges of preaching and teaching bold and purposeful giving to the Lord!

To be able to witness the love and generosity of believers in supporting the Gospel's proclamation is truly a privilege. Many of you have seen it too. But as a pastor and a giving counselor I've been blessed to see more than my share of generosity in support of the Gospel.

Generosity, based on a Christ-centered faith, surrounds the Christian home and the church — whether it is seen by young people being raised by generous parents who support both their church and missions or the generous support given by many to supply food and clothing for orphans in India — all of these are sure signs that God's people are sharing the bounty of a loving heavenly Father. Generosity is manifested in many forms and in many faces.

When making the claim that God's people are generous we don't have to look far to see that it is true. The evidence is often right in front of us. Do we have a church to attend that is not far from us? If we do it is likely because someone, or a group of people, thought it important to establish and maintain that church. Few of our churches and schools (including Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Seminary) would be here today if not for generous people and a bountiful God. As a pastor serving our synod, generous people who dearly love their Lord are people with whom I'm in contact with almost daily. At the same time, I'm sure that when any of us witnesses generosity, as I am privileged to do, it encourages us and it often motivates us to be even more generous ourselves.

As redeemed and forgiven children of God, fully cared for by a generous Father, may we all likewise be moved to generosity even as we seek to instill this special gift in others.

Isaiah's observation of this gift of "giving" by inspiration of the Holy Spirit declares, "*A generous man devises generous things, and by generosity he shall stand*" (Isaiah 32:8). In essence Isaiah tells us that a generous person has "good standing" in his community - including his church.

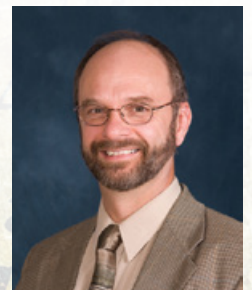
But, that doesn't mean that all of us saints have acquired the level of generosity that was so evident among the early Christians. The saints in Macedonia are held up as a special example of generosity, as Paul writes to Christians in Corinth, to nurture generosity in them also:

"Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints" (2 Corinthians 8:1-4).

When we consider this text and compare these generous followers of Christ to ourselves we find we are often wanting. It should serve as a very important reminder to humbly ask the Lord to forgive us and to ask for the grace to help us as we struggle in our own earthly stewardship. In Christ, we know we have this forgiveness and we can freely call upon Him asking for generous hearts.

May we always view this text as a reminder that as followers of Christ we need to keep stewardship, the management of our Lord's gifts, as a part of our teaching and modeling, first as parents and also as leaders in the church. The reason: so that generosity may grow as a beautiful branch bearing fruit in our midst by the grace of our generous and loving-provider God.

Dan Basel is the giving counselor for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.



President Moldstad's Annual Message

On June 15, 1520, Martin Luther was placed under the ban of excommunication by the Roman Church. The ban of Pope Leo X ordered that Luther's books be burned, that Luther retract what he had written, and that Luther submit to the Church's authority within 60 days. When that time expired, Luther boldly burned the papal bull and a copy of Rome's *Canon Law*.

Later that year Luther was summoned to the diet in the town of Worms, led by Emperor Charles V. Charles demanded that Luther recant his writings, but Luther replied that his conscience was captive to the Word of God. After leaving Worms, Luther's life was spared through a friendly kidnapping. At the Wartburg fortress, Luther translated the New Testament into the language of the people.

What moved Luther to be so steadfast? He had a love for his Savior, worked in him by the Holy Spirit. He was ready to die for the faith, knowing that Jesus had died for his sins.

In his 1529 *Small Catechism*, Martin Luther's explanation to the Sixth Petition of the Lord's Prayer ("And lead us not into temptation") did not ask God to keep us from going through trials. Rather, "We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh may not deceive us or lead us into misbelief, despair, or other shameful sin and vice." For God alone knows when and if a time of trial or testing is needed for us.

In spite of persecutions, the early Christians proclaimed Christ to a pagan world. The boil-riddled Job refused to curse God because of his troubles. We might know individuals who have endured an accident or trial, only to overcome their troubles and accomplish great things. Baptized followers of Christ could view each obstacle of life as a moment to show forth the light of God's Word into the world.

The convention theme, "Engaging Others with Jesus in Times of Trial" intends to lead us to recognize that hardships can be turned into door openers to tell about Jesus and His grace. God's people cannot answer

every "Why" question, but they can point to Christ and the restoration of life from His empty tomb.

The Strategic Plan adopted by our synod in 2011 emphasizes Christian education as an important outreach goal. Each congregation needs to view itself as a "mission congregation." God has certainly blessed our church body with 1) a good confession of faith in Jesus, 2) an emphasis on preaching and teaching both Law and Gospel, 3) dedicated pastors, missionaries, and teachers who proclaim Christ, 4) resources for mission outreach in our nation and to the world, 5) the sincere prayers of faithful people asking that God's kingdom come through His Word, 6) the Means of Grace—Word and Sacraments—by which the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of sinners, and 7) our regular

worship services and daily devotions that look forward to the time all believers will be gathered around the throne of the Lamb.

We live in a time of many attacks on our faith and Christian virtues, along with demonic assaults on God's Word and those within the church who have forsaken biblical inerrancy to teach evolution origins.

The growth of secular humanism within public education promotes acceptance of worldly philosophies and lifestyles among our Christian youth. It is very important to use God's Word to proclaim His truths, rather than trusting in political solutions. For God's Word carries with it divine power to teach our youth so they can stand against those who oppose God's truth. Therefore, Christian education efforts in our parishes—Sunday School, elementary schools, catechism classes, youth groups—are important ways to reinforce the instruction of Christian parents.

Tremendous miracles of grace can occur when the holy Gospel is preached and taught. God's grace gives optimism amid trials and opposition to us and each generation following. May God grant us the grace to do His will and may He bless our Evangelical Lutheran Synod for the glory of His name and for the salvation of blood-bought souls.



2014 Convention Essay: “Engaging Others with Jesus — in Times of Trial”

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Corinthians 4:17)

Just 100 years ago, Europe was filled with optimism at the progress of human culture. But this month [June] marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I. Faith in human reason is a baseless confidence, because human reason cannot fathom the immensity of sin. Thus, times of personal trial come as a shock. All generations of people are subject to trials in their lives. The more people try to avoid suffering, the greater its burden is when trials arrive.

The Problem of Trials

A time of trial shows one’s status as vulnerable to accident, disease, and death. It forces people to see what protection may exist and what resources or “gods” might be called on for help. For whatever we trust in to help is our “god.” And if Christians suffer just like unbelievers, what advantage is it to follow Christ? The basic answer is: trust God, a tension that is a clash of faith and sight.

Dealing with times of trial is one of the most important ways that Christians confess their faith in God, when all human resources cannot help.

There are three basic answers to suffering. First, the stoic approaches suffering with patient endurance, trusting that life will get better. The problem is that stoicism does not address the question, “Why me?” A second answer is “theodicy,” the human attempt to justify God’s action or inaction. If God is almighty, why did He allow suffering? Or if God is not almighty, why believe in Him? Job’s friends declared that Job suffered because he had sinned, for God would not allow such great suffering to happen unless Job deserved it. Humans cannot justify God’s actions, because His ways are higher than theirs (see Isaiah 55:8, 9).

The third answer to suffering is the cross and revelation. This answer requires that one recognize two distinctions: the hidden versus the revealed will of God, and the theology of the cross versus the



theology of glory. Human reason loves the theology of glory and seeks to know the hidden will of God. Faith in Christ lives in the theology of the cross and trusts in the revealed word of God.

Human nature desires to look behind what God has revealed to understand suffering. The sinful nature seeks freedom from revealed constraints, resents dependence in trials, and believes it deserves to know God’s ways. Faith trusts that God knows what is right and is content with what He reveals. Therefore, forgiveness of sins is not found in running to the cross, or in remembering Christ’s suffering, but where God has placed forgiveness—in the Gospel and Sacraments.

In the same way, salvation was accomplished under the form of defeat and death on the cross, from which came victory. The theology of the cross points the human sufferer to the God who suffered for the sins of the world. This theology of the cross affects how the Church presents itself to the world in its liturgy, hymns, prayers, and the very architecture of the sanctuary.

Engaging Others in Trials

Engaging others with Jesus in times of trial through the theology of the cross brought changes to pastoral care during the Reformation times. All trials are to be received as times to live in repentance and faith. Since not every trial is a consequence of some sin, pastoral care for the sufferer is an art that determines

how to rightly apply Law and Gospel. Repentance is both contrition (sorrow over sin) and faith (trust in Jesus' work of salvation). Why some become sorry but without faith, and others are contrite and trust in Jesus is a divine mystery that God has not revealed.

Trials and suffering may seem as if God is acting against His people and may lead Christians to struggle with their faith. God's promises of forgiveness and eternal life are seemingly opposed by experiences of suffering, terrors of conscience, and death. The Psalms contain many examples of lament, the anguish of spirit that asks God, "Why?" (see Psalms 69, 17, 10, 38, 25, 51, 55, 88, 41, 6). These psalms express the tension between God's promises of mercy and kindness in contrast with the current burden of suffering and sorrow. Christ Himself lamented from the cross by quoting Psalm 22—the paradoxical theology of the cross.

While the Christian wrestles with this paradox between God's promises and suffering, the unbeliever is confronted with his own mortality and must rely on "gods," denial of eternity, or stoicism to see him through. The task of the Christian Church is to proclaim God's Word and be ready to give a defense (1 Peter 3:15). To the sufferer, the Church preaches repentance and remission of sins, as Christ commanded. God will accomplish what He wills through the Word.

Thus, worship services can provide consolation to sufferers through offering Word and Sacraments. Teaching can be done through the hymns, the Psalms, sermons, and prayers, so that the people learn to see suffering, trial, doubt, pain, and death not as extraordinary events, but as part of what it means to live as God's child here in this world.

Engaging others with Jesus means to show others that Jesus came into the world to address the totality of human life. From conception, to life in this world, to death and resurrection—Jesus has gone through all that people endure. Jesus was bruised for our iniquities and God laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:4–6). The hope Jesus gives tempers our sorrow and grief and causes us to cry out to God, pleading that He remembers His promises.

Engaging others means pointing people to the ways that God has provided the Gospel to be given to them—His Word, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the power of the keys in absolution.

Conclusion

While we might find trials to be burdensome, Jesus said, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). In 2 Corinthians 4:17, St. Paul makes a similar comparison: light affliction versus a weight of glory. Through faith in Jesus, trial helps us see that what is heavy is in reality a "light affliction." We still suffer pain, but we call on the One who promises never to leave us and who promises to answer our prayers.

A study of the theology of the cross is where our trials meet with God's hidden ways. A study of vocation, where God calls us to interact with people in the world, provides opportunities to show compassion, to be merciful, to assist those who need help, and to present the Gospel about Jesus and the eternal reality He has given us.

The convention essay by the Rev. Thomas Rank, Scarville, Iowa, was redacted by the editor.



2014 Convention Resolutions

Doctrine Committee

The Doctrine Committee was encouraged to monitor the Wartburg Project, which aims to produce a Bible translation through volunteers. Regarding the informal meetings with representatives of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, it was resolved to continue these informal meetings, to inform the synod of their usefulness, and to maintain the confession of the synod's doctrine in these meetings. It was also resolved to continue informal meetings with representatives of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Members of the committee were thanked for their published works and were encouraged to continue working on the Reformation and Synod Anniversary Bible study and to inform the synod about current theological trends.

Finances

Regarding the proposal for a special offering to be collected for the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation and the 100th anniversary of the synod, it was resolved that the offering's proceeds fund the Board for Home Outreach to start new missions and to place suitable candidates into the public ministry for mission work. The synod was to report on specific strategies adopted to implement the ELS Strategic Plan. The congregation portion of the synod's 2015 budget was set at \$760,000, with any offerings above \$725,000 to be allocated to the Board for Home Outreach. The delegates resolved to amend the synod bylaws and guidelines to include Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. as holders of its property.

Higher Education

The election of Mr. Harold Theiste as a type "B" member of the Board of Regents was ratified. It was resolved to thank those who had given to Bethany Lutheran College (BLC) and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, including the BLC Women's Auxiliary. It was resolved that synod members encourage promising young men to study for the pastoral ministry.

Home Outreach

The Board for Home Outreach (BHO) was encouraged to follow up their evangelism retreats by contacting pastors and synod congregations regarding their outreach efforts. It was resolved to ratify the type "B" appointment of the Rev. Timothy Hartwig to the BHO. The BHO was instructed to continue its search to fill the position of Evangelism–Mission Counselor. Since the BHO has set a priority that every synod congregation consider itself a mission congregation, it was resolved that the synod encourage its members to engage others with Jesus as God gives them opportunity.

World Outreach

Since the Board for World Outreach (BWO) reported that a lack of funding required changes in its mission work, it was resolved that the BWO develop contingency plans to use the resources available. Synod members were urged to pray for the

members of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church due to the political unrest. It was resolved to thank the Rev. David and Ruth Haeuser for 25 years of faithful service in Peru.

Elementary Education

The Board for Lutheran Schools of America (BLSA) was encouraged to conduct school visits and hold an ELS Teachers' Conference in 2014 in support of the synod's elementary schools. It was resolved that the Board report to the 2015 convention about the "I'm Called" program by Prof. Wosmek. The Board is also to encourage the development of LSA schools and the use of classical education. It was resolved to encourage the production of videos to be used in the schools and distribute them online. The Board is to discuss with the Board for Home Outreach the use of early learning centers in mission congregations.

Parish Services

The Board for Youth Outreach (BYO) was instructed to conduct a survey among the synod's pastors regarding the practice of Bible history instruction. The BYO is to work with Bethany Lutheran College to help the synod's youth attend the Lutheran Youth Association 2015 convention at Bethany. The Board for Christian Service was encouraged to study health insurance options and report annually to the convention. The delegates adopted the proposed guidelines of the Board for Christian Service regarding supporting active duty military and veterans with devotional materials.

Synodical Membership

Grace Lutheran Church, Lincoln, Illinois, was accepted into membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The following pastors were received into permanent synodical membership: the Rev. Jesse DeDeyne, Messiah Lutheran (Omro, Wisconsin); the Rev. Benjamin Wiechmann, King of Grace Lutheran (Golden Valley, Minnesota); the Rev. Paul Webber, Hope Lutheran (West Jordan, Utah); and the Rev. Paul Lange, Abiding Word Lutheran (Bowling Green, Ohio). The Rev. David Meyer was granted his request to remain on the clergy roster of the synod.

Miscellaneous

The delegates accepted the report of the Centennial Committee, which stated that a year-long celebration was planned, starting with the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in June 2017 and in June 2018 the 100th anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, under the theme "Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done: The Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Our Heritage of Grace." The delegates resolved to adopt the changes to the synod guidelines as proposed by the Synod Review Committee. It was resolved that the 2015 convention be held on June 21–25 at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota.

By the editor



On the Synodical Scene...

Paul Lange Ordained in Bowling Green, Ohio

On Pentecost Sunday, June 8, 2014, Abiding Word Lutheran Church, Bowling Green, Ohio, received its new pastor. A special service of ordination and installation of Candidate of Theology Paul Lange began at 3:00 p.m. The following pastors were involved in the service: the Rev. Steven Lange (Louisville, Kentucky)—lector, the Rev. Theodore Gullixson (Mankato, Minnesota)—liturgist, Prof. Lyle Lange (New Ulm, Minnesota)—preacher and ordainer, and the Rev. Paul Schneider (Midland, Michigan)—officiant of installation. Other pastors who participated in the laying on of hands were the Reverends Robert Krueger, Jeffery Luplow, John Merseth, Sr., Timothy Nass, and Thomas Smuda.

The service also featured music by organist Lynne Grogg and pianist Darlene Carpenter; clarinet and violin music by Jessica and Rebecca Wilson; singing by the Abiding Word Sunday School children, the church choir, and a barbershop quartet. After the service, a delicious ham dinner was served by the ladies of Abiding Word.



(Front Row, L to R): The Revs. John Merseth, Sr., Steven Lange (WELS), Paul Lange, Lyle Lange (WELS), Paul Zager, and Thomas Smuda. (Back row, L to R): The Revs. Theodore Gullixson, Timothy Nass (WELS), Jeffery Luplow, Paul Schneider, and Robert Krueger (WELS).

VBS in Oregon

“Dive in to God’s Word” was the theme of the 2014 Vacation Bible School (VBS) held at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Myrtle Creek, Oregon. Twenty students and five staff members attended the four-day VBS held June 30 through July 3.

Teacher Chana Smith taught nine children (ages 4–7) the message of salvation depicted by sea creatures’ characteristics. The black dragonfish, which uses a glowing light to trick smaller fish to come near its mouth, represents the devil who tries to trick us to follow him instead of God. The sand dollar signifies how God sent His Son, Jesus, to live on earth, die on a cross, and come back to life to forgive our sins and give us life in heaven. As we fill up on God’s Word so we can fight our enemies and the devil victoriously, we think of the porcupine fish and the way its body fills up with water, so it gets fat and sharp spines stick out so enemy fish stay away. The Word of God gives us strength to fight sin and our enemy, the devil.

God’s love and protection remind us of the sea anemone, which lets some fish hide in its tentacles. The dolphin reminds us that while it sometimes helps people by accident, Jesus wants us to help people on purpose to show them that we love Him because He saved us.



Beth Fiedler had a class of nine children (ages 8–11) and Pastor Fiedler had two teenage children in his class. Cindy Black, VBS superintendent, food lady, and general “go to person” was assisted by Terri Wetzels, craft chairman and Barb Cogswell, registration, photography, and certificates.

The children voted to send their VBS offerings to the children of India for their 2014 mission outreach.

By Barbara Cogswell, a member of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Myrtle Creek, Oregon.

CELC Meets in Lima, Peru

Representatives of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) traveled to Lima, Peru, for their eighth triennial convention. The convention met at the Hotel Ferrua in downtown Lima, three blocks from the seminary building. The convention occurred on May 30 through June 2, 2014, under the theme “We Are God’s Workmanship—Created in Christ Jesus for Good Works.”

The Rev. David Haeuser, ELS missionary in Peru, was the liturgist for the opening service. The Rev. Takeshi Nidaira, Japan, preached on Ephesians 1:1–10 to 96 worshipers. Nineteen voting delegates from twelve member churches received the following churches into associate membership in the CELC: the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Albania, St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Finland, Christ Evangelical Lutheran Ministries (CELM) in India, Lutheran Mission of Salvation—India, and the Christian Church of the Lutheran Reformation of the Republic in Chile.

Five essays were presented during the course of the four-day session:

Essay #1: “God Sanctifies Us—He Makes Us Holy After He Declares Us Holy,” by the Rev. John Brenner, United States. Original sin involves the total corruption of our human nature and we stand condemned because of the sinful nature given us through our parents. God sent His Son to live under the Law in order to redeem us by His perfect obedience and innocent death. Jesus atoned for the sins of all people. Therefore, God has justified the entire world. This means that God has declared everyone not guilty and forgiven.

Although all are forgiven, not everyone will be saved: sin’s salvation comes through faith in Jesus. Salvation and faith are gifts that the Holy Spirit gives

through the Means of Grace, the Gospel in God’s Word, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

In the wide sense, sanctification refers to the entire work of the Holy Spirit from conversion to preserving our faith to the end. In the narrow sense, sanctification refers to the work of the Holy Spirit that leads us to abhor sin and do good works. Sanctification is a result of God’s justification by faith. The power and will to do good works come from God. Good works are the visible evidence of faith, because they flow from true faith. Sanctification of one’s life will always be imperfect because Christians are both saints and sinners. They cannot be perfect in this life, but they can strive to do God’s holy will.



Essay #2: “God Gives Us Power—His Gospel in the Means of Grace Gives the Power for a God-pleasing Life” by the Rev. Gottfried Herrmann,

Germany. How does God cause Christians to please Him? He gives them power for “good works,” works that are good in God’s eyes because they are done from faith out of love for Jesus. God gives us His Holy Spirit through His Word, written in the Bible.

God would have His children serve Him, not out of fear of the Law, but out of love for Christ given through the Gospel. While keeping the Law is enticing, no one can obey it perfectly. Only through the message of God’s love in Jesus can one be empowered to serve God. Through the Gospel in the Word, the Holy Spirit creates faith, sustains it, and gives strength to do good works. In Baptism, God works to make His forgiveness completely certain. Baptism is not a one-time event, but an ongoing drowning of the Old Adam and an arising to a new life. Through the Lord’s Supper, the Holy Spirit seals to Christians God’s forgiveness of sins. Out of that certainty grows new power to do good works.

While prayer is important to the Christian’s life, it is not a means of grace, for God does not speak to

the Christian in prayer—only through His Word. The Christian’s pious efforts are not enough. Only the Holy Spirit working through the Word can produce good works. Christians can ask God to help them live for Him.

Essay #3: “God Guides Us—His Law in the Bible Guides Us in Godly Living” by the Rev. Brester Msowoya, Malawi. The people of the world do good things to gain a good reputation or with the hope of reward or to please others. But the believer does all to benefit God, even when working to help his fellow men. In everything they do, it is motivated by love for God who saved them through Jesus’ work of redemption and who created faith in them. St. Paul wrote, “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works” (Ephesians 2:10). Through faith in the Gospel, God makes every Christian a new creation, or spiritual rebirth.

After this spiritual transformation by God, believers desire to do good works, such as serving in the public ministry of the Word. There are challenges to that work, such as culture. In Malawi, most tribes practice purification to please their ancestral spirits. After a birth, the baby and mother are considered unclean until the ritual cleansing is done. For 30 days, the new mother is considered unclean. So the people think that if the Holy Spirit requires cleansing for sin, our customs cannot be wrong.

Another challenge is the false teachings of Pentecostal churches. They claim that the Spirit gives power to heal and cast out demons, and that the believer must experience speaking in tongues, dreaming, and performing healings. In 1 Corinthians 12:4–10, St. Paul speaks about spiritual gifts, but does not say that all

Christians will have the same gifts; rather, He will give them to each one as He wills.

A third cultural challenge to mission work is the death of a husband. Many people believe that the spirit of the dead man is in control of his wife until the cleansing is done. If certain unchristian practices are not done,

the belief is that the dead man will be unhappy and the whole village will die. They need to hear about Christ’s victory over death so that people do not fear death.

While God’s Law gives specific rules about what to do and not do, many things are not commanded nor forbidden, called *adiaphora*. Unfortunately, some impose the obedience of Old Testament ceremonial laws. Others set up their own rules to please God. When these are done to gain salvation, they reject Christ’s work of salvation and bind Christians to man-made laws.

Essay #4: “Honoring God—We Are Created To Love God According To the First Table of the Law” by the Rev. Petr Krákora, Czech Republic. The sinful state is the common condition of mankind, and sanctification sets the believers apart by making them holy in terms of perfect sinlessness. Sanctification is a finished event the moment people believe in Jesus, because in Jesus God sees them as perfectly sanctified—wide sense. From conversion, believers also progress in sanctification on earth—narrow sense.

Sanctification is not about our becoming holy, but being holy. That is, by Baptism Jesus made us good trees that bear fruit (John 15). Being united with Christ’s death and resurrection in Baptism, Christians live out what God has done—Christ’s death and resurrection.

Worldly people may see that Christians are kind, tender-hearted, loving, and forgiving. But the believer understands that they are only carrying the fruit produced by its Author, Jesus. Union with Jesus will also be visible in the life of the Christian. For without Christ, we can do nothing. Sanctification is not a journey toward heaven, but a journey downward toward earth—to carry Christ’s life, holiness, wisdom, justice, love, and kindness into the world.

Essay #5: “Sanctification—Serving Others Is the Christian’s Seal” by the Rev. Guillermo Carrera, Peru. The emphasis is on the second table of the Law, having a responsibility to love our neighbor. If natural man cannot live a sanctified life, where does it come from? Sanctification comes from conversion by the Holy Spirit produced through the Means of Grace. In order to produce fruit, we need to be watered by the streams of living water—God’s Word. Christians are not independent trees, but only branches grafted into Christ. In reality, the vine branch does not produce grapes; it participates in the nature of the trunk. True



faith moves the believer to live for his Lord, who died for his sins.

Human sexuality is a wonderful gift of God, but if allowed to go out of His limits it becomes brutal passion. When Adam sinned, he saw himself, a form of egoism leading to self-gratification, rather than mutual pleasing in a marriage. Such self-centeredness leads to many sexual sins and the desire to legitimize them under human law. Where the world promotes sexual freedom, the Church needs to cultivate chastity so as to correct the tremendous propaganda that feeds eroticism. Christians need to lead a pure and decent life in words and actions. They serve others by helping them remain sexually pure.

Vocation can be used in three ways: God's calling us to faith, God's calling to an occupation, and God's calling to the pastoral office. Vocation, then, is the place in which God has put you to carry out your job faithfully. Through the occupations of others, God is active in caring for our needs.

Luther spoke about the callings of God with regard to three institutions God established: the pastoral office, the family, and the civil government. Above these three dwells the calling of Christian love to all who are in need. The Holy Spirit empowers us to help others, which is the seal of faith. Let everyone be faithful in his or her vocation so all may be done to the glory of the triune God.

At the business meeting, the delegates elected the following to CELC offices: the Rev. Daniel Koelpin, president; Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary President Gaylin Schmeling, vice-president; the Rev. Timothy Buelow, secretary; and the Revs. Michael Duncan and Larry M. Schlomer, Planning Committee members. The next CELC convention will meet in Grimma, Germany, on June 28/29–July 2, 2017. The delegates resolved to create a CELC Reformation Anniversary Committee to recommend ways to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.

ELS Historical Society Meeting & Readers' Theatre

The annual meeting of the ELS Historical Society was held on June 15, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sigurd Lee Theater. The meeting began with a number of Scandinavian hymn tunes played on stringed instruments. The players were Prof. Mark Harstad, Loren Halvorson, Daniel Halvorson, John Halvorson, Matti Halvorson, Peggy Harstad, Lydia Petersen, Diane Gullixson, James Strom, and Matthew Strom.

Chairman Mark Harstad announced that the society's treasury had ample resources to print the first volume of the works of Koren, translated by Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux. He announced that a group of young people, descendants of the late Rev. Bjug Harstad, planned to retrace his travels to the Yukon gold fields in Alaska. Mr. Peter Anthony and the Rev. Jerome Gernander were elected as members of the board.

Those in attendance were treated to hearing readings from early Lutheran pioneers, collected by Bethany seminary student Mike Lillienthal. The

readers were Prof. Mark Harstad, Mrs. Rebecca DeGarmeaux, the Rev. Thomas Rank, the Rev. Jerome Gernander, and Prof. Ryan and Marie MacPherson.



Cross-stitch 2014 Meeting

Mrs. Mary Born welcomed the people who gathered for the annual Cross-stitch meeting. The meeting was held in the auditorium of Honsey Hall. Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary student Matthew Bloomberg opened the meeting with a devotion on Mark 4:35–41. Lexi Fosburgh entertained the assembly by playing three piano selections.

The highlight of the meeting was a presentation by the teachers of the East Seoul Canaan Academy in South Korea via Skype on the internet. The Academy started in 2006, after the Rev. Young Ha Kim began mission work in Seoul, South Korea, the previous year. Students who wish to study in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod high schools in the United States are prepared at the Academy by learning English, other subjects, and Bible study.



The teachers of East Seoul Canaan Academy presented via Skype.

2014 – 2015 Women's Mission Society Rallies

<u>Date</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>President/Local Contact</u>
13 Sept	Frankenmuth, MI	Flo Brueggemeier (flopaul@amplex.net)
27 Sept	Oklee, MN	Terry Umphrey (dumphrey@arvig.net)
27 Sept	Klamath Falls, OR	Kay Kassulke (kaykassulke@gmail.com)
18 Oct	New Hampton, IA	Carol Volker (dcvolker@iowatelecom.net)
18 Oct	Iola, WI	Cheryl Heiliger (dheiliger8613@charter.net)
25 Oct	Cold Spring, MN	Marlene Trebesch (trebesch@yahoo.com)
8 Nov	Vero Beach, FL	Lori Steinberg (loristeinberg@hotmail.com)
7 Feb 15	Fort Mojave, AZ	Verna Green (rfyffe62@frontiernet.net)

Cross-stitch is the unifying network of these mission rallies, connecting the circuits into a synod-wide organization, coordinating the offerings for maximum blessing to the missions. Much as individual congregations are clustered into regional circuits and all together are members of our synod, so also the various local and circuit Women's Mission Societies are under the umbrella of *Cross-stitch* for the sake of good stewardship and efficiency. This year's *Cross-stitch* projects include:

\$10,000	Orphans in India
\$ 2,500	Women's Scholarships in Peru
\$ 5,000	Home Mission / Evangelism Outreach
\$ 2,500	Food for Amazon Lutheran High School
\$ 2,500	English-as-Foreign Language Program in Chile

We thank everyone for the unified support *Cross-stitch* provides for ELS missions! It is the most effective means for supporting our synod's outreach programs.



Treasurer's Report

Memorials given from 7/1/2013 – 06/30/2014

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Memorial by*

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Bethany – Port Orchard, WA

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Pastor, I Have a Question...

Question: *Was Moses a murderer? "Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand" (Exodus 2:11-12).*

ANSWER: There is no confusion about the action: Moses killed him. But to kill someone is not necessarily to murder him. Killing is a very specific act; murder is not just an act, rather it involves intent, a matter of thought and of the heart. Murdering can be done in our hearts by severe hatred even if we do not actually physically harm anyone. I am inclined to agree with Kretzmann that there is no statement in the Bible saying that Moses murdered the Egyptian or that he was "censured for it."

Killing a human being is not the same as murder. While the Fifth Commandment forbids murder, God does not forbid all killing. Not all killing is sinful. God grants to government the sword: the authority to punish criminals and to protect the innocent. Christians serving in the military or in law enforcement act on behalf of the government.

When our vocation demands it, we are permitted to kill, when it is necessary.

Moses did not stand trial in Egypt for his act. The allegations against him were not proven. We can surmise that Pharaoh believed Moses had committed some crime. He tried to kill Moses. We also must suspect that Moses felt some pang of conscience. Before killing the Egyptian, he looked around to see if anyone was around to see what he was about to do. He also hid the body. The next day when it became clear to him that his act was known he fled. This might be interpreted as a sign of guilt. The text, however, merely states that Moses killed the Egyptian, not that he was convicted of murder.

"Then he said, 'Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?'" (Exodus 2:14). It doesn't seem as if Moses had a vocation of authority at this time. It doesn't seem as if Moses had governmental authority as a soldier or policeman. He acted on his own.

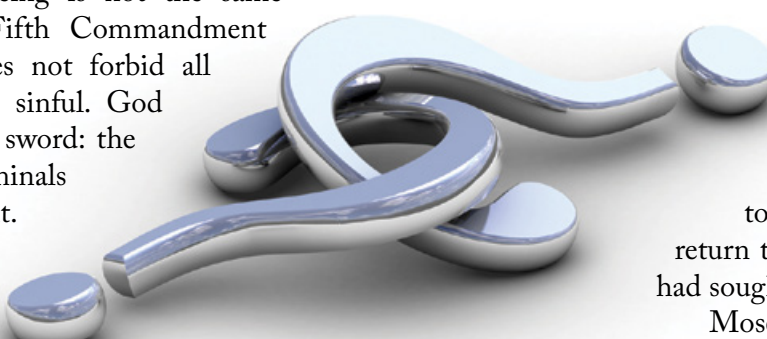
The text does tell us that Moses went to the aid of a Hebrew, one of his own people. Even if the government

should consider such an act as murder, we will aid others if their lives are threatened. The deacon Stephen stated, "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian" (Acts 7:23-24).

The most important issue is whether or not God considered Moses to be a murderer. Unlike when David sinned against Uriah the Hittite, we have no account that God called Moses to repentance for this act. In Exodus 3, God told Moses that it was safe to return to Egypt because those who had sought his life were dead.

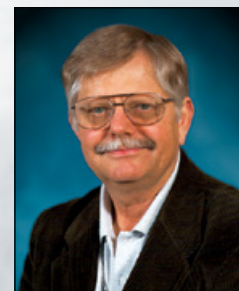
Moses was a sinner. He was a child of Adam. He was one for whom Jesus died. Jesus suffered the penalty for all sins. Moses was washed clean in the blood of the Savior. The great saints of the Bible were great only because we have a great Savior. In Jesus, we have mercy and God's grace.

The strength of our church is this: We are dedicated to letting the Bible interpret itself. The Bible speaks for itself. We ought not add to it or subtract from it. Moses killed the Egyptian. We need not say more.



Send your questions to:
Pastor Charles Keeler
117 Ruby Lake Dr.
Winter Haven, FL 33884

Charles Keeler is pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Winter Haven,



Educate Our Children

Two ELS churches, one in Florida and one in Oregon, have announced plans to start Lutheran elementary schools. Both schools plan to follow a classical education model. These developments should be seen as a positive sign for the future of our synod. Christian schools are very effective in training the youth of a congregation, and can be an opportunity to help children in the community and their parents to learn about Jesus.

Several years ago, an ELS committee was formed that led to the beginning of Lutheran Schools of America. They started with an ambitious and daring proposal: to begin 10 new Lutheran elementary schools a year and to return to a classical education model. The people supporting LSA had high expectations that the Christian education of our youth was the answer to the declining membership that the synod is facing.

Why do congregations take on the expenses of school buildings and calling teachers? Why do parents pay tuition to our schools when the public schools charge no tuition? We do not need to dwell on the influence of Common Core and other negatives about public education. The positive answer is that Christian parents and congregations take seriously what God says about bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

A Lutheran elementary school complements the Bible training that parents do in their homes. Such education trains students to memorize Bible passages and hymns, teaches a Christian world-view in every subject, and helps students use the gifts and talents that God has given them.

The philosophy of Christian education recognizes that students are sinners who are attacked by Satan, that students are forgiven of sins through faith in Jesus, that each subject taught has a connection in the Bible, and that students need to learn facts that they can use to deal with other issues.

Students need to be placed in an atmosphere that reflects Christ's love for every student, since He died for each one of them. Not every Christian student will always be liked by everyone, but students learn to respect and care for others in the classroom.

Lutheran elementary schools nurture young souls by teaching God's Word, develop minds through memorization and teaching critical thinking, instruct children in the things they need to know to live in this world, and bless students and parents through teaching respect and love for others.

Concern for others also means that Lutheran elementary schools reach out to non-member children and parents so that they learn to know the Gospel message. Such students bless teachers by providing them opportunities to speak about Jesus and His work of salvation. I personally have been with students who have visited the elderly in nursing homes or "sung" Christmas songs to deaf children and parents using sign language. There are many ways our schools can impact people in their communities.

Our Lutheran teachers are another blessing from God. For they are trained to not only fill minds with secular subjects, they also are taught how to present the wonderful truths of God's Word to young people. Our synod is blessed with many dedicated teachers who work in a one-room school or in a multi-class setting, who teach preschool children or carry out their vocations as both instructor and principal. We should often thank them for their dedicated and faith-filled work.

Again we ask, "Why should congregations support these education efforts with their prayers and gifts to God?" God wants His people to train children to know His Word. Students need this education so they continue in the faith. Congregations are blessed with informed teachers and students. Their schools can be outreach tools to let the community know about Jesus. And schools will teach another generation of workers in the congregation. For these and many other reasons, support the Lutheran elementary schools of our synod and your congregation.

Theodore Gullixson is an ELS pastor emeritus living in Mankato, Minnesota.



Lutheran School in India Needs Our Help

Help is needed for our India Mission! Grace & Truth Lutheran School in Rajahmundry has lost the lease on the buildings they rent to operate the school. Classes are currently being held outdoors in tents. The rainy season is about to begin and we need to raise a total of \$14,000 immediately to move the classes to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and re-register the school with the government. The school was scheduled to move in 2015, after the completion of the second floor of the Good Shepherd building, but the loss of leases has accelerated the move.

You may donate online at: www.els.name/donate

If you would like to mail a donation, mail to:

Grace & Truth Lutheran School–India
c/o Evangelical Lutheran Synod
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

Your help is greatly appreciated!

