



LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

MAGNIFYING MISSIONS:

AMONG THE MANY TRIBES

pg. 6

Dear Members and Friends of our ELS:

Christianity is cohesive. Outwardly, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ appears so divided. Denominations hold their differences. Some stray widely from the truth. Others embrace nuanced deviations. Pew Research in 2018 indicated 20% of self-described Christians say they believe in a higher power, but do not believe in the God of the Bible. Clearly a number of those professing Christianity sadly do not know and believe key essentials of the Christian religion. The teachings of the Christian faith, however, as set forth in the Word of God are solidly interconnected in the truth that God intends for all sinners to embrace for forgiveness, life, and salvation. All who believe in Christ, regardless of denominational ties, will be saved eternally only by holding on to the truth, never by embracing error.

The certainties upheld and proclaimed by believers during the Lent-Easter season are at the heart and core of the Christian faith. The meat of Christianity is dished up pointedly and astoundingly for each of us inwardly to digest as we ponder the Passion of our Savior and his glorious rising from the grave and what all this signifies.

You see, in Lent, we soberly consider our sinful condition and the great extent to which our gracious God went to enact our freedom from the just and damnatory punishment of our sins. His Son, Christ our Lord, “redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, ‘*Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree*’” (Galatians 3:13). There was no other way. C. F. W. Walther vividly sums it up like this: “As God could not have had any assistance in creating the world, which he made out of nothing, so the Son of God could not have been helped by any kind of creature at the second creation, the redemption of the world. He trod the winepress of God’s wrath alone, and only he could have done this” (God Grant It, p. 252).

Amazingly, this has been done!
The atonement for our sins

has been accomplished! Due to Calvary, we are to know and trust that “*we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Christ once for all*” (Hebrews 10:10).

The resurrection of Jesus seals our salvation. If the one who died for our transgressions raised himself from the dead, how can we not be sure he is our God who indeed gives us life? In his Pentecost sermon, Peter exclaimed about our Savior: “*...it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him*” (Acts 2:24). So fully did Jesus finish all that is necessary for sinners to be forgiven of sin and to be declared holy and righteous in the sight of God that the grave had to open and yield to the Life of all life! He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification (Romans 4:25). This we believe.

Lent-Easter dishes up the meat of the Christian faith, which truly satisfies. As we have opportunity, may we invite others to our churchly moments of meditation on the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord. It is a savory feast!

A Savory Feast

by **REV. JOHN A. MOLDSTAD**, President
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD, Mankato, Minn.



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GOD'S FENCE: THE 8TH FENCEPOST

Your Good Name

by **REV. KYLE MADSON**, Editor, *The Lutheran Sentinel*
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What is your most valuable earthly possession? I remember being required to consider this question as a high school assignment. How would you answer as an adult? Do our insurance policies give us clues? Is it your home, your car, your physical ability to work, your life itself? Sometimes an insurance agent will encourage you to consider how you will fare if you were to suffer the loss of a particular item or possession. This is meant to help you determine whether or not it's worth insuring.

Would any of us put “my reputation” on that list? I'm sure it wasn't on my list in high school. How valuable or important is “a good name?”

GOD CARES ABOUT YOUR GOOD NAME

“It doesn't matter what other people think of you, just as long as you know who you are...” That sounds nice, but it doesn't prove true. You could ask the woman who's trying to secure a home mortgage with a bad credit report. You could ask the man with a felony on his record as he's trying to get a job. You could ask the young lady who's terrified of going to school because of one photo that made its way onto the world wide web...

But even with all these anecdotes aside, GOD himself says that what others think of you matters. GOD CARES ABOUT YOUR GOOD NAME. He demonstrates as much by placing a hedge around your good name – your reputation.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

That God would give such a gracious hedge around your neighbor's good name shows the mercy of God. It also shows the treachery of our tongues. Though other muscles in the body are far more prominent and feared, none can harm our neighbor in spiritual or daily bread matters more than the lash and bite of our tongues. This hedge doesn't mean only to prevent false claims, but even those that may be true but are spoken with the motive to muddy a reputation or perhaps make ours seem glowing by comparison. God seize our tongues from such slander and forgive our many sins in this regard.

And though our fallen tongues have in them the treachery to do great harm, the only reason tongues can do so much harm is because God has endowed the characters and syllables

that come from tongues (we call them ‘words’) with power that He means to be a wonderful gift to us and to our neighbor. With the words that come from our tongues, God gives power to excuse a husband his many moments of inattention, power to excuse a wife her frequent failures to speak of her husband in a complimentary way. With the syllables that come from our tongues, God gives power to speak well of a civil servant we didn't vote for, power to put the best construction on our pastor failing to visit our loved one in the hospital, power to presume the best of our parishioner who hasn't always done the same for us.

JESUS BEARS TRUE WITNESS

The prohibitive requirement – “you shall not bear false witness” – shows our guilt. Luther's positive promotion – “excuse, speak well of and put the best construction on our neighbor” – this reveals our woeful void. But Jesus bears no guilt here nor lacks any good. Jesus is the True Witness. He endured the loss of His own good name throughout His public preaching and teaching at the slander of the teachers, the Sanhedrin, and Pilate. He addressed the guilty in person and with the purpose of repentance to faith. He used his flesh-and-blood tongue to pray for his enemies even as they did their worst to Him. Jesus is the epitome of righteousness with respect to this Divine command, and His spotless record is credited to us by faith. Jesus' life of True Witness is our righteousness – our good name – with God our Father, in whom we fear, love, and trust above all things.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, so that we do not lie about, betray or slander our neighbor, but excuse him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

Christ has instructed us to love our enemies and pray for them, yet several Psalms seem to be asking God to assail his enemies and are imprecatory (calling down curses). How should we understand this?

by **REV. PIET VAN KAMPEN**, Contributing Editor
CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH, Green Bay, Wisc.

Answer:

“Happy the one who takes and dashes Your little ones against the rock!” What harsh language! Who would ever wish such a terrible thing on children? Well, the answer might be a surprise. This is a verse from the Bible. Here is the passage in its context:

*“Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom
The Day of Jerusalem,
Who said, ‘Raze it, raze it, To its very foundation!’
O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed,
Happy the one who repays you as you have served us!
Happy the one who takes and dashes Your little ones
against the rock!”*
(Psalm 137:7-9, NKJV)

And Psalm 137 isn’t the only place where we find this kind of harsh language. In fact, Psalms 35, 55, 56, 58, 59, 69, 79, 83, 109, along with portions of Psalms 40, 137, and 139 all speak in this harsh manner. They are imprecatory, meaning that they are calling down God’s wrath. Therefore, they are known as “The Imprecatory Psalms.”

Some have misunderstood these psalms, arguing that they are unchristian because one cannot reconcile their prayers for punishment with the command of Christ to “*love your enemies*” (Matthew 5:44, NKJV). This concern has left many faithful believers scratching their heads, wondering how to understand and use these psalms rightly. However, remembering a few key truths can help clear away these misunderstandings.

First, **these psalms are the Word of God**. Though they are written by men suffering at the hands of God’s enemies, they are divinely inspired, just as the rest of Holy Scripture. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God* (2 Timothy 3:16, NKJV). Since God is the author, we can trust that these psalms are good and useful for us as His people. And as there is a season for all things, we can also trust that there is

a God-given season for praying these imprecatory psalms. Looking at the events that took place when these psalms were written, the psalmists’ harsh words often matched even harsher circumstances. God’s people were responding with prayer during times of intense persecution.

In connection with their proper use, then, we recognize that **these imprecatory psalms are a severe preaching of the Law**. David and the other psalmists are not vindictively asking God to punish their personal enemies, they are praying for God’s judgment on His own enemies. Paul offers his own imprecatory prayer at the end of 1 Corinthians when he says, “*If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!*” (1 Corinthians 16:22, NKJV). In the end, these psalms preach God’s wrath against those who hate God and His people. The goal of such preaching is always that God would fill His enemies’ faces with shame that they may seek His name and find His forgiveness (Psalm 83:16). So, depending on the circumstances, praying an imprecatory psalm may be exactly the right way for us to love our enemies.

Finally, it is also important to see that **some of these imprecatory psalms are also Messianic psalms**. In Psalm 69, for example, King David speaks with the voice of Christ, prophesying about His future suffering and detailing specifically how Jesus would be offered gall and wine vinegar: *They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink* (Psalm 69:21).

Can the language of these psalms be hard-edged? Certainly! They were hard-edged prayers for hard-edged times. We can be thankful that most of us haven’t seen such hard-edged times. Yet with the help of those imprecatory psalms, when hard-edged times come, we will know how to pray.

MAGNIFYING MISSIONS:

AMONG THE MANY TRIBES

by **REV. THOMAS HEYN**, Contributing Writer
BOARD FOR WORLD OUTREACH, Administrator

*And they sang a new song, saying,
“Worthy are you to take the scroll and
to open its seals, for you were slain,
and by your blood you ransomed
people for God from every tribe and
language and people and nation”.*

(Revelation 5:9, ESV)

Fishermen on the Godavari River in
Rajahmundry, India

“...from every tribe and language...”

What is a tribe? Among some, it is used to speak of their co-workers, teammates, or those who share a common activity. “Those people are my tribe,” we might say.

But historically, “tribe” meant a people united by customs, culture, and their own unique language. Tribes may consist of a number of extended families. In North America, we think of Native American tribes and recognize their successful businesses and accomplishments. In other parts of the world, sadly, they are looked down upon as people who are undeveloped and primitive. They are some of the most underserved people with respect to their health, education, and other social needs.



The Board for World Outreach

...is happy to say that our synod supports active mission work in seven different fields. Within two of them, we are working with tribal people. We are sharing God's plan of redemption, the scroll mentioned on the previous page. Only Jesus can open the scroll and carry out God's plan of redemption. He ransomed us by being slain and shedding his blood.

WE SHARE THAT MESSAGE WITH TRIBES IN TWO SPECIAL PLACES:

INDIA *(our largest mission field)*

At St. Peter's orphanage in **Hyderabad, India**, about 60 boys are at the orphanage and school. They are from a tribal people that speak their own language. They come from what was formerly one of the lowest castes of the Indian caste system (now illegal). They are still looked down upon by many. But some of our pastors in India from the Lutheran Mission of Salvation-India are reaching out in tribal villages and sharing the Gospel. Though looked down upon by some, they learn they are not looked down upon by God. He has cherished them and wants them to know they are redeemed in Christ Jesus.



PERU *(our oldest mission field)*

Many of you are aware of our work among the Shawi people in the **Amazon region of Peru**. Looked upon by many as undeveloped because of their simple homes in the jungle, nonetheless they have schools with their own Shawi teachers and support their families through farming, hunting, and other jobs. Most important, they have the message of redemption in Christ, teach it in their schools, and travel as evangelists to other villages to share the message. About ten men are in seminary classes, some preparing to become pastors, others getting further education to be better pastors.



Together with them, we are part of the "tribes, languages, people and nations" ransomed by Christ Jesus. Together we praise him and serve him.

Your generous support is so important. Your gifts and offerings to the Lord are, in turn, shared with the Lord's people who come from various tribes, languages, and nations.

TO DONATE:

If you would like to help support this work, please go to: els.org/donate

IN IMAGE — YOU ARE MINE

by REV. MATTHEW MOLDSTAD, Contributing Writer
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*“You’re the spitting
image of your dad...”*

Some might take this
as a compliment,
others... not so much.

The Bible tells us that God made us in his image. What does that even mean? I got it. It means we look like God, right? Wrong. As with all important matters in the Bible, it’s good to look at what it has to say for itself. *[You] have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him* (Colossians 3:10). Okay, this passage says the image of God has something to do with the new man and knowledge. *And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness* (Ephesians 4:24). This one says the new man is created in true righteousness and holiness. So let’s put all this together...the image of God has something to do with the new man and with knowledge, and the new man is something created in true righteousness and holiness. We can boil it down to this: Saying that we were made in the image of God must mean that we were made as holy beings with a perfect knowledge of God’s will.



QUESTIONS

1. If the “image” of God doesn’t mean “looking like God,” what does it mean?

So what happened? The two who were created in God’s image (Adam and Eve) rebelled against their Creator and that once-holy image got messy – the perfect knowledge got muddy. Man was no longer perfect and no longer had a clear knowledge of God’s will. But God worked diligently to restore his image in man by sending his Son to live according the image of God and to give us this image again through his death on the cross.

2. After the fall into sin, the Bible says that Adam “*fathered a son in his own likeness, after his own image*” (Genesis 5:3). **Describe what being fathered in Adam’s image looks like.**

In baptism, God restored you as a child in his image. He has clothed you with the perfection of Christ (Galatians 3:27). Through studying God’s Word, the new man grows in the knowledge of God, and this isn’t just in a greater knowledge of his law, but also growing especially in a greater knowledge of his grace.

3. We can’t help but think of “looks” when we hear the word “image.”
What does the life of the child of God look like?

So how come I’m not perfect now? Even though you have the new man, you also still have your sinful flesh, which clings to you. When you were a kid, did you ever take for granted that your parents had money? Did you ever have a fit in the middle of the grocery store if your mom didn’t buy you a toy? Do you still have those fits today? Maybe so – but you’re growing. You’re growing to know that your parents work very hard to buy you what you need. And as you grow, you learn to thank them for all they have done and continue to do for you.

4. Paul described fruits of faith (the fruit of the spirit) as “love, joy, peace, patience,” etc. Fruit bearing trees tend to grow slowly. Look back at times from your childhood when you acted like a kid throwing a fit in a store. **What fruit do you see growing?**

As we grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus, we grow in the image of God. This happens as we are encouraged by the Holy Spirit through his Word not to say, “Gimme more of that grace so I can sin more,” but instead to live our lives in thanks to God for restoring His image in us through Christ.

5. God uses water and light to make plants and trees grow. Being remade in his image,
what does he use to grow your faith and maintain the way you now look?

Prayer: “*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*” Amen.

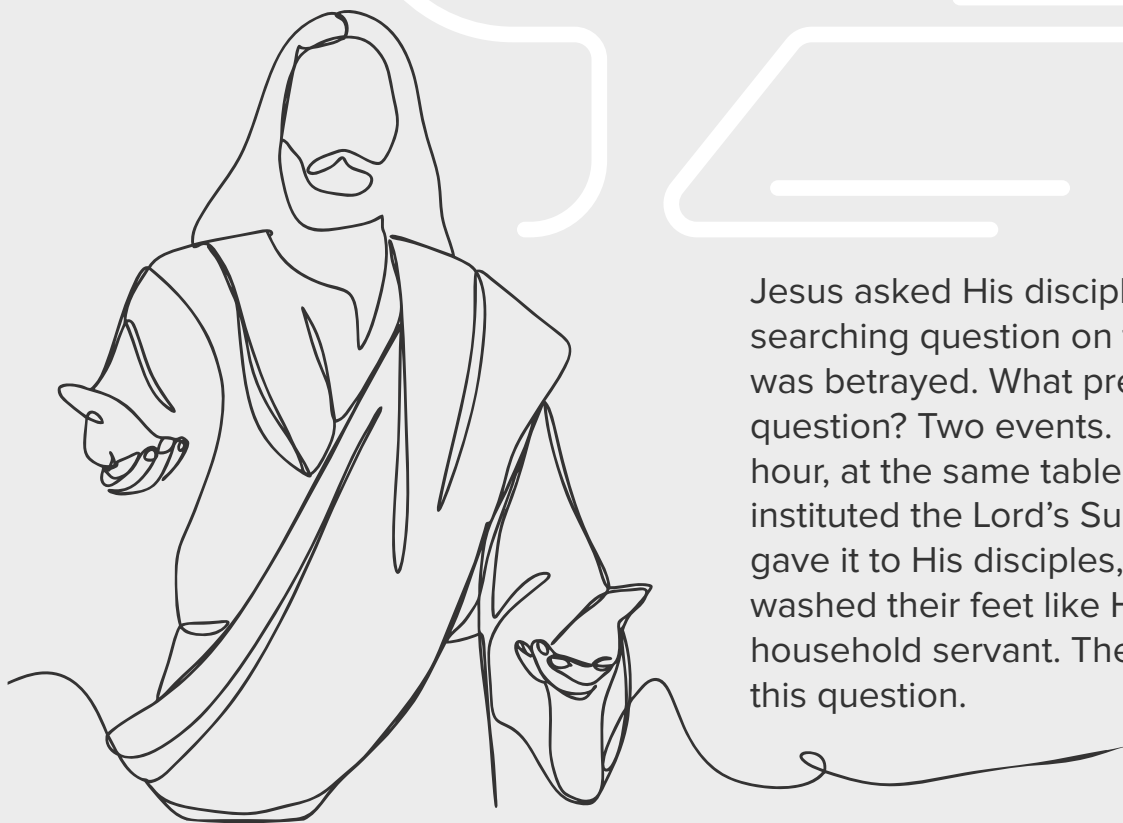
JESUS ASKS QUESTIONS

by **REV. JERRY GERNANDER**, Contributing Writer
BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Princeton, Minn.

So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them,

“Do you know what I have done to you?”

(John 13:12)



Jesus asked His disciples this searching question on the night He was betrayed. What preceded this question? Two events. In the same hour, at the same table, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and gave it to His disciples, and He also washed their feet like He was just a household servant. Then He asked this question.

Did the disciples know what Jesus had done to them? The answer is no. His question was met with silence. They knew Jesus by now. The answer would not just be “You washed our feet clean.” They knew He was teaching them something they didn’t know well enough yet.

The clue to the answer comes in Jesus’ back-and-forth with Peter as He went around washing the disciples’ feet. Peter at first refused to let Jesus wash his feet. He thought it was just about his feet. This washing of feet was a dirty job, an unwanted job, a menial task assigned to an unimportant, non-essential person. Peter didn’t want to think of Jesus that way! At first, he resisted Jesus, so Jesus said: “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will understand later.” (That statement contained the glimmer of the promise that the Holy Spirit would enlighten His disciples and open their minds to understand.) Peter then said to Jesus: “You shall never wash my feet!”

Now came Jesus’ key statement: “If I do not wash you, you have no part with me.” Then He said that he who is washed “is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”

This makes it clear that when Jesus said, “Do you know what I have done to you?” He wasn’t talking about washing their feet. He was talking about the Lord’s Supper. For what had He just said to them? “You are clean, but not all of you.” This was before Judas went out. Judas is the one who wasn’t clean. Jesus washed all their feet, Judas’ too. You could tell Judas’ feet were clean. But you couldn’t see into Judas’ heart. By a lack of faith, what did Judas get in the Lord’s Supper as an unbeliever? He still got Jesus’ body and blood, but to his condemnation. Judas was not clean. But the other disciples, who had faith in Jesus’ words, received Jesus’ body and blood to their benefit and had “forgiveness, life, and salvation” by “faith in His words.” What did Jesus say about them? “You are clean,” and not just that, but they were “completely clean.”

Hear that? You are completely clean. That is what Jesus has to say to you when you receive the Lord’s Supper. It’s why He instituted it: to make you completely clean from all your sins. It’s why you are to come - to be made completely clean from all your sins. It’s what you are to

believe, because Jesus Himself says this to you when you have partaken of His body and blood with faith in His words: “You are clean ... completely clean.” Could there be anything better? No!

Think of it! Who gets into heaven? Psalm 24 says, “He who has clean hands and a pure heart.” You’ll be tempted to think that you can’t get into heaven because your sins make you so unclean. But in the Lord’s Supper, you hear differently. Jesus says to you, “Do you know what I have done to you? ... You are clean ... completely clean.” He is saying ahead of time what He will say on the day of judgment. He will put His hand on you and say, “You are clean ... completely clean ... Come!”

This is the confidence, then, with which we go out into the world after we receive the Lord’s Supper. We are clean, so we are sent into the world to infect it with our cleanness in Christ.

Christ sends us into the world -- into our vocations -- with renewed strength to live a holy life, stronger not only in faith toward God but also stronger in love toward one another. So we cleanse others, and the very world we live in, and sanctify everything we do and touch in the power of the One who lives within us now by the cleansing power of the word He has spoken to us in the Sacrament. This is how we “wash one another’s feet.”

“Do you know what I have done to you?” He asks. We learn every time we come to the Sacrament. We’ll be learning until we arrive where there is no sin or uncleanness and we are dressed in our robes of His righteousness that were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, the cleanness in which we will live and reign with Him forever. This is your true self, as He has made, redeemed, and sanctified you to be. This is how He sees you: clean and holy. He reveals this to you so that you’ll see that this is what He makes of you: completely, and truly, clean from all sin.

Next Question: “*Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?*” (Luke 24:38)

In the Interest of Clarification

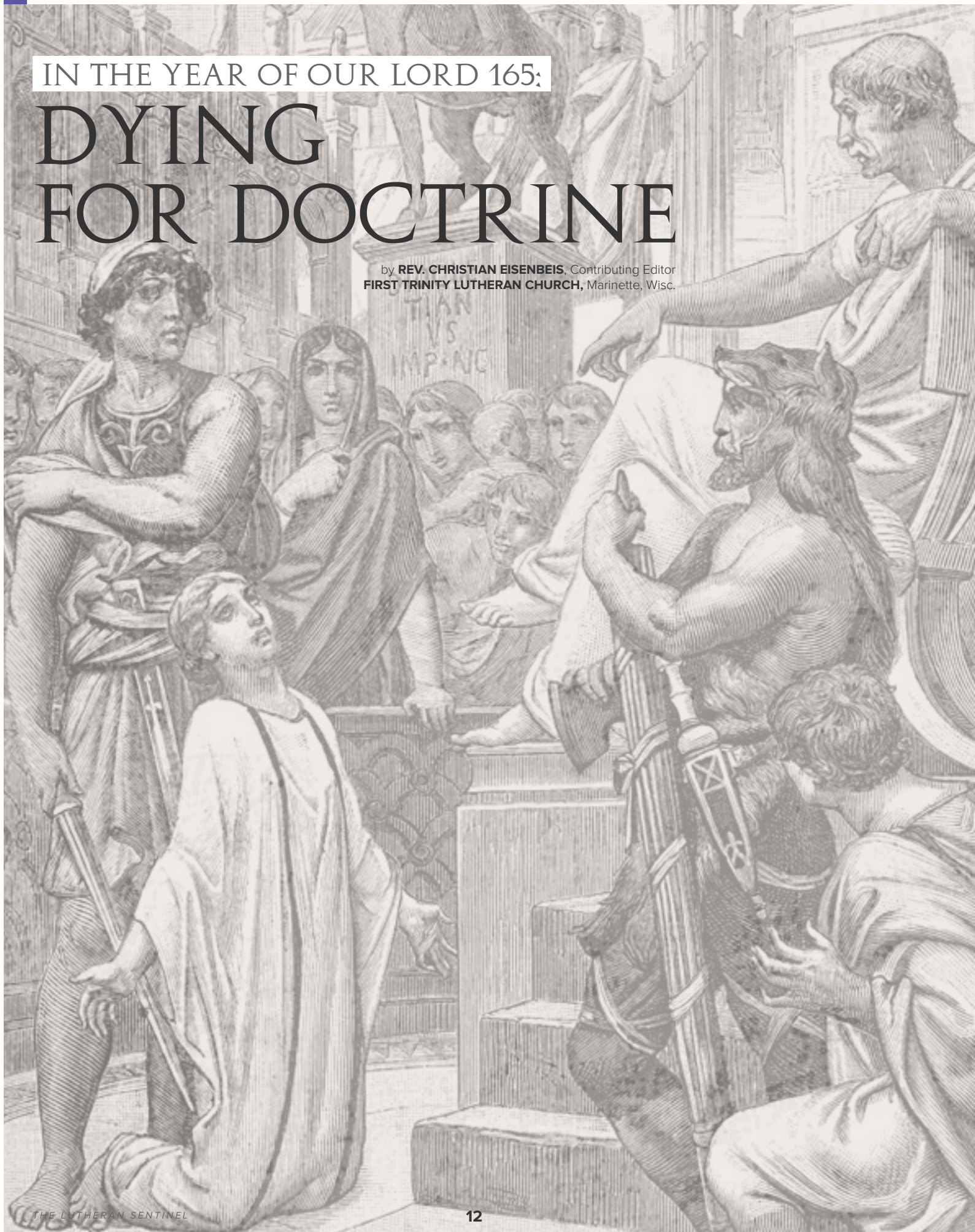
The “Jesus Asks Questions” article in the January/February issue of *The Lutheran Sentinel* contained some wording that could give the wrong impression. The author regrets writing: “He got some answers wrong. This includes His knowledge of God and his Word.” This was intended by the author to show how “Jesus increased in wisdom” and that His need for learning in His state of humiliation did not involve sin on His part, and that while He was guilty of no sin or any moral wrong, it was indeed possible for Him – during his childhood while growing in understanding – to be corrected by His earthly

parents and teachers in the process of human teaching and learning. However, this is conjecture. The author of the article agrees that this may have provided too much conjecture or taken too many liberties with regard to things written in scripture. It is comforting that our Lord as our substitute carried out perfectly the law of God in our place also in His adolescence while mysteriously still increasing “*in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men*” (Luke 2:52).

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 165:

DYING FOR DOCTRINE

by REV. CHRISTIAN EISENBEIS, Contributing Editor
FIRST TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Marinette, Wisc.



“Pastors sue mayor over subpoenaed sermons.” This was not a headline from a satirical newspaper.

In October 2014, the city attorney of Houston demanded that a handful of local pastors turn over their sermons for investigation. (The politics behind this should be sought out only as a cure for insomnia.) The pastors refused and hired their own attorneys to sue the mayor’s office for “violating their voting rights.” The injustice of someone reading his sermon was too much for one pastor, who said, “When the subpoenas came and they asked for my sermons, it was not just an attack on me, but the beginning of attacks on minorities and that is why I stand here right now.” Thankfully for him, in May 2017, the Texas legislature passed a law “protecting” pastors from subpoenas like these.

Picture these pastors and their lawyers at their modern-day press conference. Compare your mental image with an engraving of a second-century conference between the Roman emperor and a man named Justin. Justin, too, has been subpoenaed for teaching the Christian faith, but he doesn’t hide behind thick layers of attorney. He holds out an open book for the emperor to read.

Justin was born in Samaria to an unbelieving Gentile family. His passion for philosophy led him to study the Scriptures. Through the Word, he came to faith in Jesus and acknowledged His teaching to be the “true philosophy.” Justin moved to Rome and started a school for Christian doctrine.

Justin is known for his two Apologies (“Defenses”) of Christian doctrine, which he addressed to the Roman authorities. The Apologies give us glimpses into the worship practices of early Christians; for example, how they baptized and received Holy Communion. The Apologies confess that the Word of Christ is not the opinion of a fallible philosopher, but the “power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Romans 1:16 NIV84). For the Jew, Justin demonstrated that Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy; for the Gentile, he argued that Jesus is the Source of true knowledge, in whom “all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17).

Justin made powerful enemies. He was falsely accused of advocating treason, atheism, and divorce. He and several of his students were arrested. At his trial, he refused to “repent” of his teaching. As long as Christians had life in them, Justin told his accuser, they were to instruct the

human race in divine doctrines. These were the doctrines he loved, and he was willing to die for them.

In the year 165, Justin and his students were put to death for the name of Christ. That is why the Church calls him “Justin Martyr.”

When the mob came to arrest our Lord in Gethsemane, He did not call on legions of angels to protect Him, but called His enemies’ attention to His open teaching: “When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness” (Luke 22:53 ESV). Later that night, He confessed to Caiaphas: “I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret” (John 18:20 ESV).

The Risen Savior commissioned His disciples to be public witnesses of His teaching. He promised them the same troubles He had faced: “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40 NKJV). But He also promised them help in the day of trouble: “When they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit” (Mark 13:11 ESV). Whether they are untying a colt or on trial for their lives, Jesus gives His followers the Word to say. His teaching is an open book.

In his Second Apology, Justin Martyr wrote, “No one trusted in Socrates so as to die for doctrine, but in Christ.” In Justin’s confession, we hear the faith of “doubting” Thomas: “Let us also go, that we may die with Him” (John 11:16).

For further reading:

- 1 Kings 22:1-40;
- Jeremiah 26 and 36-38;
- Daniel 3 and 6;
- Luke 19:29-36;
- Acts 4:1-31, 5:12-42, 6:8-8:1, 17:16-34, and 24-26;
- James 1:2-17;
- 1 Peter 4:12-19

PART THREE:

“How far would you go for a weed free lawn?”

by **REV. TRENT SAARI**, Contributing Writer
LAKEWOOD LUTHERAN CHURCH, Lakewood, Wash.
OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH, Yelm, Wash.

Catechesis Through Scripture

2nd Chief Part – The Creed

▣ **Read:** Mark 8:27-29 & Matthew 16:13-18

“Jesus is Lord,” is one of earliest creedal statements of the church (Philippians 2:11). It is a seemingly simple answer to Jesus’ question about who He is, but when its full freight is unpacked, it becomes the starting point for all true theology, the central gathering point for true believers, and the dividing line between truth and error. We believe, therefore we speak (2 Corinthians 4:13).

Many people would like to imagine a world where doctrines and differences don’t matter. People often say things like, “I believe in deeds, not creeds.” Although this sounds pious, there has never been such a Christianity. Jesus’ question, “Who do you say that I am?” does not allow it. It is a question that all people must give an answer to. There is no church that does not confess its beliefs. Even those churches which claim that they do not subscribe to a formal confession of faith still give a concrete expression to their beliefs in the words and actions that they use in their worship services

A confession of faith is either drawn from the truth of the Scriptures or is based on a faulty understanding of the Scriptures. While most Christian churches claim to be “Bible-based,” their confession and worship may prove otherwise. The answer to Jesus’ question is only found in the Bible and revealed by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). When St. Peter confessed, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” he was not merely giving a human opinion or interpretation. Jesus said, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17-18).

By subscribing to and confessing the Creeds, Lutherans do not confess another authority outside of, and equal to, the Scriptures. Kurt Marquart writes:

If Holy Scripture is the inexhaustible gold mine of divine truth, the creeds and confessions of the church are the minted coin of evangelical currency... Orthodox creeds and confessions are truth preserving, and therefore divide as well as unite. By identifying decisive elements of the biblical teaching, such

creeds call and gather the faithful to the standards of authentic proclamation. On the other hand, by pin-pointing the differences, the creeds distinguish true biblical teaching from counterfeits and misunderstandings, thereby warding off rival, heterodox teachings, and excluding their persistent adherents. Creeds and confessions therefore embody the church’s marks in concrete, concentrated form. (Marquart, *The Church*, p.72)

Martin Luther answers the question about who Jesus is in his explanation to the second article of the Apostle’s Creed, where he writes:

I believe that Jesus Christ is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary; and that He is my Lord, Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death; in order that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Hermann Sasse writes, “This explanation is nothing less than a clear, unrefuted, and irrefutable interpretation of the Holy Bible, a classic answer to the question of Jesus Christ, ‘Who am I?’” (Sasse, *Letters to Lutheran Pastors*, Vol. 1, p.28-29).

The Lutheran Church is a confessional church. In subscribing to the three ecumenical creeds and the Book of Concord, the Lutheran Church demonstrates that it has never been interested in forming its own sect of Christianity. This confessional subscription demonstrates that Lutherans seek to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). The true Church gathers around Scripture (John 8:31-32), but also around Scripture rightly understood. The creeds give expression to the true understanding of Scripture. The Lutheran Church holds its teachers and members to the ecumenical creeds and the Book of Concord because they are true expressions of the faith handed down by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). Jesus said, “[W]hoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32). Lord keep us steadfast in Thy word and confession of the truth!

Next Issue: *The Lord’s Prayer*

ANNOUNCING

The 102nd Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

The 63rd Annual Meeting of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.

The 4th Annual Meeting of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.

**"MY HELP COMES FROM THE LORD,
THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH"**

JUNE 23-27, 2019
MANKATO, MINNESOTA

SYNOD SUNDAY / JUNE 23

4:00 Synod Sunday Service
5:30 Dinner (free will donation)

MONDAY / JUNE 24

9:00 Opening Convention Service

TUESDAY / JUNE 25

1:30 Convention Essay
4:30 Communion Service

WEDNESDAY / JUNE 26

1:30 Convention Essay

THURSDAY / JUNE 27

8:00 Convention Continues

Second Annual Apologetics Seminar

MAKING THE CASE FOR THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE

Bringing Jesus to My Unbelieving Neighbor

Thursday, June 27, 2019

Bethany Lutheran College's Trinity Chapel | Mankato, Minnesota

Do you feel **frozen in silence** when people around you **criticize Christianity**?

Are you at a **loss for words** when asked to **explain your beliefs** to others?

Would you like to learn how to **speak the truth in love** (Ephesians 4:15), giving a defense to everyone who asks **a reason for the hope** that is in you (1 Peter 3:15)?

Then you will benefit from this Christian apologetics seminar.

blc.edu/apologetics2019

SESSIONS

- When Your Neighbor Doesn't Believe in Truth—Combining Apologetics and Evangelism
- Is the Old Testament Reliable? The Evidence Within the Text
- Is the Old Testament Reliable? The Evidence Beyond the Text
- Keynote: How to Make the Case for the Truth of the New Testament

REGISTRATION

Please register in advance for FREE admission with the option of adding supper for \$15. For complete details plus registration, visit blc.edu/apologetics2019 or contact Pastor David Thompson at pastor@flc-sa.org.



Sponsored jointly by the ELS Committee on Apologetics and the Bethany Lutheran College History Department.

MEETING MY BROTHERS & SISTERS:

PINEWOOD LUTHERAN CHURCH

Burlington, Massachusetts

by **REV. THOMAS H. FOX**, Contributing Writer
PINEWOOD LUTHERAN CHURCH, Burlington, Mass.

Let's play ELS church trivia! *Question:*

What church began in 1884 in South Boston, moved to Cambridge during the Depression, and moved again to Burlington, MA, 40 years later? What church has had 12 pastors, including Christian Moldstad, George Lillegard, Rudolph Honsey, and Robert Preus? Which one has a bell cast by Paul's Revere's apprentice in 1846? What congregation has more members with Irish and Italian names than Norwegian? If you answered Pinewood Lutheran, you'd be correct!

Pinewood is unique in many ways for our synod. We have always been an urban church. We approach people with the mindset exemplified by St. Paul in reaching non-believers, ex-Roman Catholics, and struggling searchers. We are an area church (45-minute circle around the church) rather than a community church. Pinewood also has something we call "food fellowship" in that every Sunday after service, we serve delicious treats to those who stay. In the past 30 years, our congregation has gone from being rather old, age-wise, to very young. Those under 40 form our majority with many young singles and marrieds. Oh, I forgot to mention our pipe organ, which was originally built by Hutchins around 1899.

As one of the few bastions of confessional Lutheranism on the "Right Coast," we basically do foreign mission work and reflect that mindset. By God's grace, Pinewood is a happy home to many and a beacon of truth to all.