



LUTHERAN SENTINEL

A PUBLICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD



Forming a Biblical Worldview
within our Young People

pg. 6



THE RHYTHM OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

Spring is the traditional time of the year for renewal. My mother would announce that we were going to freshen up the house with the annual “spring cleaning.” Windows, sills, doors and frames, walls, carpets, curtains, floors, metal bed springs were all washed. Rugs were taken outside to beat out the dust. Storm windows were removed and the screens were washed and affixed.

Decluttering took place. Toys and shoes were culled. Clothes would be assessed in regard to size and wear and sorted into the Goodwill, rags, and garbage piles. Warm weather clothes would go to the front of closets and cold weather put to the back. My father would tackle the garage and basement decluttering and washing down surfaces as well. Fall would have some of the same but less intense cleansing routines.

These memories came to mind after reading this section from Peter’s first epistle, chapter 2:

Therefore rid yourselves of all evil, all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all slander. Like newborn babies, crave the pure milk of the word so that by it you may grow up with the result being salvation. Certainly you have tasted that the Lord is good! As you come to Him, the Living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious, you also, like living stones, are being built as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, in order to bring spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (vv. 1-5)

Our lives of repentance and faith have a certain rhythm to them. As God’s Word works upon us, both His Law and Gospel, we find ourselves decluttering, cleansing, setting things in order, establishing new or reestablishing old pious habits. The Spirit is at work in our lives so that these periodic spiritual renewals and cleansings become more intense at times. These efforts are normal among us, not something for which we need to be alarmed or ashamed. As children of

God, made so through His Son our Savior, we are moved by the Spirit to assess ourselves spiritually and make the adjustments which are pleasing in His sight.

Yes, the sins listed by the Apostle are things for which we are ashamed and repent. The commitment to rid ourselves of them and put things in order is not a sign of failure but of proper sanctified living. All of this is produced by the Spirit at work in our lives through Word and Sacrament. You have tasted that the Lord is good by living under His mercy and grace. He entered our sinful and corrupt world, lived perfectly, and sacrificed that perfect life unto death by taking upon Himself the guilt of all our sin - our evil, deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, slander, and all the rest. All our sins died with Him having been punished in Him. Then by His rising to life, we are declared justified for all eternity.

So like newborn babies, who crave pure milk, we as God’s children crave the pure milk of His Word that continually forgives us and dresses us in Jesus’ holiness. By this nourishment, you grow up and the result is always your salvation in Him alone. Your spiritual “spring cleanings” are only natural by the Lord’s doing and should cause you to rejoice.

At the close of the last day of spring cleaning, we would often have had our sheets and pajamas washed and hung outside to dry. They would smell so clean and fresh in a room that was also freshly fragrant. May your periodic Spirit-wrought cleansing and decluttering bring you the joy Jesus intends by your everlasting sanctification.

LUTHERAN SENTINEL

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echoes

from **ELS PULPITS**
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The Lord Does Save His People

In Christ Jesus, who according to His own
Word is “mighty to save”

(Isaiah 63:1).

Dear Fellow Redeemed:

Our text is the favorite story of every Christian boy. But there is a great deal more to the story than the fact that a mere youth overcame a giant. It is a story of God's great way with His people, those ways which are as far above our ways as heaven is above earth.

The world in which we live has become so used to ruling God out of things that even Christians may fall into such habits of thought. It is not that they doubt God's power or His presence everywhere, but they may begin to doubt that He is concerned. Our text proves God's concern in two ways. It is recorded to help us grown-ups, too, the better to realize this truth which we shall consider today, namely that:

THE LORD DOES SAVE HIS PEOPLE

I. God is interested in the saving of His people.

II. God has the means to save His people.

The defiance of Goliath was a defiance against God. The Philistines, of whom Goliath was the champion, had taken it upon themselves to destroy God's people, the Israelites. Thus it was God Himself whom they and Goliath were attacking. David tells his large, overconfident and God-defying opponent, "the battle is the Lord's". He tells his cursing and blaspheming opponent that God would destroy him, "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel", that is, a God who is interested in the saving of His people.

Today God conquers our own problems and fears to demonstrate His greatness and love to the world. We have our peculiar problems as Christians and as a Church. It isn't always easy for our flesh to listen to the sneering remarks made about our loyalty to our Church and to God's Word. It isn't easy to keep people with the Church when the devil (through his many agents) is striving hard to wean them away. It isn't a pleasant task to remain faithful to Scripture when others are unfaithful and ridicule our faithfulness. There are times when all these things together seem to oppose us like a giant Goliath.

But Dear Hearer, God does not forsake His people. He has given us definite assurances that He is interested in saving us. No matter who may oppose us, Scripture says, "*and they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you; for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the Lord*" (Jeremiah 15:20).

Secondly, we note that God has the means to save His people. Goliath approached David armed with spear, sword, and shield and a most haughty and presumptuous confidence. But the Lord does not always employ the powers of body or mind to vanquish His enemies. David is a good example of that. David tells Goliath that he intends to prove by him and all the peo-

ple "that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands" (v. 47). Yes, the Lord has His own devices, sometimes humble ones and very near at hand. In our text, it was but a small stone that was to be hurled by a common sling. Regardless of what devices God has, they are His and they are always effective and certain of results.

The problem we as Christians have to overcome is not our hesitancy to call upon the Lord for help, but one of limiting His help to human forces. How often have we not imagined that unless the Lord helped us in just this or that way, all would be lost. And then God chose to answer us in a different and better way and nothing was lost, either. It is sometimes a hard lesson to learn, but we must also today remember that "the Lord saves not with sword and spear". He does not need material means.

David's confidence was in His Lord, not in himself. For he assured the giant, "*This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel*" (v. 46).

Hence a faith in Christ Jesus, who has fought our battle of sin for us, is the guarantee of our hold on God, our assurance that the Lord will fight the battles of and for our faith. Not as men had expected, but by His suffering and lowly and shameful death did He redeem us, and did so without our asking to be redeemed. That Lord who has saved us from eternal ruin

is most worthy of our trust in view of this promise given by the Apostle Paul: *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things* (Romans 8:32).

David won a great victory when he, with but one stone hurled from his sling, killed the champion of the Philistines. We are apt to say it was so great because David was so little and Goliath so big. No, it was because David was so little and humble before God and thus so much greater than Goliath, who dared to defy the true God.

Right there is the secret of obtaining the Lord's help. We have seen that He does help His people; He does so because it is His cause when they are opposed and attacked because of their faith; and He does so in His own way. However, only those who can be certain of the Lord's assistance, who in humble but trusting faith, like David firmly rely on the Lord to help them. God grant us one and all such a confident, such a victorious, such a saving faith for the sake of Jesus in whom alone there is salvation. Amen.

“Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.”

(Romans 12:2, CSB).



Forming a Biblical Worldview within Our Young People

by **REV. DAVID THOMPSON**, Contributing Writer,
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When King David began his reign, leading men of the tribe of Issachar joined him “who understood the times and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chronicles 12:32, CSB). These men observed the time and place in which they lived and brought with them and applied to it the teachings of the one true LORD and God. That is the essence of what it means to have a biblical worldview: to understand, view, and judge current culture through the eyes of God and the lens of Scripture. It is wearing the Bible like a pair of glasses in order to accurately see how culture measures up and compares, including culture’s understanding(s) of God, religion, creation, origins, man, ethics, sin, life, death, worship, heaven, hell, purpose, truth, knowledge, language, corruption, order, ugliness, beauty, marriage, sex, gender, education, science, art, vocation, government, authority, progress, suffering, wars, devastations, etc. A biblical worldview is to be all-inclusive.

Having said that, we should be aware of two errors. One is the belief there is only one way of doing or thinking about a certain thing when in fact Scripture has not made such a declaration (for example, how to worship – see our synod’s statement at <https://els.org/wp-content/files/worship/2011-Report-of-the-Committee-on-ELS-Worship.pdf>).

But a more common mistake is to compartmentalize one’s Christian beliefs: “My faith in Christ and my Christian beliefs apply here, but not necessarily over there in other parts of my life.” Government, education, vocation, marriage, sex, and “secular” matters are places where this can occur today. But it is necessary to remember that the devil is no respecter of any of such compartments. He does not have a “hands-off” policy toward anything. *We know...the whole world lies in the power of the evil one* (1 John 5:19, ESV). He takes advantage of any and everything to hinder the formation of a biblical worldview so he can replace it with lies or half-truths to lead one away from Christ.

Satan is a master of manipulating language (“Did God really say?” Genesis 3:1). So, for example, many states are implementing new teacher certification standards that use words such as affirm, diversity, inclusion, equity, oppression, privilege (words found in the Bible in some form or another!). But in the new standards, these words are defined and used in such a way to undermine Scriptural (and even common-sense) teachings on morality, sin, gender, sex, marriage, partiality (racism), God’s created order, and man created in the image of God. They are used to promote a worldview (called Critical Theory, Wokeism, or Cultural Marxism) antithetical to the Christian worldview.

Christian education must prepare our youth to live as Christians in such a world. What can be done to help our young people develop and maintain a solid biblical Lutheran worldview? Several things.

We need to talk to them as if there is a real war going on, for there is. *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places* (Ephesians 6:12, ESV). We also need to tell them there is a truly good side and a truly bad side that fight over real truths of eternal consequence. The problem is that popular worldviews (namely Postmodernism and Critical Theory) try to convince our youth that any battles going on are mere power struggles between two sides which have constructed their own truths in order to oppress each other. And the bad side, according to these false worldviews, is Christianity because it confesses its truths are true truths. We are the evil ones.

So we teach our Christian youth they are in a war. We preach law and gospel. We administer the gospel in word and sacraments. We teach them Holy Scripture. But these things are never done in a vacuum. There is always a context, there is always a war, there is always a false worldview, there is always a Satan who knows exactly how to ask, “Did God really say?”

Along with this, we also need to teach them to appreciate the art of theses and antitheses, where the church’s war tactic is to state clearly what it believes and what it condemns. The church needs to do this if heresy is to be kept at bay tomorrow when our young people take the reins. This is a hard pill to swallow in our do-not-judge environment. And it means the unbelieving world will condemn us, call us fools (1 Corinthians 1:23) and even worse – but we are in good company, for Christ was there first (Matthew 10:25).

And as we teach our young people they are in a war, we also teach them that they are very strange soldiers. The very people that attack us in body or soul are the same ones we are to love, sacrificially. We love them as they are, unconditionally, no matter which side they end up on. Like Jesus did. We speak to them with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15-16). One cannot love without absolute truth. Love without truth leads to apathy at best; at worst, to atrocities like abortion, euthanasia, and devastating social consequences like gay marriage and transgender affirming policies that include the mutilation of body parts. In Postmodernism and Wokeism, unlike Christianity, there are no transcendent truths that show us how to treat (love) our neighbor.

But this also means, strange as it may sound, we cannot love without judging. In between truth and love – connecting them, so to speak – is judgment. It is righteous judging that makes love possible. In fact, righteous judging is essential in order to love one’s neighbor. A good example is from Mark 10:21: “*Then Jesus, looking at [the rich man], loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.’*”

The truth: without Jesus there is no salvation. The judgment: this man has indicated by his confession that he is without Jesus. And the love: sharing with him the message that he is a desperate sinner who needs to follow the cross-driven Jesus. All acts of Christian love involve this process. Truth: my neighbor is to be helped. Judgment: my neighbor needs... Love: I will help him by... Christian love, based on transcendent truth, is the answer to culture’s promotion of indifferent tolerance. Tolerance simply says “whatever” since it does not recognize transcendent truth that tells us what is truly good for us and our neighbor.

Think of how God approached us. He did not merely tolerate us, He did not say “whatever,” He did not affirm whatever we choose to believe or however we choose to live, He did not put aside His truth. He judged us all worthy of His wrath. And then He loved: He sent His one and only Son.

¹Unrighteous judging is when a person puts himself above another morally or where he reads into another person ill motives or thoughts. Righteous judging is simply agreeing with what the Word of God has already concluded about a belief, teaching, lifestyle, or behavior.



by **REV. DAVID JAY WEBBER**
and the **ELS DOCTRINE COMMITTEE**

What in the world is going on?

CULTURAL MARXISM

“Cultural Marxism” is a controversial term. It is nevertheless an accurate description of a worldview that represents a dangerous cultural force in our time, to which St. Paul’s admonition would therefore apply: *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil* (Ephesians 5:15-16, ESV).

Economic Marxism

The term “Marxism” refers to Karl Marx, an atheist and materialist whose communist teaching was designed to bring about an earthly utopia. Marx believed that the impoverished laboring class was “oppressed” because it was shut out from any opportunity to prosper by those who already had wealth and power. He also taught that certain institutions, such as organized religion, supported the oppressors and helped to perpetuate this disparity.

Marx’s solution was twofold. First, through revolution, the laboring class needs to grab political power and bring about the downfall of its oppressors and of the institutions that had supported them. If necessary, coercion and violence may be used. And then, with representatives of the laboring class running the country, new economic structures must be put in place that will eliminate poverty through communal ownership of all means of production. No one will be either rich or poor, but equality and a kind of “heaven on earth” will be achieved.

This communist scheme has failed in every country where it has been tried because it denies the reality of human sinfulness and incorrectly assumes that human nature is capable of the kind of altruism and selflessness that such a scheme requires. Marxism also denies the truth of the Seventh Commandment (“You shall not steal”), which protects honestly acquired wealth from arbitrary confiscation. And Marxists always denounced and suppressed the one institution that could actually inspire people toward altruism and selflessness, namely the Christian church.

As with all dangerous worldviews, false teachings are hidden underneath true ones. The poor are often oppressed by the rich and the powerful (James 2:5-6; 5:1-6). But it is also true that being wealthy does not necessarily make one an oppressor. Biblical figures like Boaz, Job, and Abraham were men who were blessed with wealth so that they could be generous toward those in need (1 Timothy 6:17-19). People with resources should be concerned for the disadvantaged. Christians understand this well, and that is why hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, and other human care agencies often have a Christian origin. Jesus likewise gives specific direction regarding how we as individuals should make provision for those in need:

When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just. (Luke 14:12-14, ESV)

Yet Jesus also said:

“For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me.”
(Mark 14:7, ESV)

Poverty will always exist in this corrupt world, and we should never think that it can be completely eliminated from the human experience.

Cultural Marxism

Cultural Marxism has much in common with economic Marxism, although it does not focus on the rich oppressing the poor, but also on other alleged oppressor-oppressed relationships. So men oppress women, Caucasians oppress people of color, heterosexuals oppress homosexuals, and cisgendered persons (males who identify as males and females who identify as females) oppress transgendered persons.

Cultural Marxists also claim that certain institutions exist primarily so that oppressors can keep the oppressed out of power. They therefore seek to infiltrate, undermine, and eventually destroy these institutions so that on the dust heap of the old culture, a new culture of complete social “equality” can someday be constructed.

Cultural Marxists especially see the value of being able to control the language. Terms that have positive meanings and seemingly innocent associations (such as “tolerance,” “affirmation,” and “justice”) are redefined so that they can be used in promoting a cultural Marxist agenda. People who begin to use these old terms in the new way often do not realize that they have been drawn into that agenda.

Closely related to this is the desire of cultural Marxists to control the flow of information through gaining influence in the media and to shape the thinking of the youth through gaining influence in education – thereby also gradually supplanting the influence of parents.

One of the most resilient of the old institutions of “power” is the traditional family – ideally comprising a husband, a wife, and children being raised by their parents according to the parents’ beliefs and values. This divinely ordained vision of a family is seen as “oppressive,” both in its internal relationships and over against the new definitions of “family” that cultural Marxists promote (such as same-sex marriage and parenting, polyamory, and cohabiting without marriage).

The Christian church, which undergirds the traditional family, is therefore also seen as an oppressive institution, over against secularists and minority religions such as Islam – although

Islam is an “oppressed” religion only in America and is itself an oppressor in societies where it is dominant.

Wherever an oppressor-oppressed relationship is perceived to exist, a cultural Marxist will amplify and exaggerate the conflict, take the side of the “oppressed,” and attack the “oppressor.” And if the “oppressed” later succeed in becoming “oppressors” themselves, then cultural Marxists will turn on them. An example of this is the Jewish people, who previously were “oppressed” by antisemitism, but who now are “oppressors” of the Palestinians.

Again we see that there are some truths embedded in the otherwise false teachings of cultural Marxism. In this sinful world, there is real oppression of the weak by the powerful. Those who are hurt by this are to be objects of our prayerful concern. The Lord exhorts us through the Prophet Zechariah:

Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart (7:9-10, ESV).

And as we are reminded of our duty to love our neighbor in need, God admonishes us in Psalm 82:

How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked (2-4, ESV).

At the same time, we as Christians know that many of the supposed oppressor-oppressed relationships that cultural Marxists identify as such are not actually that at all. The spouse-parent-child relationships within a traditional family are instituted and governed by God and are designed by him to facilitate human flourishing, not oppression. And strong families are a stabilizing force in a functioning society.

The Christian church is also a divine institution where forgiveness, life, and salvation are delivered by God to all who repent and believe the Gospel. It is not oppressive but is a place of liberation for those who are in bondage to sin, Satan, and the fear of death. The church is also a place of healing for those who struggle with temptation and confusion.

Real injustice will, however, never be fully removed from this evil world until Judgment Day. Yet the hope of all who do suffer now, and who know Christ as their Savior, is renewed and strengthened even in the midst of injustice as they look forward to an eternity in which God “will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4, ESV).



The First Lutheran Martyrs

Part II of IV



A Viper's Nest of Heretics

by **REV. JACOB KEMPFERT**, Contributing Writer,
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As we continue to examine the first Lutheran martyrs, Hendrick Vos and Jan van Essen, and the impact their deaths had on Martin Luther, it's good to consider the environment in which they lived and served as well as their connections to Luther's own life and work.

Both Vos and van Essen were friars in the German Reformed Congregation of Augustinians (also called the "Observant" Augustinians). Frustrated by how many monks only loosely adhered to their vows of personal poverty, daily prayer, and community fellowship, the Observant Augustinians desired to return to the "golden age" of their Order and to recapture the essence of monastic life through renewed obedience to their vows.

Luther himself belonged to this special Observant Congregation of Augustinians as a monk in Erfurt. As Professor of Theology at the University of Wittenberg, Luther maintained personal contact with the Observant Augustinian Congregation. Many Augustinians attended the University of Wittenberg, and Luther helped prepare young Observant Augustinians for admission to the University.

In addition, when Luther presented at the Heidelberg Disputation in 1518, many in the audience were representatives from the Observant Augustinians and left impressed with Luther's explanation of the unworthiness of human works and the free grace of God. As a result, many were won over by Luther's teaching.

Vos and van Essen belonged to the Antwerp branch of the Observants, founded in 1513. However, they didn't have the permission of the powerful Church of Our Lady in Antwerp. Particularly aggravating to them was the fact that the Observant chapel services led to a reduction in attendance—and donations—to the Church of Our Lady.

Through their legal representative, Adrian Floriszoon, the Church of Our Lady issued a cease-and-desist letter to the tiny Augustinian friary, demanding the closure and destruction of its chapel and that all profits gained from donations be turned over. When the Observants didn't respond, Floriszoon repeated his order, this time threatening citation before the papal court and excommunication if the friars failed to comply.

Ultimately, the Antwerp city council and territorial government stepped in and ruled in favor of the Observants. Floriszoon mediated the peace agreement, and notably present for this agreement was one of the cloister's founding members, Jan van Essen. Thus, the Church of Our Lady resented the presence of the Augustinian cloister from its beginning. And Floriszoon was forced to negotiate the concession that allowed the cloister to remain.

In 1518, Jacob Probst was appointed prior to the Antwerp cloister. Probst was a student of Luther at the University of Wittenberg from 1505 to 1508 and prior in Wittenberg from 1515 to 1518. There he witnessed firsthand the immediate response to Luther's 95 Theses and the resulting controversy. Probst may also have assisted in translating Luther's writings into Dutch, which began appearing in Antwerp in 1519.

In Probst's tenure as prior, the Antwerp Observant Augustinians became known for preaching justification by faith alone as well as for their open criticism of the sale of indulgences. These messages gained them a great deal of popularity, so much so that they soon added seating in their chapel to accommodate the crowds.

Soon this put them on the radar of Governor Margaret of Savoy, Emperor Charles V's aunt. Charles V undertook a state-run Inquisition in the Netherlands to eliminate the Lutheran "heresy" and its sympathizers. Since Charles couldn't get to Luther due to the various protections offered in Germany, he could instead go after the other Observant Augustinians that persisted in spreading Luther's writings. Antwerp especially was a "viper's nest of heretics,"¹ and it was much easier to punish heresy there than in Germany.

Charles' Inquisition had the full support of Pope Adrian VI, who gave papal approval in 1522. A likely reason for this is that Pope Adrian VI was also Charles' former tutor and the former legal representative and dean of the Church of Our Lady in Antwerp—Adrian Floriszoon, the same man who years earlier sent an ineffectual cease-and-desist letter to the Antwerp Augustinians and had failed to dissolve their cloister.

On December 6, 1521, the chief inquisitor invited prior Jacob Probst to Brussels for a so-called "friendly conversation."² Upon his arrival, Probst was immediately arrested. Imprisoned for eight weeks, brutally interrogated by the state Inquisition, Probst faced the ever-present threat of being dragged to a heretic's stake at any moment.

After two months of such treatment, Probst agreed to recant and openly denounced Luther and his writings. His recantation especially emphasized the institutional authority of the pope. When Luther heard the fate of his former student, he somberly realized the severity of the situation: "This is no longer a joke or a game, but it will now become serious, and it will exact life and blood."³

Over the summer of 1522, the Reformed Augustinians appointed Hendrik van Zutphen as Probst's successor in Antwerp. Zutphen was another former student of the University

of Wittenberg and lived alongside Luther in the Augustinian cloister there. When indulgence salesmen entered Antwerp, Zutphen defied the ban on evangelical preaching and began publicly denouncing indulgences.

On September 29, 1522, Zutphen was called away from the cloister to the aid of an ailing parishioner. There was no ailing parishioner; Zutphen was instead arrested, to be sent to Brussels for interrogation. Thus began Governor Margaret's final crackdown on the nest of heretic vipers in the Antwerp cloister.

On October 6, all of the remaining friars were arrested. Over the winter and spring, the Augustinians were imprisoned and interrogated until they recanted—which most did. Eventually, only three remained: Hendrick Vos, Jan van Essen, and Lambertus Thorn. When the date for their burning as heretics was announced, Vos and van Essen still outright refused to recant, but Thorn asked for additional time to consult the Scriptures. They gave him four days; he died in prison five years later.

Following the October 6 raid, Margaret removed the Eucharist from the monastery's chapel and led a pomp-filled procession of it across town to reconsecrate it at the Church of Our Lady—the same church that ten years prior failed to shut the Reformed Augustinians down and take their profits. Margaret disbanded the cloister, and on January 16, 1523, had all its buildings razed to the ground. She spared only the chapel in order to convert it into a parish church.

In order to sentence and burn Vos and van Essen, Charles' state-run Inquisition had to wait for papal authorization. Pope Adrian VI (Adrian Floriszoon) obliged him. Vos and van Essen were scheduled to burn on July 1, 1523. Floriszoon's threats in 1513 to close, destroy, and despoil the cloister and excommunicate its remaining members were finally enacted, with the Augustinians as heretics and Floriszoon a pope.

And, what's more, when Floriszoon's demands in 1513 were frustrated, Floriszoon himself had visited the friars to facilitate the agreement. When Pope Adrian authorized their execution ten years later, these men were no strangers to him—he had met van Essen face to face.

On July 1, 1523, Vos and van Essen were burned at the stake. They faced the flames professing faith in their Savior and singing praises to God with the words of the Psalms, the Creed, and the Te Deum Laudamus, "We praise Thee, O God!" Even as they burned to dust, the echo of their praises lived on in the minds and memories of many witnesses and could not be silenced in the hearts of those guilty of their blood. The songs cried out by such blood cannot be silenced, but resound in the singing of the church and are but a foretaste of the everlasting song of joy that the martyrs even now are singing in all of heaven's bliss and glory. We merely wait to join them.

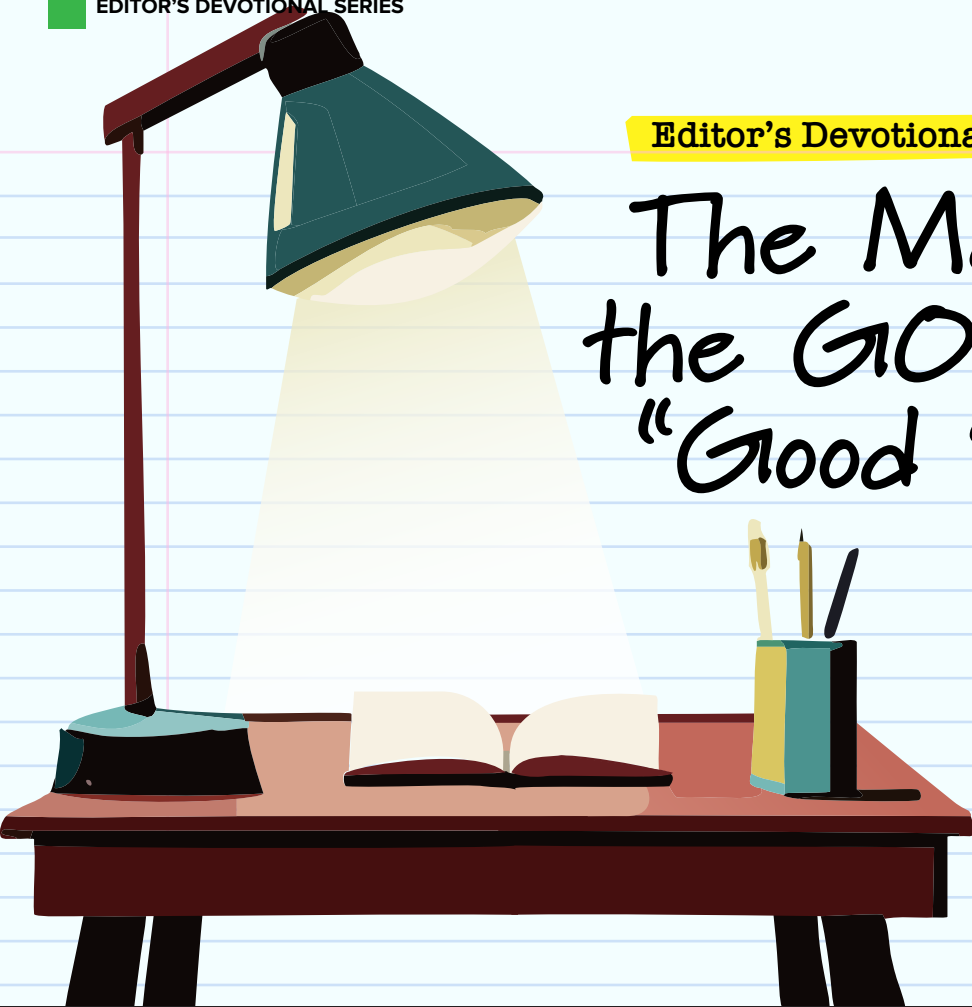
1. Mark Greengrass, *Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517–1648* (New York: Viking, 2014), 354.

2. Robert J. Christman, *The Dynamics of the Early Reformation in their Reformed Augustinian Context* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 58.

3. *Ibid.*, 59.

Editor's Devotional Series:

The Makings of the GOOD "Good Shepherd"



“How would you like your eggs?”

a courteous waitress will ask while taking your breakfast order.

“And how would you like your burger cooked?”

inquires your neighbor hosting you and your family for a summer cookout.

“How would you like it cut?”

asks the barber or beautician about to cut your hair.

by **REV. KYLE MADSON**, Editor, *The Lutheran Sentinel*
NORSELAND & NORWEGIAN GROVE LUTHERAN CHURCHES, Norseland, Minn.

All these questions are asked from the same familiar market-driven premise:

“The customer is always right.”

How might it play out if this same familiar premise didn't only govern the ways of the “market-place” – the place where money is exchanged for goods or services? What if this mode of operation was also at work in governing the realm of faith and Christian doctrine as well? Even more specifically, what if “the customer is always right” worked its way into this highly familiar picture from the Christian Scriptures – JESUS as “the Good Shepherd”. What would that operating premise act like? “The sheep are always right?”

Many Jesuses?

“*Our Many Jesuses*” – that was the eye-catching title of an article that ran in the *Wall Street Journal* Easter weekend of 2023. It’s a very open-eyed and honest survey of American religious thought. It recognizes a deeply divided (egalitarian) notion of who this 2000-year-old “Jesus” fellow was and what it is He stood for then and what He means now.

“The different Gospel (records) give different versions of Jesus...” asserted one professor of New Testament studies interviewed from a New England university. “We put them together ... for ourselves, because no one person’s Jesus is going to be like someone else’s Jesus.”²

From politicians and presidents of seminaries to the Pope and an LGBTQ-affirming Roman Catholic priest – various “versions” of Jesus were presupposed. One might say the article reflected the reality that the person called Jesus, historically reflected in the Bible’s four Gospel records, is treated as something of “a menu item” in our cultural milieu. And we are the diners being asked, “How would you like your Jesus?”

Suppose that were true. Suppose that it was up to us to order our Good Shepherd. Suppose the sheep were always right in this “marketplace”. What would be our Jesus Du-jour?

Would we order up prosperity-giver Jesus? Would we call up a Jesus who rewards us with bountiful health and wealth if or when we’re sufficiently well-behaved, self-disciplined, and well-intentioned people?

Would we order up the Jesus who “gets us”? A Jesus in keeping with the one in the billion-dollar ad campaign currently running in our country? Would we order up a Jesus who has no authoritative status or standing, but instead a “Jesus” who is “just one of the guys?” Would our “menu-item” Jesus be one who does nothing more than “make us feel seen” – a Jesus who makes sure that we know “we’re good just the way we are?”

Would we order up “social justice-Jesus”? A version of Jesus who would serve as the fearless leader of whatever moral improvement crusade we or our peers determine to be the most pressing problem of the day? Or might we dial up a double order of “patriot-Jesus” – a champion-leader we can wrap up in our nation’s flag (or the flag of whatever nation we deem to be our nation’s dearest ally)? Could we order up a version of Jesus that would enable us to picture our civil nation as one and the same as God’s holy people – The Holy Christian Church?

If this one called Jesus were indeed a made-to-order menu item, what version of Jesus would be on the plate in front of us?

Jesus Isn’t On The Menu

Dear fellow blood-bought sheep, Jesus isn’t on the menu... Thanks be to God! For our good, indeed for our life and salvation, Jesus is not “made-to-order” for our particular versions and preferences or according to whatever our culture’s prevailing passions are.

What makes Jesus **the Good Shepherd** is that He is the Shepherd, the caretaker of sheep that His Father has divinely determined Him to be. And this means the Good Shepherd is good not because of us sheep – our input and consent. Rather, the Good Shepherd is good for us sheep who are, by our sheepish nature, not “good” for ourselves.

Jesus is The Good Shepherd because He knows us sheep better than we know ourselves. He knows all of our wandering ways and our wavering wants. And so, for us He walked the unwavering path of “goodness” so that His walk of righteousness might be our walk in Him.

Jesus is The Good Shepherd because He is not a hired hand – working for His own payday. Instead, He is the commissioned Son of God – the Shepherd who sees the wolf (the Devil) on the prowl for us... vices and temptations at his disposal, bearing his ferocious fangs called sin and guilt and death. And the Shepherd, in His unfathomable goodness, lays down His guiltless life for the guilty lives of us sheep. He entrusted Himself to the Shepherd-orders of His Father. The Good Shepherd carried your sins and mine in His body so that by His life laid down we would be healed (Isaiah 53).

Jesus is The Good Shepherd because His goodness is governed by His Father’s boundless good. This goodness sends our Shepherd in search of sheep who do not yet hear or recognize The Good Shepherd’s gracious voice – in pursuit of sheep who do not yet belong to His pen. His laid-down-life drives Him to seek out and rescue all the lost sheep who will come to hear His voice – the voice that will address them as His sheep on the last day – that day when the Shepherd announces in all of His Goodness: “*Come, my dear sheep, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the ‘pasture of Paradise’ prepared FOR YOU.*”(Matt. 25:35)

The Jesus of the Scriptures isn’t made-to-order. He isn’t a christ shaped to your version, my version, or the popular version of the masses. Jesus is the Christ. He is the Shepherd that His Father ordered for Him to be. And this is what guarantees the Goodness of our Good Shepherd. Of ourselves, we are just sheep going astray. But by the God-ordered work of the Good Shepherd, we are returned to the Overseer of our souls.

1. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/our-many-jesuses-6c5d82f2>
2. Ibid.

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107th Convention of the
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9th Annual Meeting of the
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APOLOGETICS AND WORLDVIEW CONFERENCE



Sponsored by: **The Center for Apologetics and Worldviews (CAW)**

June 20, 2024 | Bethany Lutheran College | Mankato, MN

10:00 a.m.

*“Defending the
Historical Reliability
of the Gospels”*

Dr. Adam Francisco,
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

12:30 p.m.

*“Understanding
and Applying the
Apologetics of Paul”*

Prof. Luke Thompson,
Martin Luther College,
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

2:00 p.m.

*“Understanding
and Applying the
Apologetics of Jesus”*

Rev. David Thompson,
Center for Apologetics and Worldviews
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

3:30 p.m. Table Talk with Presenters

Question ...

*In confirmation class, we used Luther's Small Catechism, but lately in church I've been hearing my pastor refer to Luther's Large Catechism. I remember hearing about it, but don't really know what it is. **What is Luther's Large Catechism?***

Answer:

Luther's Large Catechism is one of "The Lutheran Confessions," a statement of faith which helps people to understand what makes Lutherans... well, Lutheran. In the Appendix of Luther's Small Catechism and Explanation, one will find a list of "the seven Lutheran Confessions, which distinguish the Lutheran Church from all other churches." Number five on the list is The Small Catechism of Dr. Luther (1529), followed by number six, The Large Catechism of Dr. Luther (1529).

The history of Luther's catechisms

Catechisms were nothing new in Luther's day. The Christian church had used catechisms for centuries to teach the essential truths of the Christian faith to children and new converts by walking them through the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the meaning of the Sacraments. Through the early years of his ministry, Dr. Martin Luther himself had preached on the various parts of the catechism several times.

Yet in 1528, Luther discovered a dire need for Christian teaching and instruction during "The Saxon Visitation." In 1528, Martin Luther traveled to various congregations in the region of Saxony in order to evaluate the preaching and teaching of their pastors as well as what the average parishioner understood about the Christian faith. What Luther found out was not good. Many parishioners couldn't even recite the Lord's Prayer or the Apostles' Creed, let alone the Ten Commandments. Their knowledge of Christian teaching was practically nonexistent. Among the pastors, Luther did not find conditions much better. In the preface to his Small Catechism, Luther lamented that "many pastors are altogether incapable and incompetent to teach."

So Luther took it upon himself to try to correct the problem. He took a series of sermons on the Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments, edited them, and combined them into a book called the Large Catechism, which was published in April of 1529. A month later followed the Small Catechism.

The differences between the catechisms

Both catechisms teach the same chief truths of the Christian faith, but there are some important differences between the two

books. The most obvious difference is their respective length. Luther's Small Catechism only requires a few short pages of printed text while The Large Catechism takes up roughly two hundred pages. The Large Catechism reads like a sermon book while The Small Catechism contains relatively short explanations, lists, and a catalogue of practical questions and answers.

These differences in style exist because each catechism has its own intended audience. While Luther wrote The Small Catechism primarily for children to memorize, he intended The Large Catechism for instructing pastors and parents more deeply in the essential truths of the Christian faith.

The need for both catechisms

For Luther, both books were important for instructing future generations in the truths of Scripture. In much the same way infants eventually transition from a diet of milk to solid food (Hebrews 5), Luther hoped that, when pastors and parents had finished teaching their children The Small Catechism, they would go on to teach them The Large Catechism "and give them also a richer and fuller knowledge" of the Christian faith. At the same time, in his preface to The Large Catechism, Luther confessed that even as an educated doctor of theology, he still used The Small Catechism. Dr. Luther would recite the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer daily as part of his morning routine.

If you would like to read and study Luther's Large Catechism for yourself, the online version is available for free at <https://bookof-concord.org/large-catechism>. The Lord bless your study of His Word!



Do you have a question for Pastor Van Kampen?

---> Send them via email:
pvankampen@holycrossmadison.org

---> Send them via "snail mail":
Pastor Piet Van Kampen
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
734 Holy Cross Way,
Madison, WI 53704

LUTHERAN SENTINEL

6 BROWNS COURT
MANKATO, MN 56001

MOTHER'S DAY

Sharing a Mother's Love

by **REV. JAMES KASSERA**, Contributing Writer,
Secretary, **ELS BOARD OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE**

"We were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. We yearned for you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us."

(1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, EHV)

With Mother's Day on our mind, praise God for all the love and care He provided for you through a mother. God gives us the example of a mother, giving her time, energy, and life to nurse her child. We are all born into this world completely helpless and dependent on the compassion of others to survive. Mother's Day is one great reminder of the fact that we are all dependent upon the compassion and self-sacrifice of others and God is pleased to provide such compassion through the blessed vocation of mothers.

Various tragedies in life can make people feel helpless like a child all over again. Some things you see as major headlines on the news: victims of war or lives destroyed by natural disasters. Other people suffer as victims of abuse, the sudden loss of a loved one, or a major illness which impacts an entire family.



Sometimes people just need a little love and compassion to get back on their feet.

Our Evangelical Lutheran Synod annually collects a Mother's Day Offering which supports our ELS World Needs Fund. With this fund we have been able to reflect God's love and care by helping people in need around the world. With these offerings we are able to extend love and care to others far beyond our own physical reach. Please consider using the "Mother's Day Offering" link on the synod website (els.org).

Additional options are to direct your offerings through your local congregation or send them directly to the Synod:

ELS World Needs Fund
Evangelical Lutheran Synod
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

Mother's Day is a time to thank God for the love and care He provides through the moms in our lives. We also thank God and pray for the continued love and care He provides through the generous gifts from all of you. To God alone be all glory.
Happy Mother's Day!