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IN MEMORIAM: MAYNARD J. WITT (1913-1992)

On June 19, the afternoon of the close of the Twentieth Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, as delegates, pastors, and families began to wend their way home, a little party from Washington state enjoyed a congenial meal with a few friends in the Eau Claire airport, before boarding the plane for the half hour flight to Minneapolis. During that short flight, through an apparent heart attack, our Lord called home one of these servants who had just taken part in the meetings in Eau Claire.

Meinhardt John Witt was born to the Rev. and Mrs. John Witt in Norfolk, NE, on June 10, 1913, the ninth of eleven children. He was received into the Lord's kingdom through baptism as an infant and confirmed his baptismal vow in his youth.

Early in life his heart was moved to consider the public ministry as he sat with brothers and sisters on the front steps of the parsonage, while older brother Herbert preached to the little "congregation." After his high school years in New Ulm, MN, he attended Northwestern College in Watertown, WI, and further prepared for the ministry at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Thiensville, WI, from which he was graduated in 1938. Although there were not enough calls to go around in June, his first call came that same year from St. Paul Lutheran Church of Palouse, WA, a small farming community just north of Pullman. On November 29 he was joined in holy matrimony to Verona Hansen of Tilden, NE, (who still resides at the family home in Spokane) and the couple moved west. The Lord would bless their union with four children.

The text of Pastor Witt's first sermon in Palouse anticipated the spirit of his entire ministry: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). After a few years in Palouse the church council gave both permission and encouragement to the young pastor to explore mission possibilities in the much larger city of Spokane, about seventy-five miles to the north.

Pastor M. J. Witt was a gift of God to the CLC and served in various capacities during his 43-year ministry –as a vice president, a conference visitor, a member of ILC Building Committees and the Board of Doctrine,

to name a few. But to Lutheran Christians in the Pacific Northwest, where his entire ministry was conducted, Pastor Witt had come to be identified with Trinity Lutheran Church of Spokane, WA, which he served from 1942 until his retirement in 1981.

(Adapted from the September 1992 *Lutheran Spokesman*. – Editor.)

Mission Festival Sermon *

Vernon Greve

* Printed in memory of its author, who entered eternal life November 4, 1991. — Editor.

Text: Matthew 9:35-38 -

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow laborers with Him,

Just how interested are you in coming to eternal life in heaven? How much is eternal life worth to you? How much time and energy and money are you expending on salvation, on the kingdom of God? Just how interested and concerned you are is shown in your doing: your giving and interest in church, in spreading the Gospel, in leading others to salvation. We consider ourselves to be Christians, to be God's dear children. We pray to Him in time of trouble and sickness. We come to Him for forgiveness. We expect that He should bless us with health and prosperity. But how much thanks do we give Him? How much glad and willing obedience and service do we render to Him in His kingdom? Recall the parable of the Two Sons. The father approached both these sons and appealed to them as sons, as ones who had enjoyed all the blessings and benefits of his home—the daily food and clothing and protection and care and joy—and asked them to go and work in his vineyard. And certainly God has every just right and reason to expect that we who receive every blessing of body and soul from Him should render glad and willing service unto Him, for we are His true children through faith in Christ—children of God and heirs of eternal salvation. He it is who appeals to us in our today's text also—asking us as dear children of God to labor in and to be concerned about His kingdom, to follow the example of our Savior and Christ.

Let us then today, on the basis of our text, ponder -

Jesus' Concern for Man's Eternal Well-being:

As shown 1. In His Life and Ministry, and 2. In His Appeal to Us to

be Laborers with Him in His Kingdom.

I.

There is one and only one force which motivates and incites a person to be active and concerned with saving souls. That is love and appreciation for Christ's work of saving us and all mankind. Let us remember that Jesus didn't **have** to do this work. No one of mankind nor yet the sum of mankind did in any wise force Jesus to come to earth to redeem and save us. Rather, it was His love and compassion for lost and condemned mankind which caused Him to become our Substitute and Savior. We read in our text, "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

Jesus devoted His life to saving mankind. As our text shows us, Jesus was constantly busy, active, and concerned with man's well-being—physical well-being and spiritual well-being. He wasn't concerned about church work only on Sunday or Mission Fest. He didn't say, "Let someone else do it; I've got other things to do." Neither did He say, "Let mankind watch out for themselves." Jesus went about all the cities teaching God's Word, preaching the glad and joyous Gospel message of God's love and mercy—and what did He get out of it? What reward, what wages or salary which are so important in the minds of men? Jesus received no earthly reward. He had no house, no home, no land or cattle, no wages or salary. His love and concern for man's welfare was reason for His devoting His life to the eternal welfare of man. Jesus healed every sickness and every disease among the people, but He didn't charge anything for it; He didn't set any fees. Isn't this the exact opposite of the world and mankind, where the reward is so often the important thing? But Jesus' love and concern didn't stop here.

In His concern for our eternal welfare He perfectly kept and fulfilled every law and commandment of God for us and in our stead. His life was a perfect life of love. He took all our sins, our transgressions of God's law upon Himself and for us—mind you, for us—gave Himself to the bitter sufferings and death of the cross, that the dread consequence of our sin might be removed, the dread punishment of sins might be paid, and that we through Him might stand holy and righteous before God as children and heirs. To such children Jesus says: "Son, go work today in my vineyard." – "Go ye, and preach the Gospel in all the world for a witness." But what is our interest or concern, our gratitude and appreciation for His life and death for us and in our stead? What are we doing to serve Him? "But when Jesus saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." There is no lack of work for any and every one of us to do for Jesus. The multitudes of mankind are in desperate need of guidance in their thinking, their evaluating, their aims and goals. Jesus says: "They are as sheep having no shepherd. Son and heir of God, go work in the Lord's kingdom. Go ye and preach the Gospel—let your light as a child of God shine forth in guidance in the direction of the way to heaven. Lead them (not by harsh words and demands, but) by the living Gospel message of your lives and mouths. Multitudes of mankind are lost and scattered and have no hope. Direct them to the Savior and His Word; comfort, encourage, counsel them in His Word."

II.

Jesus appeals to us to be active and concerned, to be laborers together with Him in feeding His lambs and sheep. "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." The harvest is plenteous! There is no lack of work for any and everyone of us to do for Jesus. The souls of mankind are to be won for the Lord. And these souls are round about us on all sides. In our very midst. In our homes. Our children are to be nourished and fed upon God's Word. Bring them regularly to Sunday School. Let them join in the singing. Help them

with their stories and their memorization that they do not soon join those scattered abroad. Be a laborer for Christ and with Christ at home and in Sunday School. Be an example in your personal concern for the Word in regular church attendance, home devotions, the Christian language you speak, the manner in which you deal, your aims and goals—not with dollar signs in your eyes, but in love and service to Him who bought you with the price of His holy precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. Let your neighbor, your fellowman, see and marvel at your sincere interest in serving Christ, and not the world and the things of this world.

"The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few." Work in the Lord's kingdom is a full-time task and not just upon occasion. And because the task of winning souls for Christ is so tremendous and far spread, the Lord bids us to pray for more laborers to help with the work. Pray that the Lord grant us willing hearts and hands. Pray that the Lord grant more willing workers. Pray for our missions and missionaries. Pray for ILC and its professors and students that more pastors and teachers and missionaries be trained as faithful laborers in the kingdom. We can pray and we can be active laborers ourselves. We can regularly contribute to missions in our regular Sunday envelope. We can finish and complete our collection for the property at ILC in Eau Claire. [This sermon was first preached in 1964.] We can encourage our children to be laborers for Christ—to study to be teachers or pastors—the laborers are few! How active, interested, and concerned are we who claim to be children of God and heirs of eternal salvation? Christ gave His life for us. What are we willing to do for Him?

Hark! the voice of Jesus crying,
"Who will go and work today?
Fields are white and harvests waiting,
Who will bear the sheaves away?"
Loud and long the Master calleth,
Rich reward He offers thee;
Who will answer, gladly saying,
"Here am I, send me, send me"?

The Holy Spirit Never Contradicts Himself in the Word!*

Paul F. Nolting

* Preached at Indian Landing Lutheran Church, Rochester, New York, December 15, 1991.

Texts: Ephesians 5:22-24; 1 Peter 3:1-6; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 11:3; Galatians 3:26-29.

In Christ Jesus, whose Word of salvation has come to us by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Fellow Redeemed:

Does the Bible contradict itself? Did the Holy Spirit move any of the holy writers to record contradictory truths? Does the Bible of the Holy Spirit expect man to use his reason to resolve imagined contradictions in the Bible? The answer to all three of these questions is an unqualified NO.

Permit me to give you some examples so that you understand what is involved here. The Bible clearly teaches that God wants all men to be saved—universal grace. The Bible also teaches that God from eternity by grace and in Christ Jesus chose or elected a certain definite number of persons to be brought to faith, preserved in the faith, and finally glorified. That is the scriptural doctrine of the election of grace. Human reason finds a contradiction here. If God wants all to be saved, but only elected some, the grace of election seems to be in conflict with universal grace. What's the so-

lution? Believe both—universal grace and elective grace, for the inspired Apostle Paul instructs us to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

Another example: God wants all to be saved—again universal grace. All men are utterly and equally conceived and born in sin. Human reason concludes that either all will be saved or none. But some are saved and some lost. How come? John Calvin reasoned that God elected some to salvation and some to perdition, but that reasoning contradicts universal grace. The synergists or Arminians reason that there must be a difference in people which accounts for the fact that some come to faith and some remain in unbelief. But that contradicts grace alone.

What's the God-pleasing solution? Believe both—universal grace and the universal corruption of human nature. Those who are saved are saved by God's grace alone. Those who are lost have no one to blame but themselves. Once again—every thought is to be taken captive to the obedience of Christ.

Luther called natural reason a "whore," ever enticing us to be unfaithful to the written, inspired Word of the Lord. This is the truth that I pray the Holy Spirit will impress on your minds this morning:

THE HOLY SPIRIT NEVER CONTRADICTS HIMSELF IN THE WORD!

I. He teaches the absolute equality of man and woman "in Christ Jesus."

This truth the Holy Spirit taught through the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians. The words are simple and clear, and so the meaning equally clear. Paul wrote, "For you are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." Faith is the common denominator of all Christians. There is no such thing as a male or a female faith! How did the Galatians obtain this common faith? "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." A son of God is a person who has put on Christ through baptism! What does it mean to put on Christ? It means to put on His righteousness, to be clothed in the unisex garments of salvation, and that by faith, even as we sing in the hymn: "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness / My beauty are, my glorious dress; / Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed, / With joy shall I lift up my head" (#371:1). So all sons of God, every single believer from Adam on down to the last person converted before the Lord comes, is covered with the garments of salvation by faith, the righteousness that Jesus won for all through His holy living in love and through His innocent suffering and death.

To inculcate this glorious truth, to drive it home, Paul continued: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." All things that separate us here on earth, including sexual differences—male and female—are wiped out at the foot of the cross and at the empty tomb. There is no male forgiveness and female forgiveness; there is one forgiveness for all. There is no male baptism and female baptism; there is but one baptism for all. There is no male Lord's Supper and female Lord's Supper; there is but one Lord's Supper for all. There is no male faith and female faith, but a common faith. There is no male garment of righteousness and female garment of righteousness; the righteousness of Christ is unisexual. There is no male heaven and female heaven; there is but one heaven for all. The distinction between male and female is wiped out "in Christ Jesus," that is, as far as our spiritual relationship with Christ is concerned. "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed [spiritual Jews] and heirs according to the promise." Nothing can be clearer than this glorious truth that there is no male salvation or female salvation, no superior or subordinate salvation, but **one salvation** for men and women, girls and boys.

Now in view of this clear truth, some women ask: If we women are equal "in Christ," why can't we vote in the congregational meetings; why can't we hold decision-making positions of power in the church; why can't we be ordained as preachers in the church? Why do we have the "love, honor, and **obey**" in the marriage ceremony? These questions sound reason-

able, do they not? Some of you women have asked them and apparently are still asking them. What is the scriptural answer to these questions? Let's listen to what the same Holy Spirit, who taught equality of the sexes "in Christ," has to say about the relationship of man and woman in the state of matrimony and in the church. What does the Holy Spirit teach?

II. He teaches the "headship" of the man over the woman in the family and church.

Listen to the same Holy Spirit speaking through the same Apostle Paul. This is what He taught regarding the relationship of wives to husbands in marriage: "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife [Here is the headship principle!], as also Christ is the head of the church [Again the headship principle!]; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." Again, the words are clear and simple. The same Holy Spirit taught through the same Apostle Paul that the woman is equal to the man "in Christ," that is, in all things pertaining to salvation, but that the woman is to be subordinate to her husband in marriage. She is to respect the God-established "headship" of the husband in the family. The Holy Spirit moved the Apostle Paul to repeat that instruction in his letter to the Colossians: "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord" (Col. 3:18). Paul tells all Christian wives that such behavior, such submission, is fitting, appropriate, the way it should be "in the Lord." That is what the Lord expects of wives! The same Holy Spirit taught the same truth through the Apostle Peter: "You wives, be submissive to your own husbands . . . as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror" (1 Peter 3:1,6). The same message—equal with the husband regarding salvation; subordinate to the husband in marriage! Crystal clear!

As clear as these words are, they still go against the sinful flesh of every woman, Christian women also. The Greek word implies that this submitting is to be self-imposed. The woman is to curb, to drown, to crucify her own old Adam who will not cease rebelling against this instruction of the Holy Spirit as long as the woman lives. So also the husband must fight against his old Adam till he dies, for his old Adam constantly tempts him to abuse and misuse his wife, to exploit his headship without realizing that headship demands both responsibility and accountability. Once again—in matters of salvation—complete equality of man and woman; in marriage the "headship" of the man over the woman. That is the Lord's unalterable order!

Now how about the church? Again we listen to the Holy Spirit who gave instructions through the Apostle Paul. In his letter to the Galatians Paul did not write concerning order in the church. The big theme of Galatians is Christian liberty from the law, that is, full and complete salvation for all—men and women alike—without the deeds of the law. But in his letter to the congregation at Corinth and in his pastoral epistle to Timothy, he wrote specifically and directly concerning how things were to be done in the church. We'll take 1 Timothy first. Here is what the Holy Spirit teaches through Paul: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." Submission—not authority over a man! The headship principle is to be observed in the church. How does one exercise headship in the church? Through preaching and teaching! I'm exercising headship now over men and women through preaching. The man is to exercise such headship, not the woman. The Levitical priesthood in the Old Testament was strictly male. Pagan religions had their priestesses. Jesus chose twelve men as His apostles—no women. The Scriptures consistently maintain the "headship" of the man in the church. What about voting at congregational meetings? The vote is the means by which rule is maintained. The majority vote prevails. If the wife voted, she could cancel the vote of her husband and so violate his "headship." In a congregation as ours, where we have more women than men, the women could destroy the Spirit-ordained "headship" of the men in

the church.

Now why did the Holy Spirit establish the "headship" principle in the church? Was it an arbitrary decision? Was the Apostle Paul a misogynist, a woman-hater? Did the Holy Spirit permit the Apostle to express opinions that are unfair to women? Let the Spirit and the Apostle answer for themselves! Why is the woman forbidden to exercise authority over the man in the church, but to be in silence? Paul gives two reasons: "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." When God created Adam and Eve, He had three options, humanly speaking. He could have created them simultaneously, or He could have created Eve first and Adam from her rib, or He could have done it as He did it—created Adam first and then Eve from Adam's rib. So the very act of creation established the "headship" principle, which God wants maintained in the Christian family and in the Christian church. The second reason was that Eve was thoroughly deceived by Satan, not Adam. Eve was the first "woman libber," the first president of NOW. She seized the headship of the family and of the human race. Without any consultation with her husband, who had passed on to her the Lord's command not to eat of the tree in the midst of the garden, she went on her own, took matters into her own hand, and made a unilateral decision that plunged all mankind into sin and death. Adam became responsible for the mess when he wimpishly listened to his wife and so violated his responsibility as head of the family.

The women in the congregation at Corinth were disorderly. Here is what the Apostle Paul wrote to them: "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for women to speak in church" (1 Cor. 14:34-35). What the women libbers want—the right to vote, to hold decision-making positions, to be ordained and so to preach and teach—the Holy Spirit says is "shameful." This is not my personal opinion. This is not the interpretation of the CLC or any other church body. These are the plain, simple, clear words of the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul. Once again—the principles: Complete equality between men and women in all matters regarding salvation; "headship" of the man over the woman in the family and church.

Now why are these principles ignored, despised, and reviled in so many Christian churches today? People read the Galatians passage which teaches complete equality of the sexes "in Christ Jesus." Then they read of the "headship" of the man over the woman in the home and the church. They imagine that the Holy Spirit is contradicting Himself, the Apostle Paul also. No way! There is no contradiction, except in the rebellious, sin-corrupted reason of man. In Galatians Paul was speaking of one thing—salvation in Christ Jesus; in Ephesians, Corinthians, and Timothy he was speaking of order in the family and in the church. Two different things! Both stand!

Once again I am standing on the walls of Zion, warning both men and women, but especially you women. Don't let Satan tempt you to be disobedient to the Holy Spirit and the order He has established in the home and church. Beware! Miriam, the sister of Moses, is called by the Holy Spirit a "prophetess." After the crossing of the Red Sea she led the women of Israel in singing praises to the Lord for His great deliverance of His people. But there is another scene in Miriam's life that should send a cold shudder down the spine of any Christian woman who is moved by her flesh and the devil to challenge the order of God in the church. Miriam didn't like Moses' choice of a wife, a black woman. She challenged the "headship" of Moses over the congregation. Her spineless brother, Aaron, became her partner in sin. The Lord summoned Aaron and Miriam and made it clear that they had violated His order and so had rebelled against Him. The Lord was angry with them. Miriam was the instigator of the rebellion. The Lord smote her with leprosy. Her flesh became as white as snow. Moses had to intercede for her. The Lord removed her leprosy but shut her out of the camp for seven days. Read all about it—Numbers 12. I don't want anything like this to happen to any of you women! Amen.

The Song of Solomon

A Homiletical View

John K. Pfeiffer

How many preachers choose texts from the Song of Solomon? Nesper's *Biblical Texts* lists no texts from this book of the Bible (also Esther and Obadiah). The nature of the book does make it difficult to use in a public service. However, it is a part of God's revelation and is, therefore, "written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4) and "is profitable" for "the man of God" (2 Tim. 3:16f.). For that reason it should not be ignored in our preaching.

The following is an attempt to provide the preacher with a way to use this wonderful picture of the relationship between Christ and His Church. It is recommended that the preacher not read the entire text in the service. He may choose a verse or two that express the thought of the text and encourage his hearers to read the entire text in private.

The Bridegroom and His Bride: The Beautiful Relationship between Christ and His Church

CHAPTER 1:1-8 **The Unworthy Bride**

- vv. 2-4 The Church longs for the love of Christ. She calls Him to lead and she will follow into His chambers. There she finds joy and delight.
- vv. 5-6 The Church realizes that she is completely unworthy of the love of Christ. The world often misleads her into its ways and works, while she neglects the work of the Lord.
- v. 7 She pleads to be shown the pastureland and the location of the Lord's flock. She does not want to be excluded.
- v. 8 Christ admonishes her and points out the well-beaten trail, the way of the Word. In following this, she shall find the flock and the tents of the faithful shepherds.

The Church desires to be loved by Christ, though she realizes that she is unworthy. Yet, without His love beckoning her and embracing her, she would be lost. Then she would be outside of His flock, wandering in the ways of the world. This she cannot bear. Most gratefully, she hears the wonderful words of grace. The eyes of Christ see past the ugliness of her sin to the inner beauty of imputed righteousness.

"Draw me" (v. 4) - Jer. 31:3,18; John 12:32; Ps. 80:3

"Let us run" - Ps. 119:32; Isa. 40:31

"The trail of the flock" (v. 8) - Ps. 23:3; 25:4f.; 119:105;
Prov. 4:11; Isa. 2:3; Jer. 6:16

- I. The Bride's desire to be a beloved bride.
- II. Her knowledge of her own unworthiness.
- III. Her pleading to the Bridegroom.
- IV. His acceptance of her.

Possible Readings: Eph. 5:22-33; John 3:25-30

Possible Hymns: 379, 343, 349, 23:2,3

CHAPTER 1:9-2:7; 4 **The Beauty of the Bride and Bridegroom**

(I did not find this to be a section which lends itself to a verse-by-verse breakdown. Rather I dealt with the entire picture that is presented.)

As we view our natural, spiritual appearance, we find only ugliness, as also does God. Though there was no beauty which attracted Christ to us, yet He loved us enough to make us beautiful. He began by taking our ugliness on Himself. He, who possessed the beauty of holiness, allowed Himself to be disfigured with the ugliness of our sins and the wretchedness of our punishment. Suffering and rising again, He washed us clean and exchanged our filthy garment for the robe of His righteousness and the beauty of His holiness. Now He praises us for the very beauty that has been freely bestowed upon us. In the eyes of God we are as beautiful as is our beautiful Savior. Likewise, we now recognize His beauty and praise Him for it. – All who reject these "wedding garments" remain ugly and will be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Thanks be to the Spirit, who moves our hearts to faith.

- I. Where do we look for beauty?
 - A. There is no natural beauty in the Bride (cf. Matt. 23:27)
 - B. There is no physical beauty in the Groom (Isa. 53:2)
 - C. The Lord looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7)
- II. The true beauty of the Groom (1:16; 2:3)
 - A. Holiness (Ps. 69:9)
 - B. Grace/love (Ps. 45:2)=
 - He took upon Himself the ugliness of our sin (Isa. 53:4)
 - C. Wisdom, which formulated the way of salvation
 - D. Justice, patience, unchangeableness, omnipotence
- III. The true beauty of the Bride (1:14,15; 2:1,2)
 - A. Beauty bestowed upon us (Ezek. 16:14)
 - B. Because of the cleansing by Christ (Eph. 5:25ff.)
 - C. Isa. 61:3,10; 28:5; Ps. 149:4; 90:17
 - D. Why reject such beauty (cf. Matt. 22:11ff.)

Possible Readings: 1 Pet. 3:1-4; Matt. 22:8-14

Possible Hymns: 357, 657, 371:1

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CHAPTER 2:8-3:11 **The Bride's Search for the Bridegroom**

- vv. 8-9 Christ is the first to approach the Bride. We see only partially.
- v. 10 Christ invites us to follow Him.
- vv. 11-13 The beauties of salvation unfold before our eyes.
- v. 14 Jesus calls for a response from us.
- v. 15 We want to be rid of the forces which destroy the vineyard.
- 3:1 The forces of evil cause us to think that Christ is far away from us.
- v. 2 This produces a desire to seek Him.
- v. 3 Many watchmen fail to show us the way.
- v. 4 But Christ is not far away; He let's us find Him (Jas. 4:8)
- vv. 6ff. Christ sends protectors to bear us to heaven; we see it coming and are strengthened.

Our lifelong search for Christ began when He came searching for

us and found us. He then called us into the fields of His labor: to spread the Gospel, to prune away errors within ourselves, to remove false teachers that try to ruin us. After bringing us to His side, He puts us to the test, allowing dark troubles to enter into our lives. How shall we respond? Shall we forget what He has done for us or shall the spark of faith, which He kindled, move us to seek Him with all our hearts? If we seek Him, we do so only because He has assured us that we shall find Him. He always keeps Himself close at hand, as close as the Word, as close as our brethren, as close as the pastor, as close as our church. When we find Him, we cling more firmly to Him and He erases our darkness with the eternal light of His glory.

- I. The search is initiated by the Bridegroom (2:8)
 - A. Not by the Bride (Rom. 3:11f.)
 - B. The Groom approaches (Ezek. 2:12ff.; Luke 1:68)
 - C. He invites us to behold the beauty of the Gospel (2:10ff.)
 - D. Isa. 65:1
- II. We are invited to join in His labor (2:12,15)
 - A. Vineyard: Christ's field of labor
 - B. Christ used laborers to invite us; He uses us to invite others.
 - C. Mission work; driving out false teachers (foxes)
- III. The dangers from evil forces (3:1)
 - A. Doubts and temptations obscure our view of the Bridegroom. Such are the trials of faith (Ps. 35:22)
 - B. The Bride does not give up, but seeks the Groom. "Bad" times should cause us to search the more for Christ.
 - C. Matt. 7:7; Jer. 29:13
- IV. The Bride finds her Beloved (3:4)

Possible readings: Eph. 2:12-19; Matt. 11:25-30

Possible Hymns: 270, 361, 383, 305:2

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CHAPTERS 5 and 6 **The Sleepy Bride**

- v. 1 The Bridegroom comes in joy to bring joy.
- vv. 2-3 The Bride has become lukewarm toward Him.
- v. 4 His call arouses her from her lethargy.
- v. 5 She opens to Him, but He is gone. He puts her love to the test so that she might learn the value of His love.
- v. 6 She searches in vain, at first.
- vv. 7-8 The watchmen persecute her
- vv. 9-16 She is moved to ponder the beauty of her Beloved.
- 6:1 Now she discovers where to find Him.
- vv. 2f. He dwells with the flock.
His voice once again praises her beauty.

In joy Christ comes to us, desiring to share His joy with us. It brings joy to His heart to know that He has a Bride, who has no spots or blemishes, no stains or wrinkles. With the continuing message of forgiveness, He knocks at our heart's door. This repeated Gospel is meant to stimulate faith, to arouse the spirit of zeal. "Open to Me," He says. However, tired of exercising our faith, we are too lazy to open the door (too lazy to read our Bible, too lazy to have family devotions, too lazy to go to church or Bible Class, too lazy to serve Him and our neighbor). – "I was asleep, but my heart was awake." While being weak, we are still awake with faith. Therefore, Christ touches us to rouse us from our lethargy (Hymnal

#536:1). When we finally open to Him, shall we find Him (e.g., find His Word in our churches)? So we search, because our hearts have been stirred by Him. But He seems far away. We don't know where or how to look. It is a test, for He is not far from any of us. Knowing this, we persist, desiring to find Jesus. As we remember the beauty of Christ, the answer comes: the Lord is to be found in His garden, where the Word is taught in its truth and purity and the Sacraments are rightly administered. In His garden we find Him and enjoy the beauty of His righteousness and the sweet fruit of His Gospel. – "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; If any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and I will dine with him and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20).

- I. The weariness of the Bride
 - A. Weakness of faith causes us to be weary.
 - While the heart is still awake, we are tired of serving.
 - B. It is too easy to ignore His call and think that He will still be there when we need Him.
- II. The Bride begins the search for the Bridegroom.
 - A. His voice arouses our hearts.
 - B. Yet, He **seems** to make Himself scarce to those who are lax, because He wants them to search harder.
 - When a church becomes lax in its discipline, the voice of Jesus is heard less and less. The Bride is driven to search elsewhere.
 - C. She persists in the search.
 - The false teachers (watchmen) persecute her. They make it difficult for those who desire to hear the pure Word.
 - D. She remembers her beauty (righteousness, holiness, grace . . .) and thus knows where to look for the Bridegroom.
 - The Garden of the Groom: wherever the Word is taught in its truth and purity and the Sacraments are rightly administered.
 - E. In the garden she hears the Bridegroom praise her beauty.

Possible Readings: Rev. 3:14-22; Luke 14:16-24

Possible Hymns: 278, 650, 356, 305:2

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CHAPTER 7:1-8:2 **The Bride in the World**

- 7:1-9 The Bride has been blessed with many beautiful gifts. These are intended for the pleasure of the Bridegroom. As it pleases Christ, so we use our gifts and talents.
- 7:10-13 The Bride desires to put her gifts into the service of her Beloved. She wants to walk into the world with Him, carrying the Gospel, gathering fruit for Him.
- 8:1-7 The Bride longs for continual companionship with Christ. Without it she is lost and her work is in vain. But with His assurance (with the earnest of the Spirit: "seal" - v. 6), she is strong. His love cannot be quenched, no matter what opposition she faces. This she prizes above all things.
- 8:8-12 Because of His love for her, her heart is stirred in love toward others, primarily those who do not have the Gospel and those who are weak in faith.

The Church desires to show her love toward Christ by going out into the world and bringing Christ to the people. In the world she is faced with open hostility and is tempted to keep her mouth shut. However, her zeal for Christ is stronger than her fear of persecution, because she is re-

newed by the revealed knowledge of Christ's love for her. She has the seal of the Holy Spirit on this. **"We overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us"** (Rom. 8:37). Furthermore, she is beautified with gifts and talents necessary to carry out her desires: prophesying, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, showing mercy . . . (Rom. 12). She cares about the souls wandering in darkness, who lack the spiritual beauty of the Christian. They are still ugly with sin and guilt, totally undesirable. However, through Christ they can be beautified. Therefore, with the seal of Christ's love and the necessary tools, the Church reaches out to the lost.

- I. The need for the presence of and the seal of Christ.
- II. The possession of gifts dedicated to His pleasure.
- III. Our loving concern for the heathen and the needy.

Possible Readings: Rom. 12:1-13

Possible Hymns: 500, 360

Hark, the Bride of Christ is calling,
"Come, Beloved of my soul.
Go with us into the highways
And the byways to enroll
Hearts that now are bound in darkness
All enslaved by guilt and sin,
For Thy love shall e'er go with us
And shall souls for heaven win."
(Tune: Hymnal #496)

* * * * *

CHAPTER 8:13,14 **Waiting for the Marriage Feast**

- v. 13 While waiting, the Bridegroom is anxious to hear the voice (prayers) of the Bride; so are His companions (angels).
- v. 14 The Bride calls for the Bridegroom to hurry (Second Coming).

The age of the Church Militant is a time of waiting. She sits in the "gardens," where she can gaze upon the beauties of God's Word and Sacraments. There she hears Christ calling upon her to speak to Him. He and the angels delight in the prayers of the Church. The time of waiting is drawing to a close and the need for prayer is greater than ever: prayer for forgiveness, prayer for strength. Also in her prayers is the request that Christ would come quickly, for she longs to end the physical separation. **"Hurry, my Beloved."** – **"Yes, I am coming quickly"** (Rev. 22:21).

AMEN!

- I. Waiting in prayer.
- II. Waiting anxiously.

Possible Readings: Rev. 19:6-9; Matt. 25:1-13

Possible Hymns: 609, 72, 67, 432:5

Commentary on a Convention Resolution

David Lau

The 1992 convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) passed the following resolution concerning meetings with representatives of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS):

"After reviewing the work the Board of Doctrine and the president have done for us in their correspondence with representatives of the WELS and ELS during the past two years, we come to the following conclusions:

"1) We affirm that ever since the formation of the CLC in 1960 there has been a doctrinal difference between the CLC and the WELS/ELS on the matter of termination of fellowship with church bodies that have become causers of divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, cf. Romans 16:17-18.

"2) We are convinced by Scripture (Gal. 5:9; 1 Thess. 5:21-22) that in order to resolve doctrinal differences it is necessary that previous official false statements and actions be clearly rejected. This conviction is reinforced by a study of church history.

"3) Since in the correspondence of the past biennium the representatives of the WELS/ELS have refused up to this point to acknowledge that this difference which separates us is a matter of doctrine, we urge the Board of Doctrine to terminate the present discussions with the representatives of the WELS/ELS, unless such discussions address this specific doctrinal difference from the outset.

"4) We encourage all members of the CLC to study the CLC 'Theses and Antitheses on the Role of Admonition in the Termination of Fellowship with Church Bodies' (Revised by the CLC Board of Doctrine, February 1990), and to re-study the pamphlet entitled 'There Is Still a Difference' (1982), in order to gain a better understanding of this doctrinal difference.

"5) We thank our Lord for giving us the opportunity both to study God's Word and to give testimony in this area of the doctrine of church fellowship. We pray that the Holy Spirit will use His Word and this testimony to accomplish His will to the glory of God and His saving Gospel."

What is the doctrinal difference between the CLC, on the one hand, and the WELS/ELS, on the other hand? Those who left the WELS in the years and months before the WELS 1959 convention did not leave the WELS because of a stated different doctrinal principle. At that time both sides still seemed to hold (in theory, at least) the same principle: namely, that church bodies ought to be avoided when they are causing divisions and offenses contrary to Scriptural doctrine, according to Romans 16:17-18. Those who left the WELS before the 1959 WELS convention felt conscience-bound to do so because the WELS was not following this principle. That is, the WELS was not avoiding a church body—the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS)—that they had publicly declared (at the 1955 WELS convention) to be guilty of causing divisions and offenses. If the WELS had then corrected itself in 1959 by obeying God's Word in Romans 16:17-18, it is possible that those who felt conscience-bound to leave the WELS would have returned to it, since the principle that both groups accepted was now being obeyed.

But what happened is that the WELS convention of 1959 did not correct its earlier disobedience of God's Word, but rather it justified that disobedience by adopting a different principle on the termination of church fellowship, namely, that "termination of church fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail and that the erring brother or church body demands recognition for their error." According to this new principle the WELS was not sinning by its continuing fellowship with the LC-MS. According to this new principle continuing fellowship was in order because admonition was still being carried out and the WELS was not yet convinced that its admonition was of no avail.

When the CLC was organized in August of 1960, it adopted *Concerning Church Fellowship* as its statement of doctrine on matters of fellowship. In this document the WELS statement of 1959 was declared to be a false principle, a false doctrine, if you will, on the matter of termination of fellowship. "We further reject the teaching that errorists and their followers are to be avoided only when they no longer listen to admonition, or that we are to remain in fellowship with errorists as long as we think that there is hope that they might give up their errors. Though the teaching Church is ever an admonishing Church, we reject the opinion that separation from errorists is dependent upon the course of admonition."

The correct principle was spelled out in these words: "We further believe and teach that suspension of an established fellowship is to take place when it has been ascertained that a person or group is causing divisions and offenses through a false position in doctrine or practice."

Those who left the WELS after 1959 to form the CLC did so because, in their opinion, the WELS had become a heterodox or false-teaching church body because it had adopted a false principle on termination of fellowship.

Ever since 1959 there has been this doctrinal difference. Print the two statements on termination of fellowship side by side, and it is easy to see that there is a difference between them, and that this difference is a difference in teaching. We teach officially (in *Concerning Church Fellowship*) that God's Word tells us to follow a certain principle on termination. The WELS teaches officially (on the basis of its 1959 resolution which has never been rescinded) that God's Word tells them to follow a different principle.

In 1961 the WELS did, indeed, suspend or terminate fellowship with the LC-MS. But on what basis was this suspension approved? On the basis of the CLC principle, or on the basis of the WELS principle? I was present at that 1961 WELS convention, and it was evident that the resolution to terminate fellowship was made, as we might expect, on the basis of the principle adopted by the WELS in 1959.

That is why the WELS decision to terminate fellowship with the LC-MS did not in itself correct the false teaching on termination of fellowship. In the meetings that took place between the CLC and the WELS in the sixties this doctrinal difference was never resolved. Neither side was willing to acknowledge that its principle was incorrect.

In the eighties another generation took up the question of the historical difference between the CLC and the WELS. This time the ELS was also included in the discussions. Our CLC representatives entered in on these discussions, thinking that perhaps the difference in doctrine could be resolved on the basis of a fresh study of the Scripture passages. Papers were presented by both sides. There seemed to be hope for real progress. In fact, subcommittees had gone so far as to agree on a joint statement of doctrine.

But then came the question of a preamble. To us it was self-evident that the joint statement must be presented as a settlement of doctrinal difference. If there was a doctrinal difference that was now being resolved, the preamble should declare what the difference was that was now being resolved. All previous statements that contradicted the joint statement must of course now be declared false.

But at this point in the discussions there came a letter from the WELS commission chairman that indicated a totally different understanding on their part of what these discussions were all about. The letter stated: "We do not believe there was a real difference between us in doctrine" (letter of August 8, 1990, from the Chairman of the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations). I suppose it is not altogether preposterous for some to believe that all of us who left the WELS to form the CLC did so on the basis of a mere misunderstanding, rather than a doctrinal difference. But our committee and our convention wanted to make as clear as we could our solemn and sincere conviction, based on God's Word and the facts of our history, that our difference with the WELS/ELS has been, and is now, "a doctrinal difference." This, of course, implies that one side or both sides in the controversy have been guilty of false teaching. If we can agree on what is true and what is false, and if we are sincere in what we say, then it follows that we will want to correct and eradicate that which is false, no matter who

said it or did it, so that from this point on we can work together in the Gospel on the basis of God's clear Word.

In our opinion the *Theses and Antitheses on the Role of Admonition in the Termination of Fellowship with Church Bodies* (revised by the CLC Board of Doctrine in February of 1990) are an adequate statement of what is true and false in these matters, and we print them here so that all our readers can know where we stand. Note that III.A is a rejection of the position taken by the WELS and III.B is a rejection of the position taken by the ELS.

CLC THESES AND ANTITHESES ON THE ROLE OF ADMONITION IN THE TERMINATION OF FELLOWSHIP WITH CHURCH BODIES

Romans 16:17-18 has always been considered a *sedes doctrinae* among us. We affirm that this passage is a word of God which teaches clearly the separation principle. We herewith set forth that which we affirm and believe, as well as that which we reject, with regard to the role of admonition in the termination of fellowship with church bodies.

- I. We regard fraternal (in-fellowship) admonition as a continuing function of Christian love among brethren in the exercise of their fellowship relations, also and particularly when there is concern that brethren may have strayed into error. (Compare Ezekiel 33:1-9; Romans 15:1-14; Ephesians 4:1-6; Colossians 3:12-17; 2 Timothy 4:2.) Such admonition directed to a sister church body and the response thereto play a proper role in ascertaining whether that synod has the status of weak brethren or whether it is causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of God's Word.

We repudiate any application of Romans 16:17-18 to those brethren who have misspoken or inadvertently erred, or to those who have the status of weak brethren. In the case of all such, Christian love teaches us rather to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2).

- II. The *skopein* ("keep on watching out for") of Romans 16:17 is an activity whereby believers in Christ are to be constantly alert for those who are causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of God's Word.

We do not believe that *skopein* in the context of Romans 16:17 specifically and directly enjoins admonition. This does not deny that admonition, as enjoined in other passages of Scripture, will normally take place concurrently with the watchfulness that is implicit in the *skopein*.

- III. When it has been ascertained that a church body is causing (*tous poiountas*) divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Holy Scripture, the directive to avoid is as binding as any word addressed to us by our Savior God in Holy Scripture. The apostle's peremptory *ekklinete* ("avoid") is the voice of the Good Shepherd Himself, as He lovingly protects His sheep and lambs from the deception of error and as He graciously gives warning to the false teacher. Continuing in fellowship for any reason with those who are causing divisions and offenses exposes Christians to the dangerous leaven of error, which is contrary to the Lord's saving intent. Romans 16:17-18.

A. We reject any interpretation of Romans 16:17-18 which, in the name of Christian love, would make the avoiding of causers of divisions and offenses contingent upon the subjective judgment that admonition is of no further avail and that an impasse has thereby been reached.

B. We also reject any interpretation of Romans 16:17-18 which in effect states that when a person or church body with whom we are in fellowship causes divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, we mark them immediately, then admonish, and if this proves fruitless, avoid them.

Revised by CLC Board of Doctrine
February 1, 1990

Our 1992 CLC convention declared itself in point #2 as follows: "In order to resolve doctrinal differences it is necessary that previous official false statements and actions be clearly rejected." False teaching is the leaven of which Paul says in Galatians 5:9: "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." Even a little false teaching is dangerous. In the Old Testament every last bit of leaven had to be removed for a proper celebration of the Passover. So also we need to keep on removing the smallest leaven of false doctrine and false practice from our lives, lest it grow and we find ourselves eventually losing God's saving Gospel. False teaching spreads.

There is evidence that the leaven introduced into the WELS and ELS in the fifties has spread. For example, the false principle of termination of fellowship was presented in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* (Winter 1989) in connection with the report of the 1988 convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (ELFK) in East Germany. This convention passed some very strong resolutions. For example: "We hold firmly to the position that Holy Scripture demands of us a clear confession of the truth and a total rejection of all false teaching or toleration of it. Hence we reject all practice of worship and church fellowship with those who persistently teach or tolerate some other doctrine." With the exception of the word "persistently" that can be understood in agreement with the false WELS principle of 1959, we would agree this is a very strong statement in agreement with God's Word. But that same convention of the ELFK made this declaration with reference to its continuing fellowship with the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK): "Because the far-reaching differences in doctrine and practice between our churches continue undiminished, because also through correspondence and discussions the disagreement between us has until now not been able to be removed, and because the SELK *Kirchenleitung* leaves open if and when binding discussions about the disputed doctrinal questions will continue, we can to our regret continue in church fellowship only under protest. . . . Because of our burdened consciences this state of protest can continue only for a limited time. Before making a decision, however, we still want to wait until the 1989 SELK General Pastoral Conference."

Does it not seem that the leaven of the WELS/ELS principle on termination of church fellowship is in evidence here? When we are sure that divisions and offenses are being caused contrary to Bible teaching, why should there be any delay in avoiding the errorists? Is it because we do not yet know whether they are "persistent"? Is it because we do not know how they are going to react to our continued admonition? If CLC representatives rather than WELS representatives had been present at this ELFK convention, would we not have had to advise the ELFK to terminate fellowship with the SELK at once on the basis of Romans 16:17-18? Is this not what God tells us to do in Scripture? When different principles are followed, different actions result.

How can the CLC and WELS/ELS possibly work together in the future unless there is a clear rejection of that which is false? So let us do what the apostle tells us to do in First Thessalonians 5:21-22: "Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." If we are in agreement on what is true and what is false, then we can test various declarations, resolutions, and actions of the past on the basis of our agreement in Scripture. We can hold to what is good and reject what is false, regardless of who was responsible for what was good or what was false. We should not be interested in saving face or preserving someone's reputation when the truth is at

stake.

"This conviction is reinforced by a study of church history." The *Formula of Concord* clearly rejected various statements made by prominent theologians. I don't think Luther was condemned for any statement he made, but many statements of his associates were condemned, statements of Melancthon, Amsdorf, Agricola, Flacius, and others. Their names were not mentioned specifically in the document, but their erroneous statements were clearly rejected. Even some statements of the old church fathers that had been used in support of false teaching were condemned as false. Such a clear rejection of previous false statements has certainly proved to be a blessing to our church.

On the other hand, how damaging it was to the church when the infamous Chicago statement of the forty-four LC-MS theologians in 1945 was allowed to do its work as a leaven without ever being rejected or its authors disciplined! The statement was withdrawn but not rejected, and it is still working as a pernicious leaven even to the present day. This statement insisted that Romans 16:17-18 should not be applied to false-teaching Lutheran church bodies.

As another example, consider the Common Confession of 1950 that was supposedly a doctrinal settlement of the differences between the LC-MS and the American Lutheran Church (ALC). The WELS and the ELS at the time rejected the Common Confession as inadequate. It failed because it did not clearly reject the false statements of the past. Why should we want to repeat this same mistake in the nineties?

Therefore we cannot totally agree with the statement of the WELS commission chairman when he writes: "We do not wish to sit in judgment on people who did what they did in all good conscience in that time of confusion" (letter of August 8, 1990) or the statement of the WELS president when he writes: "We did not want to sit in judgment on those who preceded us" (letter of February 17, 1992). We, of course, dare not sit in judgment on any person's motives or state of faith, but we can and should judge the official statements of a church body to determine whether they can stand in agreement with Scripture or whether they need to be rejected. The leaven of error needs to be removed. (Cf. J. Lau, "Voices from the Past," *Journal of Theology*, March 1992, pp. 31-42.)

Our CLC convention floor committee on doctrine held an open meeting at the convention to give our delegates and visitors a chance to express themselves on our discussions with the WELS/ELS representatives. Over and over again we were warned to be very careful. The thought was expressed by more than one that the WELS and ELS are not the church bodies they used to be. Apparently the leaven of error has been working through these many years since 1959.

We believe, for example, that cooperation with fraternal insurance agencies such as AAL and Lutheran Brotherhood, from which we in the CLC barely escaped by God's grace, seems to be involving the WELS and ELS more and more in seminars and meetings and projects of various kinds that seem to go beyond mere cooperation in externals with false-teaching church bodies. (Cf. J. Lau, "What is Going On?" *Journal of Theology*, December 1991, and "What is Going On? (Revisited)," March 1992.) Pastor Gregory Jackson of the WELS has been warning his fellow-members concerning the church growth movement, which he suggests has been adversely influencing some WELS pastors and congregations. (Cf. his conference paper of April 27-28, 1992, publicized in *Christian News*.)

We have pastors and members in our CLC congregations who have left the WELS or ELS in recent years because of wrong positions taken by their synods or their congregations in various matters. These people have been happy to find agreement with the CLC in doctrine and practice. They tell us that in recent years the WELS and ELS have changed for the worse, and that we need to be on our guard. Many of them feel that protracted discussions with church bodies that deny that there are any doctrinal differences between themselves and us will tend to weaken our convictions and doctrinal position.

For all of the above reasons our committee proposed and the convention accepted the five points of our report printed at the beginning of this article. We conclude by repeating #5: "We thank our Lord for giving us the opportunity both to study God's Word and to give testimony in this area of the doctrine of church fellowship. We pray that the Holy Spirit will use His Word and this testimony to accomplish His will to the glory of God and His saving Gospel."

P A I D E I A

From a Pastor's and Professor's Notebook

Roland A. Gurgel

XVIII

Isaiah

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on thee." Isaiah 26:3.
PERFECT PEACE IN A PERFECT WORLD

Isaiah spends a good deal of time in bringing to the people of this imperfect world the assurance that, when the Savior looms large in heart and mind, there is for them amidst all the turmoil and the ravages of time **perfect peace**. That is not just a vain dream but is firmly built on the power, grace, and promises of God. (Cf. the many preceding articles on Isaiah.) However, to see in Isaiah's prophecies **only** the assurance of **a peace for time, for this world** is to miss the final objective that a gracious and mighty God has for those who are His in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah (rather, God through the pen of Isaiah) reveals in many places and in many ways that there awaits God's children **A PERFECT PEACE IN A PERFECT WORLD**. It is that truth that we wish to enlarge on in this final article based on Isaiah's prophecies. There are many chapters and verses that deal with and refer to this glorious truth. From those chapters we have chosen the 35th chapter.

In the verses of that chapter, the Lord holds before our eyes the perfect world that awaits His children. He permits us to see the perfection of that world in three ways. Perfect peace will be ours in a world of **perfect physical condition**, in a world of **perfect environment**, in a world of **perfect companions**.

One need spend little time on pointing out what sin has brought to man's physical condition in time. The clinics, the hospitals, the nursing homes, etc., testify that perfect health is at best a fleeting thing. Man spends billions of dollars in trying to keep, to regain, to find a perfect body; and eventually it all ends in a return to dust and ashes after suffering to a greater or lesser degree the ravages of sickness and disease.

But Isaiah points out that the grave is not the final end. There awaits the people of God a body untouched by the ravages of sin, a perfect body in eternity. Listen as he writes in chapter 35:5 and 6, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." It is obvious that he is not speaking of the return from the Babylonian exile to an earthly Zion. That return did not cure the physical ills and deformities of Israel. The Zion Isaiah speaks of in verse 10 is the new Jerusalem, the heavenly Zion. There awaits the child of God a body untouched by the ills sin brought in time. Paul speaks of the new condition of man in eternity in his First Letter to the Corinthians in chapter 15, verses 42ff.: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power . . ." PERFECT PEACE IN A

PERFECT WORLD—A WORLD OF A PERFECT, GLORIFIED, AND INCORRUPTIBLE BODY!

Perfect peace for God's people in a **perfect environment**. In this world we are surrounded by an environment that is anything but perfect. The conference of world leaders held in Rio de Janeiro highlighted what has been obvious ever since man fell into sin. The world has been groaning and travailing in pain until now "because the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope" (Rom. 8:20). The devastation of the earth and its resources is the subject of a lot of talk and a little action. The perfect world that came from the Lord during the six days of creation has undergone traumatic changes. We do indeed live in an imperfect world.

The Lord through the pen of Isaiah shows us how different will be the environment in the New Zion, God's new creation for His people after this life. Turn to verse 6 and 7 of chapter 35. No more desert and waste places, no more parched ground, etc., but rather perfect beauty untouched by the curse that sin brought and that sin brings. PERFECT PEACE IN A WORLD OF PERFECT ENVIRONMENT! (Cf. Isa. 65:17-25 for further pictures of this thought.)

Perfect peace in a perfect world—**a world of perfect companions**. Without spending a lot of words on the exegesis of verse 8, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (for details see Lenski's *Eisenach Old Testament Selections* - text for the 27th Sunday after Trinity), let it be noted that the highway spoken of in verse 8 **is not** the highway to heaven but rather is the highway in heaven, the streets and roads of heaven itself. On that highway, on those streets, the streets of holiness, **the unclean shall not pass over**. Only those who have been robed in white, those who have been washed clean in the blood of the Lamb, only those will be found on the "way of holiness." In this world we are surrounded by "the unclean," the unbelievers, the mockers, the unregenerate. They are there as a constant source of temptation. By means of the radio, the television, the printed as well as the spoken word, they pose a danger to us and an unwanted source of evil thought and desire. In the New Jerusalem, the New Zion, no such companions will be found – "the unclean shall not pass over" that highway, those streets; it will be a PLACE OF PERFECT COMPANIONS.

On that highway we will find direct and visible contact with the most perfect of all companions, namely, the Lord Jesus Himself. Instead of reading in verse 8, "it shall be for those," a far better reading (as found in the margin of the AV) might well be, "**for He** [the Lord] **shall be with them**." Together with the gracious Savior God and all His saints, now of perfect body and soul and in an environment untouched by sin, we, God's people, shall live forever in perfect peace. There, no longer walking by faith that at times wavers and flickers and at times loses sight of that God of Peace, but in full view of Him, never to doubt or to despair, we will live FOREVER IN PERFECT PEACE IN A PERFECT WORLD!

It is no wonder that the prophet cries out, "Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, BE STRONG, FEAR NOT; BEHOLD, YOUR GOD WILL COME WITH VENGEANCE, EVEN GOD WITH A RECOMPENSE; HE WILL COME AND SAVE YOU" (Isa. 35:3-4).

(Conclusion)

BOOK REVIEWS

A Bible Study on Man and Woman in God's World, by John F. Brug. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1992. Student's Manual, \$3.50; Leader's Manual, \$4.99.

These recent publications by Northwestern Publishing House are intend-

ed for use in Bible classes in congregations of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). Both the student's manual and the leader's manual contain in an appendix the full text of "Scriptural Principles of Man and Woman Roles" adopted by the WELS convention of 1991.

The reason for the publication of these study guides at this time is stated by the author, Professor John Brug of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, in these words: "There is probably no issue facing the church today which raises more difficulties than the widespread controversy concerning the appropriate, scriptural roles for men and women. This is currently the issue which has the greatest potential to cause serious divisions also in our church body" (*Leader's Manual*, p. v).

Since we are living in this same evil world, the congregations of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) are faced with the same difficulties faced by the congregations of the WELS. Although there is no organized group of women in our congregations clamoring for greater leadership roles for women, as is definitely the case in some other church bodies, there is certainly a great need for us all, both men and women, to study and heed the word of our gracious God on this subject so that we "all speak the same thing" and are "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

Professor Brug's manuals can certainly be of help in our on-going studies of this topic. The first four lessons discuss the principles of man and woman in God's world on the basis of First Timothy 2:1-15 (Lesson 1), Genesis 1-3 (Lesson 2), First Corinthians 11 and 14 (Lesson 3), and various passages illustrating how women served their Lord in Bible times (Lesson 4). Lesson 5 summarizes the truths learned from these Scriptures and presents some guidelines for the application of these principles. Lessons 6-10 apply the principles in the following areas: using the means of grace (Lesson 6), teaching and administration (Lesson 7), church organizations (Lesson 8), marriage (Lesson 9), and society (Lesson 10).

Most of us, no doubt, would find ourselves in basic agreement with almost everything that is presented. This review will concentrate on those areas where we have questions in connection with the exegesis of the passages or the application of the principles.

First Timothy 2:1-15

The *Leader's Manual* says: "Paul says a woman must not teach a man. A woman must not have authority over a man." The Greek text here presents two activities that are improper for Christian women: teaching men and exercising authority over men. Instead of understanding these two phrases as coordinate, some scholars (Professor David Kuske of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, for example) have maintained that the second phrase does not refer to a second prohibition but is merely an explanation of the first. According to this sense, what Paul was saying was this: "I do not permit a woman to teach; that is, what I mean is this, I do not permit a woman to exercise authority over men." The New Evangelical Translation (NET) seems to adopt this way of looking at it: "I do not allow a woman to teach in such a way as to have authority over a man." Professor Brug commends this view.

In the fall of 1991 a number of us here in Eau Claire took the time to study Professor Kuske's arguments in behalf of the explanatory or epexegetical use of the Greek word *otde* in this passage (as presented in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, October 1981, pp. 243-261, and Winter 1991, pp. 64-67). The end result of our studies is that we were not convinced that *otde* should be understood in an epexegetical sense in this passage. Rather, we concluded that there are two separate but interrelated prohibitions here. The first prohibition forbids women from doing the kind of teaching undertaken by a pastor or leader in a worship service or Bible class: that is, the teaching of men. The second prohibition is even broader than the first. It forbids the exercise of any kind of authority of women over men in the church.

We fear that Satan may use the epexegetical *otde* to weaken the true sense of Scripture in this verse. In other words, what may develop from this new exegesis is that the only kind of teaching forbidden to women will be that kind of teaching that is authoritative. It will be argued that women can teach men in the church as long as they can do so in an unauthoritative way. On the other hand, if the second prohibition is only an explanation of the first, then the exercise of authority discussed in this passage has to do only with teaching, and there is no passage in Scripture that definitely prohibits women from exercising authority over men, let us say, in the voters' meeting, where teaching is not involved. Professors Brug and Kuske do not seem to be drawing such conclusions at this time, but we need to be on guard against Satan's intentions. Our little study committee at Eau Claire was convinced that there were no grammatical, contextual, or doctrinal reasons for abandoning the usual sense of *otde* as linking two coordinate prohibitions. (Those who are interested in a summary of the study group's conclusions may contact Prof. C. M. Kuehne.)

Romans 16:1 and First Timothy 3:11

Most translations take the expression in First Timothy 3:11 to refer to the "wives" of the deacons rather than to "women deacons" or "deaconesses." Professor Brug also prefers the translation "wives." It seems to me, however, that it is preferable to see in First Timothy 3:11 (and in Romans 16:1) a reference to women deacons or deaconesses. Such service in the church can well be rendered by women of the congregation in ways that do not at all involve them in teaching men or exercising authority over men. If Paul had wives of deacons in mind rather than deaconesses, it is puzzling that he did not include any special instructions for the wives of the bishops or pastors in First Timothy 3:1-7. But if he had deaconesses in mind, the omission of any reference to women in First Timothy 3:1-7 is understandable. For women to serve as bishops or pastors would have been contrary to the principles set forth by the apostle in First Timothy 2:12.

Church history indicates that women served as deaconesses in Christian congregations from the very earliest times, even as women serve in our congregations today as elementary school teachers, Sunday School teachers, ladies' officers, secretaries, and in other ways as well.

Using the Means of Grace

On page 33 of the *Student's Manual* Professor Brug says: "Women, of course, can share the word with others privately as part of the priesthood of all believers." I am wondering how he understands the word "privately" in this context. Does he mean "privately" rather than out in the open? Or does he mean "privately" in the sense of "as an individual Christian" rather than by reason of some office? Both the words "privately" and "publicly" can be understood in more than one sense.

Our position, as stated in *Concerning Church and Ministry* (p. 25), is that "the ministry of the keys, which is the ministry of the Word, has been committed to the holy Christian Church – therefore to each Christian man, woman and child. Christians are to be personally active in this ministry in every possible way which is not in violation of God's will and ordinance." A Christian woman therefore may very well be called on to make her Christian testimony in a public place (at a grocery store, the hair salon, or the local mothers' club), but she is making this testimony as an individual Christian, not as a spokesman for a Christian congregation.

If she has a call as teacher from the congregation, she is serving in the "public" ministry, whether she does her work openly or behind the scenes. For she is teaching in behalf of the Christians who called her.

Teaching and Administration

In Lesson 7 Professor Brug gives his opinion on many practical ques-

tions of interest also to us. "Question: May a woman teach in the church?" Answer (in part): "A woman should not teach the adult catechetical and Bible classes in which men are involved, except under the most exceptional circumstances." No examples of such exceptions are given.

Another question: "Why don't we let women vote in our church?" Answer (in part): "Only men should cast votes which exercise authority over men." There are other ways of getting the opinions of women members without changing the voters' assembly into an advisory body without any authority, as has been carried out by some congregations. Professor Brug rightly says: "If the men of the congregation are to carry out their headship in a God-pleasing way, they will make sure that they hear and consider the needs of all of the members of the congregation."

Another question, a very practical one also among us: "Wouldn't it be a good idea to have the women participate in the congregational meetings as long as they don't vote?" I think there is good wisdom in Professor Brug's answer: "Women should not participate in the debate in governing bodies of the church."

What about the presence of women at such meetings? When matters of conscience are being discussed, a woman may feel it necessary to get first-hand information on the questions at issue and therefore to be personally present at the voters' meeting. Our voters' meetings are generally open meetings, and anyone is welcome to listen in on the discussion, as is also the case in our synodical conventions.

But should women be urged as a matter of conscience to attend such meetings or be encouraged to attend? Again I think there is wisdom in Professor Brug's answer, and I quote it here in full: "There is no scriptural reason why women cannot be present at congregational voters' or council meetings, but as a regular practice, this may not solve the perceived problem. To be present at such meetings, but to be unable to debate or vote tends to increase frustration and hurt feelings rather than to decrease them. I don't believe it is wise to promote this practice as a way of lessening offense and anger on the part of women who feel excluded from the government of the congregation.

"Congregations that have tried this practice report various degrees of satisfaction. From discussions which I have had in various conferences about this, I am concerned that some of the congregations that have been the most satisfied with this practice have achieved that satisfaction only by removing any restrictions or cautions concerning the participation of the women in debate. This is getting on dangerous ground and caution must be exercised" (*Student's Manual*, pp. 40-41).

In Society

There are many other such practical matters discussed in the last chapters. We shall not take the space to comment on all of them. We encourage our readers to study these matters for themselves. We do, however, wish to make a few comments about the last lesson, which deals with how men and women should apply Scriptural principles to their lives in the everyday world. In this lesson many questions are raised and few answers are given, chiefly because "Scripture does not apply the principles to life in society, as it does to the life of Christians in the family and the church" (*Leader's Manual*, p. 44).

The 1991 WELS statement of Scriptural principles does include a reference to society. Point #5 says: "God ordered these roles for man and woman in his creative plan before he united them in marriage and before they fell into sin (Genesis 2:7,18,22; First Corinthians 11:3,8,9). Therefore God's assigned roles apply beyond the marriage relationship to men and women in every period of history."

I have a hard time understanding what is meant by the statement that God ordered these roles for man and woman **before** He united them in marriage. From Genesis 2 we learn that God united man and woman in marriage immediately after He created woman from the man. Of course I agree

that what God says about the roles of man and woman in First Timothy and First Corinthians applies to unmarried Christians as well as to married Christians. But I am not quite sure how the quoted passages prove the point that God's assignment of different roles to man and woman applies to all men and women in every period of history.

Points #21 and #22 may help us understand. Point #21: "Christians also accept the biblical role relationship principle for their life and work in the world (Ephesians 5:6-17). Christians, however, do not force their morality on the world (First Corinthians 5:12-13) but seek to influence the world by their obedience to the will of God (First Peter 3:6,13-17)."

Point #22: "Scripture leaves a great deal to our conscientious Christian judgment in applying the role relationship principle in the world. Christian love will restrain us from unduly judging brothers and sisters as they apply this principle to their lives in the world."

It seems that much of the debate in the WELS has revolved around this question of how Christians should apply the Scriptural principles in society. We have heard, for example, that the WELS statement seems to say that every woman is subordinate to every man, and that therefore Christian men should not work for women bosses in the world, and that Christian women should not hold positions in the workplace in which they supervise men. Antithesis #13 in the WELS statement speaks to this point as follows: "We reject the opinion that the principle of role relationship means that all women are always subject to all men. Since other biblical principles may also govern relationships, we consider this opinion an exaggeration of the biblical role principle. One of these other principles is, 'We must obey God rather than men!' (Acts 5:29)."

Perhaps it is necessary to discuss these things in our modern world. But it seems almost impossible to come up with any definite answers. For this reason and other reasons as well our CLC pastors will probably not want to distribute the manuals for use in their Bible classes but rather glean what they can from these manuals and then produce their own materials that are suitable for their own situations. Obviously, we in the CLC are not bound by the WELS statement of principles, except insofar as it is in agreement with the Scriptures.

- David Lau

What's Going on Among the Lutherans?, by Patsy A. Leppien and J. Kincaid Smith. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1992. 406 pages, paperback, \$11.99.

In the last few years a number of books have been written by persons who have seen liberal Lutheranism as the apostasy that it is and have separated themselves from that which they formerly promoted. In 1986 Pastor David Barnhart, formerly a pastor in the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and now a pastor in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC), published *The Church's Desperate Need for Revival*, which revealed the antisciptural and immoral theology and practice of the LCA and the American Lutheran Church (ALC), now a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

In 1988 Craig Stanford, then a student at the Fort Wayne seminary of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LC-MS), published *The Death of the Lutheran Reformation*, in which he recalled the kind of antisciptural "education" he had previously imbibed in schools associated with the ELCA.

In 1991 there appeared *Liberalism - Its Cause and Cure* by Dr. Gregory Jackson, formerly an LCA pastor and now a pastor in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), exposing the errors of the historical-critical approach to Bible study as well as of the charismatic movement among Lutherans.

To these valuable and informative witnesses we can now add a fourth, *What's Going on Among the Lutherans?*, a 1992 publication of Northwestern Publishing House, written by a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and one of his members, Pastor J. Kincaid Smith and Mrs. Patsy A. Leppien. Both Pastor Smith and Mrs. Leppien were until very recently participants in liberal Lutheranism. In fact Pastor Smith makes this confession about himself and his colleagues: "In 1973 when I graduated from an LCA seminary in Ohio, I did not believe in the Virgin Birth nor, for that matter, in the bodily resurrection of Christ, and neither did any of my fellow graduates, and certainly none of our professors. . . . In the liberal position I lost my faith in Christ" (pp. 42-43). Mrs. Leppien had been active in an ALC congregation for many years, teaching in Sunday School the "Bethel Series" of adult Bible studies, which she now recognizes as being poisoned by the historical-critical approach to Biblical studies.

This fourth book is probably the most valuable of the four, building on the work of the previous three, because it presents paragraph after paragraph of damaging testimony from various liberal authors in high places in the ELCA. This book is intended for the ordinary reader, not scholars, and it surely ought to be given to any friend or relative in the ELCA who has indicated any kind of discomfort at all with what is being taught in the ELCA. The difference between historical, confessional Lutheranism and the "Lutheranism" of the ELCA is clearly presented by quotations from Scripture, the Lutheran confessions, and current materials produced by the ELCA. An ELCA Christian who reads this book will know what he or she ought to do: get out of that faith-destroying organization. In fact this counsel is clearly given on page 375: "If, after careful research and questioning, a pastor or layman determines that he is, indeed, a member of a heterodox church body or congregation, then he is commanded by God's Word to act according to this knowledge and **depart** (Romans 16:17-18; Matthew 7:15; 2 John 10-11; Acts 20:30-31)."

This 406-page paperback is divided into three sections. Section I sets the historic Lutheran position with Scriptural proof alongside the liberal Lutheran position and points out the vast difference between the two. There are chapters on Bible inspiration, creation, the words of Jesus, the deity of Christ, the new morality, and others. Section II presents historic Lutheranism as distinct from Roman Catholicism, Reformed theology, and pietism. Section III is a historical survey of Lutheranism in America from the earliest settlers in 1634 to the present time.

In a book of this size some inaccuracies are bound to creep in. In a cursory reading I noticed reference to the WELS theologian "August" Hoenecke rather than Adolf. The beginning date of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) is listed as 1955 rather than 1960. Surely it was an oversight that the chart of Lutheran church bodies on pages 340-341 does not supply a downward arrow under the CLC, indicating our continuing existence along with the ELCA, the LC-MS, the WELS, and the ELS.

Actually it is quite remarkable that the CLC is mentioned at all, since some of the other smaller Lutheran church bodies in our land are omitted. Perhaps the reason for our inclusion is that the authors, who are from Saginaw, Michigan, are acquainted with our CLC congregation in Saginaw. The origin of the CLC is presented in these few words on page 323: "When the 1955 WELS Convention postponed action on a resolution to terminate fellowship with Missouri, a group within the synod insisted on an immediate break. When the convention hesitated to sever the bonds of a 90-year fellowship, the dissenting group separated from both the WELS and Synodical Conference and, along with some pastors and congregations of the ELS, formed the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC)." The long-standing difference between the CLC and WELS/ELS on termination of fellowship with heterodox church bodies is not mentioned. C. M. Gullerud and Paul Fleischer of the CLC are quoted in various places in the book, and there are references to *Mark and Avoid* by Pastor Paul F. Nolting, *This Is Your Church*, the authorized history of the CLC, and the *Lutheran Spokesman*, called "the official magazine" of the CLC.

I encourage all of our pastors to buy several copies of this book and

have them on hand to give to persons who are or ought to be troubled by the great apostasy of the ELCA and kindred minds in other church bodies. As Paul Fleischer wrote in the July 1989 *Lutheran Spokesman* (as quoted in this book), "we are alive to witness some of the saddest days in the history of Lutheranism" (p. 354).

- David Lau

BOOK NOTICE

Northwestern Publishing House of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has recently published the following interesting and useful paperbacks:

Baptized into God's Family, by A. Andrew Das, is a 1991 publication that presents and defends the Bible doctrine of infant baptism. There are chapters on the need for baptism, the power of baptism, Christ's command concerning baptism, a comparison of baptism with circumcision, examples of baptism in the Bible, and the testimony of early Christians. Pastors wanting to give a simple, thorough, and well-written presentation on infant baptism to adult prospects who have difficulty with this doctrine should welcome this book.

Face the Facts, by James Aderman, is a 1992 presentation of the sexual facts of life for young people. Christian pastors and parents certainly may have differences of opinion on when and to what extent such facts should be made available to young people. This particular guide combines helpful and up-to-date medical and scientific information with God's clear Scriptural teaching. Homosexuality, lust, and abortion are presented as sinful. The Gospel of forgiveness in Christ is offered to all who are troubled by past sexual sins of various kinds. Each chapter ends with prayer. Other books along this line have been written. This one seems better than the others I have examined.

To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People, by various authors, is an interesting account of the various world missions supported by the Wisconsin Evangelical Synod (WELS) during the 100 years from 1892 to 1992. In 1892 mission work was begun among the Apache Indians in Arizona. Other areas evangelized by WELS missionaries since that time include Poland, Nigeria, Japan, Central Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Mistakes, differences of opinion, and disappointing setbacks are reviewed together with amazing "coincidences" and providential opportunities. Of special interest to CLC readers will be the reports on Japan, Nigeria, and India, where our church body also has been involved in Gospel ventures. Certainly all of our readers specifically involved in world missions will profit from a careful reading of this 340-page volume.

- David Lau