



Steadfast

In the Word and Faith



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Postal Address: Box 692, Kingaroy, Q. 4610.

Editor: Pastor G L Winter – glwelcr@bigpond.net.au

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What Luther Says About Mission



The Best Work. The very best of all works is that the heathen have been led from idolatry to the knowledge of God. SL 7, 1170

Begin at Home. The noblest and greatest work and the most important service we can perform for God on earth is bringing other people, and especially those who are entrusted to us, to the knowledge of God by the holy Gospel. SL 13 a, 784 f

Mission Work Is Christlike. The Lord wants to say: You have received enough from Me — peace and joy and everything you ought to have; personally you need no more. Therefore work now, look at what I have done, and imitate it. My Father has sent Me into the world for your sake alone, in order to help you, not to benefit Myself. This I have done; I have died for you and have given you all I am and have. Therefore you should think and act in like manner. Henceforth spend your lives serving and helping everyone; otherwise you would have nothing to do on earth, for through faith you have enough of everything. Therefore I send you into the world as My Father has sent Me, that is, that every Christian may instruct and teach his fellow man also to come to Christ. SL 11, 730

Go, Tell Others. After we have learned to know God in His Son and have received the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit, who endues hearts with joy and with the peace of soul by which we look with contempt on sin and death, what remains to be done? Go, and do not be silent. You are not the only one to be saved; the remaining multitude of men should also be preserved. SL 2, 1711f

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Devotion — Romans 1:16,17 (Part 1)

v.16. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Frederick the Great was a lover of human reason, philosophy, and an open scoffer of the Truth of the Word of God. He was a very capable, and ruthless, general and monarch. He successfully defended Prussia against the whole of Europe, setting the course for the establishment of modern Germany.

On one occasion Frederick the Great invited some notable people to his royal table, including his top-ranking generals. One of them by the name of Hans von Zieten declined the invitation because he wanted to partake of communion at his church. Some time later at another banquet Frederick and his guests mocked the general for his religious scruples and made jokes about the Lord's Supper. In great peril of his life, the officer stood to his feet and said respectfully to the monarch, 'My lord, there is a greater King than you, a King to whom I have sworn allegiance even unto death. I am a Christian man, and I cannot sit quietly as the Lord's name is dishonoured, His character belittled, and His cause subjected to ridicule. With your permission I shall withdraw.'

The other generals trembled in silence, knowing that von Zieten might be killed. Frederick got the title 'Great' because of his ruthlessness and determination, so there was good reason to fear. But to their surprise, Frederick grasped the hand of this courageous man, asked his forgiveness, and requested that he remain. He promised that he would never again allow such a travesty to be made of sacred things.

He was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

Now, never think the life of the ministers of the Word is easy; let alone the work of the Apostle. Hear Paul account the many trials he bore for the sake of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:24-28):

In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness;

beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

And yet, what does he say about his suffering, his persecution for Christ?

V.10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong. (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

And they are not alone. Many thousands have taken their stand with Christ, lived with Him, for Him and under Him. The Old Testament, the New Testament, church history are full of the valiant witnesses of Christ who chose to take their stand under the banner of His cross. They were burned alive, thrown to hungry animals, cut in two, tormented, abused, impaled, crucified for the confession of Christ, yet they were not ashamed. They died valiantly and now enjoy their crown of glory with their Saviour above.

They were not ashamed of Christ. What about you?

1. In answering this question, we must first of all ask: What is the Gospel of Christ?
2. Only when we truly know what the Gospel of Christ is, can we truly understand why we need not be ashamed about it, but can rather like Paul glory in it.

(Part I):

What is the Gospel of Christ? The Greek word for Gospel is 'euangelion', derived from two words, 'eu' = good, as in the English words euphoria, a feeling of well-being, or eulogy, a speech in praise of the dead. The second Greek word and 'angelo', to proclaim, news. So when you put the two together, you get 'good' 'news', euangellion, the Gospel. Therefore the Gospel is the good news, the good news of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11:

'Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand,

by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;

and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures;

and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve;

after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

After that He was seen of James, then of all the apostles.

And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Therefore, whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.'

Paul knew that the Gospel of Christ was no human invention, no idealistic or self-serving man-made philosophy. He had once sincerely believed that he was better than others; that his own righteousness could stand before God. He was well educated, intelligent, zealous, hard-working, admired and respected by his peers. A man who had prospered, and stood to gain immensely from worldly philosophy, human approval. A man who had attained to the pinnacle of human excellence, who could have won for himself power, riches, respect, prominence. A man consumed by his own self-righteousness. And yet the Gospel of Christ had changed him.

Paul had been consumed by his own arrogant pride, his quest for self-righteousness. But the Gospel of Christ destroyed in his heart the myth of his own righteousness and replaced it with God's righteousness.

'Here is where the greatness of the Gospel is clearly seen. It provides for us what we could never provide for ourselves. On our own merits we all stand condemned before the Almighty. Who is there who would dare to say, 'I am good enough to go to heaven?' As someone has said,

'A clear conscience is the result of a poor memory.'

The only people who think they are good enough to go to heaven are the people who don't know how bad they really are! Righteousness is what we need but do not have. Therefore God, knowing that we could never be righteous on our own, has provided a righteousness which comes down to us from heaven above. It's not earned or deserved, but is given to us by God as a free gift.

2 Corinthians 5:21: **'For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.'**

All of our sins were laid on the sinless, holy Son of God, Jesus Christ. 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.' It was solely the grace of God, His undeserved mercy, which moved Him to send His only Son into the world. **'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing (counting) their trespasses unto them.'**

2 Corinthians 5:19. God is moved by His grace, which has been merited for us by Christ. Romans 3:23, 24: **'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'**

Romans 3:28: **'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law.'**

Philippians 3:9: **'and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'**

Martin Luther had a great struggle with Romans 1:17: **'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.'** How could the righteousness of God be Gospel, good news? The holiness of God, His righteousness, His perfection, only condemned him, he felt. In fact, he admitted that he hated God. How could you love someone Whose righteousness condemns man to everlasting perdition in hell?

No wonder his spiritual struggle, as no matter how hard he tried, he could not even keep the First Commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and mind.' But it was then that the Holy Spirit revealed to him the truth of these words, 'The just shall live by faith.' The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. It is through faith that man is saved.

Ephesians 2:8, 9: **'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.'**

—TJW.

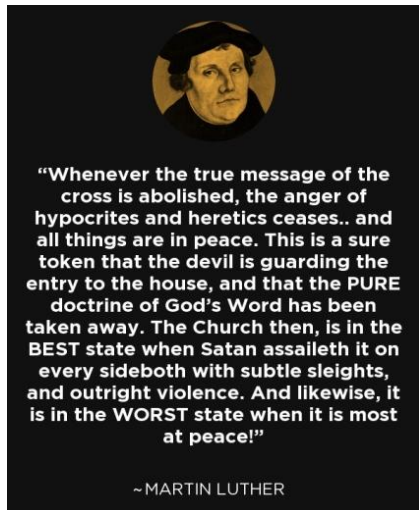
Following the Biblical Faith of our Fathers

FOUR VITAL LESSONS

BIBLICAL WARNING

1 Cor.10:11, ‘Now **all these things happened** unto them for **ensamples** (*Greek*: warning examples): and they are written for our **admonition**¹ (*Greek*: loving confrontation involving admonition or encouragement in order by faith to bring about Godly changes in their life), upon whom the ends of the world are come.’ These incidents (1 Cor.10:1-10) from the journey of the Israelites in the wilderness serve for all time, also for us today in these last days, as a **warning example**. The same Lord directs our affairs that ordered theirs; and if we sin as they did, we also must expect to be severely punished. If by God's grace we repent then, then we will be pardoned by the blood and righteousness of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. There is contained here a powerful warning to learn from these examples taken from Biblical history or else we are doomed to repeat them.

As we briefly study, during this 50th Anniversary Year of our ELCR, the *Biblical lessons* that Christ wants us *earnestly* to take to heart from the tragic downfall of our once orthodox ELSA (later ELCA), let us out of love to Jesus for His work of redemption and for the gracious treasure of His Word, take note of four points in particular, which the late Pastor Kleinig, as a Biblical historian of the highest order, repeatedly taught that if observed by the pastors and lay people, the corrupt Union of 1966 would never have occurred.



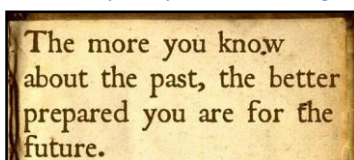
[1] Pure doctrine (2 Tim.4:2) and especially the ‘whole counsel of God’ (Acts 20:27) must constantly be taught. If the correct **distinction between Law and Gospel** had been properly taught there would have been more true Christians who loved God's Word and who would have absolutely refused to depart from it. If especially **those doctrines which divided the two churches** (and they were many as Pastor Gavin Winter has shown in *How Are The Mighty Fallen*) were clearly taught and the **seriousness of the errors shown**, then faithful Lutheran Christians would never have wanted to endanger their souls by being exposed to them.

[2] The Scripture doctrine of Church Fellowship must be thoroughly known both by pastors and lay people. The great majority of people knew very little about it. They saw the Union as an opportunity to ‘become a larger church so that we might have more prestige before the world’; others saw it as a way of saving money, for example, instead of



having two seminaries, now we only have one; still others had the carnal and ‘millennialistic view’ that now they could make a bigger impact and convert the majority of people to Lutheranism. But Holy Scripture teaches that **church fellowship can only take place where there is complete agreement in God's Word in doctrine and practice**. Christ Himself says

in John 8:31,32: ‘If ye continue (*Greek*: constantly believe, obey and live according to it) in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed (*Greek*: truly); and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ Again Jesus instructs us in Matt.7:15, ‘Beware of (*Greek*: Constantly be guarding yourself against) false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing (*Greek*: appearing gentle and innocent), but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.’



[3] A thorough knowledge of the history of the Christian Church as well as of the Lutheran Church (particularly here in Australia) is absolutely vital. In Rom.15:4 we learn: ‘**For whatsoever things were written aforetime** (*Greek*: ‘in earlier times’, in the Old Testament) **were written for our learning** (*Greek*: instruction), that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope (*Greek*: ‘so that through patient endurance and the encouragement arising from the Scriptures we might have hope and overflow with confidence in His

¹ The full meaning of the usage of this Greek word involves “**lovingly confronting people with God's Word out of deep concern for their soul's salvation so that by faith in Christ those changes in their life that God requires are brought about.**”

promises.’). ‘This text teaches that whether referring to doctrine or history the Bible, therefore, is the teacher, the instructor, of the Church after Christ as well as before Christ. The late Prof. Koch (himself a brilliant teacher of church history) constantly reminded his students that ‘*history has the habit of repeating itself*’ and ‘*whoever will not learn from the mistakes made in history is doomed to repeat them.*’ The great majority of people in our old church knew very little about the history of the two churches. If they did they would have known that in the former UELCA none of the doctrinal differences had been resolved and that they were masters of applying the evil ‘Open Questions’ principle, agreeing to disagree agreeably in matters of differing doctrines.

“Hebrew is the best language of all...no one can really understand Scripture without it.”

-Martin Luther

[4] It is vital that our pastors (as well as our lay people who can study them) thoroughly know the two original languages of the Bible, the Old Testament Hebrew and the New Testament Greek, and how to apply them in a practical manner.

The most crucial text which was perverted was Rom16:17,18: ‘Now I beseech you (*Greek: I beg of you, please*), brethren, mark them (*Greek: be keeping a watchful eye ever open for those*) which cause (*Greek: keep on teaching error in spite of instruction*) divisions and offences (*Note: error causes a division in the church and is at the same time a scandal, a stumbling block, a death trap, that which endangers another's soul*) contrary to (*Greek: alongside of; beside the Truth they bring their error as well*) the doctrine which ye have learned (*Note: the entire doctrine of Scripture*); and avoid them (*Note: have no church or prayer fellowship with them*). For (*Greek: gives the reason why false teachers are to be marked and avoided*) they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly (*Greek: inner evil desires*) [in persistently adhering to error such false teachers are not serving Christ in that point, but are slavishly following their own sinful desires.]. Once this text was perverted *error flooded into the church and there was no way to discipline errorists.* Now, instead of having no church fellowship or union with all persistent false teachers, the new and false position arose that unless you could prove someone to be a non-Christian you had to have fellowship with them. There are many other Bible texts that were corrupted due to a lack of knowledge of the original Hebrew and the Greek.

Dear brethren and sisters of the ELCR, in the Name of Christ who shed His holy precious blood for us, I beg of you, **let us all faithfully learn this wisdom** and never forget it. *Our future* as an orthodox (right teaching) faithful church body depends on it. It is absolutely vital to our *God-given task* of leading lost souls to Christ and their remaining with Christ. Then such wisdom will truly be of great blessing to us as we learn in Prov. 24:13,14: ‘My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the (*Heb.:* drippings of the) **honeycomb**, which is sweet to thy taste (*Note: This example of honey is used as a figure of speech to praise the loveliness and agreeableness of true Biblical wisdom.*): so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul (*Heb.:* ‘know that Biblical wisdom rightly applied is such to your soul’, that is, it will be full of rich nourishment and well worth acquiring.): when thou hast found it, then there shall be a (*Heb.:* happy future and a blessed) reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off (*Heb.:* Your hope is not destroyed) (*Note: The future will show that the acquiring of such wisdom was well worth while.*).

Why Still The Division?

(Continued from May- June Steadfast 2016.)

(Translation of old Orthodox Lutheran Works)

(By Dr. W. Janzow, the General President of our former ELSA [Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia]; Taken from *The Australasian Theological Review* (1931-32) where he points out the **real differences between our old church and the UELCA** (United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia) which were **never settled** before the Union in 1965 and **were cunningly compromised with clever double talk in the Theses of Agreement.**)

THESIS ONE: It is God's will that we Christians in matters of faith adhere firmly, steadfastly to the pure doctrine of God's Word in all its parts in word and actions. That is crucial for us.

The False Doctrine Of The United Church²

UELCA Theses 3 on the Doctrine of Inspiration



Thesis Three reads: ‘**This does not exclude the presence of irregularities attached to the outward form of God’s Word, due to the fact that the Holy Ghost spoke through holy men to whose human imperfections He condescended to accommodate Himself. This applies especially to the present-day text corrupted by copyists and other adverse circumstances as well as to translations based on the aforementioned text.’**

Apparently as a consequence of this and of the previous thesis rest the basis for the following (false, BLW) position: As God's Word, the water of life, the living source, proceeded from the heart of the great and perfect God, also from there came the external form of God's Word perfect and completely free from error and from any other ‘irregularities’. But **when He transmitted this Word to men** God Himself relied on human channels who indeed, as it is commonly known, were afflicted **with imperfections, weaknesses and infirmities** (weasel words for errors, BLW), then it unfortunately happened that by going through this process **human weaknesses and infirmities** (weasel words for errors, BLW) were attached to the outward form of the Word. Hence it has occurred that **the world has not acquired God's Word in Holy Scripture in its original perfection**, but rather is infected with unfortunate ‘irregularities’, the product of the holy human writers. The Holy Spirit is absolutely not at fault for this; He has only ‘**condescended to accommodate**’ Himself for this purpose. He has permitted these fatal ‘irregularities’ as He has already permitted so much other misfortune in the world.

Should we be satisfied with this? Shouldn't we here agree with this thesis and immediately take back the abovementioned judgment of censure³ and humiliatingly eat humble pie? — **By no means!** For behind this seemingly pious speech hides the **unbelief** which preserves at any price **its little foundation of man's ideas of the ‘irregularities’** and wants to promote the recognition of a false favourite theory **without** having provided the only valid distinguishing mark of truth, **clear Scriptural proof** for it. But Holy Scripture makes it the **sacred, indispensable duty for every teacher of the Church** to provide the **proof from God's Word for his teaching**; for it stands written in God's Word, ‘**If any man speaks (in the church), let him speak as the Word of God.** (Luther's Translation)’⁴ (1 Pet.4:11).

But where in Holy Scripture is it taught that the external form (the actual verbally inspired and written words, BLW) of God's Word is ‘infected with irregularities’? Where in the Bible does it stand written that this ‘abuse’ is due to the fact that God has spoken through ‘holy men’?⁵ Where are the Scripture passages which tell us that this has occurred due to the ‘**human imperfections to which the Holy Spirit condescended to accommodate Himself**’? **Nowhere!** Thus, in these theses (of the UELCA) there is nothing to do with the divinely revealed Truth, but rather it deals with **human fantasy** that has no counterpart in reality, yes, with a **false doctrine** which passes off ‘human wisdom’ as divine Truth. Moreover, Scripture teaches the **exact opposite**, because when the apostle says of his writings, ‘**Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth**’ (1 Cor.2:13), then in these words **he ascribes also the external form of the words to the authorship of the Holy Spirit while stressing at the same time its divine perfection** and so brands the Third Thesis (of the UELCA) as the perpetrating⁶ the criticizing of the Word of God as false and completely reprehensible and unacceptable.

(ATR, 1932, pages 8,9. To Be Continued; italicised emphasis is Janzow's; some paragraphs shortened. Next time Dr. Janzow deals with the UELCA's Thesis Four on the Doctrine of Inerrancy.) BLW.

SPECIAL NOTE.

In his 1972 Fellowship Day Essay *Pastor Kleinig* correctly explained what these false teachers meant by ‘**Irregularities attached to the outward form of God’s Word**’.

² Another name by which the UELCA (United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia) was known in those days.

³ severe disapproval.

⁴ KJV: ‘**If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles** (in accordance with the divinely inspired Word) **of God.**’

⁵ 2 Pet.1:21, ‘**Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**’ This verse teaches that the very words of Holy Scripture in the original manuscripts are the very Word of God.

⁶ Perpetration means to commit a harmful or anti-Scriptural action.

He wrote: 'By this they mean **errors in the written form of God's Word**, namely, errors in the Bible. They go on to say that these errors are due to the "imperfections" of the "holy men", meaning such things as lack of modern scientific education, primitive world-views, etc. Since there were no better-educated men around in those far-off days, and yet God wanted mankind to know His Word of salvation, the Holy Spirit had to condescend to accommodate Himself to the "imperfections" of the "holy men", just like we, if we want to chop some wood, but have for our use only a **badly blunted and gapped axe to cut the wood, we have to make the best of it**. And that the writers of the theses are referring not only to copies of the original manuscripts, but to the original manuscripts themselves, concerning which St. Paul wrote: "**ALL Scripture is given by INSPIRATION OF GOD,**" is plainly shown by their using the word "especially". So, according to these "theologians" also the original manuscripts, written by the "holy men", are not without "irregularities", i.e., without errors.' (Emphasis added. BLW.)

Learning from Luther - The Christian Cross

The Christian cross is one of the greatest and most necessary blessings that God has given to His dear children. Those who refuse to bear their cross cannot be true Christians. Jesus said, 'He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.' (Matt. 10:38). We need the cross because we are still in the flesh. 'If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?' (Heb. 12:7). We also need it because it is a means by which God works His power in us. Paul writes, 'Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.' (2 Cor. 12:9-10). And we further need the cross because it is a means by which God brings others to Christ through us. It was said of the early church that 'the blood of the martyrs became the seeds of the church.' Paul writes, 'For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.' (2 Cor. 4:11-12). In this article, Martin Luther shows us the essential nature of the Christian cross and how best to bear our cross.

Luther points out that the Christian cross is essential to our calling. 'As Christ was, so are we in this world.' (1 John 4:17). As we are partakers of His glory, so must we be of His sufferings. 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.' (2 Tim. 2:12). 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory'. (2 Cor. 4:17). 'But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.' (1 Pet. 4:13). Luther writes, 'Remember, belief in Christ necessitates confession of Him, and the entire Christian church is numbered in the holy, divine

calling that stands for the praise of God and the promotion of His kingdom. An essential feature of this calling is the suffering of evil in return for good. It seems inevitable that Christians be condemned in the eyes of the world and incur its highest displeasures; that they be destined to take up the gauntlet against the devil and the world. It is said (Ps. 44:22): 'For Thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter,' or for the sacrifice. Sacrificial sheep were kept in an enclosure, not permitted to go to pasture with the others. They were not kept for breeding, but to be daily, one after another, slaughtered.

'What will you do, beloved Christians? Will you live in the world and not encounter any persecution because of your good deeds? Understand, you are called to suffer persecutions; they are a consequence of your baptism, your Christianity. For these you renounced the devil and professed Christ. You are baptized unto the suffering of every sort of misfortune, unto the enduring of the world and the devil. You cannot escape the smoke when compelled to live in the inn where the devil is host and the whole house is filled with it. Again, if you would have fire, you must have smoke as a consequence; if you would be a Christian and a child of God, you must endure the resultant evils that befall you.

'In short, the Christian, because he is a Christian, is subjected to the holy and precious cross. He must suffer at the hands of men and of the devil, who plague and provoke him; outwardly with misery, persecution, poverty and illness, or inwardly – in heart – with their poisonous darts. The cross is the Christian's sign and watchword in his holy, precious, noble and happy calling unto eternal life. To such a calling must we render full dues and regard as good whatever it brings.' (*Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. VII, Ed. Eugene F. A. Klug, pp. 250-251)

Luther further points out how best to bear our Christian cross. He writes, 'First, we must know the enemy and realize his purpose; second, we must be armed to meet him and defend ourselves, that we may stand before him and conquer. He is a terrible, mighty foe... He cannot bear to see you Christ's. He thinks and plots about nothing else than your overthrow. And think not that he is far from you, or that he will pursue you from a distance. He has encamped close to you and right around you; yea, in your own territory—that is, in your flesh and blood. There he seeks how to reach you, and overtake you when unguarded, attempting now this, now that. Misguided faith, doubt, anger, impatience, covetousness, evil passions, etc., are points of attack - any place where he finds an opening or discovers that you are weak. Therefore, think not that he is simply jesting. He is more furious and hungry than a famished and angry lion. He does not purpose merely to wound or prick you, but wholly to consume you, so that nothing of body or soul will remain.

'Whoever would withstand such a foe must be equipped with other armour and weapons than those furnished by human wit and understanding, by human powers or ability. Your defence is nothing else, says Peter, than faith, which holds and grasps God's Word. And because the believer holds fast to this, the devil can gain nothing. It is God's truth and power before which, with his lying and murdering, he cannot stand; he must yield and flee. Therefore Ephesians 6:16 says: 'Taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one'. If you

would withstand these wiles, there can be no other plan or counsel than this: Fight with God's Word in firm faith... Keep in mind both your former misery and your present treasures of grace. Remember how you were once under God's wrath when, without fear of God and without faith, you were the devil's own, subject to all his will, and must have perished had not God, in boundless goodness, forgiven you your sin and bestowed on you his grace... If you experience weakness and suffer want, you are bidden to call upon him, certain that he will hear you. The promise is: 'If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in my name' John 16:23. Also: 'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you' John 15:7. (*Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. VIII, Ed. Eugene F. A. Klug, pp. 85-87)

May our dear heavenly Father cause us to retain and remember these excellent truths as we encounter our own crosses for His sake. May we realize that our sufferings are essential to our Christian calling. 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.' (1 Peter 4:12). May we also know and understand that our 'adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour' (1 Pet. 5:8). And finally, may we defend ourselves with steadfast faith in the promises of God's Word. 'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.' (Rev. 12:11). —S Wood.

Greetings to the Fiftieth Anniversary Fellowship Day of the ELCR

Dear Pastor Bryce and Barbara,

We wish we were there for the Fellowship Day this coming weekend! We have sent in the mail a check to be included in the Fellowship offering that day. I know it will not get there on that date as it was just posted today and I am sorry about that but know you can facilitate our wish.

We want to be included in the number of ELCR members who are so grateful that there have been pastors who have studied to show themselves approved rightly dividing the Word--Law and Gospel. When we listen to what is going on in our news today and know how similar the conditions are here as they have been in times past, we feel so sorry for family and friends who don't have a clue what is happening and aren't interested in knowing it seems.

It was so good to hear Jess in the recordings that you sent here. It was like hearing Pastor Kleinig again, who, of course, I only heard on recordings also. Mr. Stenske talks of a church which was just around the corner from where we live here in Woodland Hills. Of course that church was in trouble and the Stenskes then had home church and that was back in the 70's. I am hoping to see his 'open letter' that he would send out and he said he would get no response from it.

Do hope you all are doing well. Dan and I are both showing our age now. Thanks so much for suggesting Psalms to memorize. Psalm 100 and 121 were easy compared to the long Psalm 31. I had to take that one in segments.

May our Lord bless your Fellowship Day--our love to all,

Dan and Kathy.

The Chairman, ELCR.

Dear Sir,

It is with much pleasure that we send our greetings to the ELCR as you thank God and celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of your existence.

Pastor B. Winter requested that we contribute some information to you for this occasion as we are under the 'Spiritual Care' of the ELCR.

My wife and I and two of our children left the LCA in 1997 over the matter of that Church joining the Australian Council Of Churches. We believed that this decision of the LCA was clearly against the Word of God as found in 2 Cor. 6: 14-18.

Some time later we joined the AELC and spent 10 years there before that came to an untimely end. In this time we came to know of the existence of the ELCR and came into contact with you through Paul Winter, who we purchased books from. These books were a real eye-opener. The material was not only as we had been taught to believe and understand, but also an introduction to doctrines we had never heard of or understood.

Undoubtedly one of the most crucial matters was that concerning the organized Church in that all members speak with the same tongue and believe the same thing, so that there is no dissension. For this to occur there can be no room whatsoever for disastrous policies like the 'Evil Open Questions', as in the LCA, where one person can hold a certain position on any given doctrine and another person can hold an entirely different one on the same matter and nothing be done about it because that is in line with what is expressed in their Theses Of Agreement. This means that they can 'agree to disagree agreeably'. However this is plainly sinful because their opinions then become an individual viewpoint and not that of God. If this situation arises then the Doctrine of Church Fellowship and any subsequent Church discipline should be observed. In an orthodox Church it would be.

What has happened in the LCA in recent years is a salutary reminder to the ELCR to be wary of not following their lead. We have witnessed tragic convulsions such as an abdication in certain quarters to the Doctrine of Justification through faith - the doctrine that binds all other doctrines together.

The present controversy regarding the ordination of women is tearing apart what is left of the LCA, in spite of feeble and pathetic injunctions to maintain unity. This matter should send a very clear message to all that if we pick and choose what parts of the Bible we will accept and what parts we will reject then we have had it. We cannot fall into the temptation of thinking we know what is better for us than God does.

We thank God that in our dealings with the ELCR we have found unity of purpose and action and that God's Word is taught in all its truth and purity, which Scripture demands.

May God bless you all.

With Christian greetings - Phil & Rosalie Lienert.

Report of Convention 2016

Notes and News

Hospital: The following have spent some time in hospital recently:

. May they find

comfort with these words from *Starck's Prayer Book*.

The Believing Christian Prays God to Govern and Guide Him.

EXHORTATION.

Teach me Thy way, O Lord; I will walk in Thy truth. Unite my heart to fear Thy name. Ps. 86,11.

This life is nothing else than a journey. We enter upon it at our birth; and when we die, the journey is ended together with our life, and we pass into eternity. The question is: On what way are we travelling during this life? If we are travelling a good way, the way of faith and the fear of God, our journey ends in the glory of heaven. If we walk on the broad way, the way of unbelief, malice, wickedness, our journey will end in hell, in eternal damnation.

When a Christian ponders these facts, he should (1) picture to himself two ways which lie before him in this life, the narrow way which leads to heaven, and the broad way which leads to hell. But he should with all diligence pursue the way to heaven. (2) In order that he may enter and remain on the narrow way, he should pray God to govern and to guide him. (3) If he prays God for

His holy guidance and direction, he must not look around to see how the children of this world live and on what ways they are travelling; for if he undertakes to follow them, God's Spirit ceases to guide him ; yea, He departs from him.

(4) Now, just as a traveller needs a guide to show him the right way, so a believing Christian needs the Spirit of God to show him the right way in which he should walk. To this end, however, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart is necessary, that it may be said of the Christian: 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' 1 Cor. 3, 16. If we have this trusty Guide in us and with us, He will also regulate our thoughts, our lips, our senses, and our desires. (5) A believing Christian does not resist this holy rule, nor does he resist the Holy Spirit, but he suffers himself to be led, encouraged, and guided, and is confident that he will be safely guided here in time and hereafter in eternity. O blessed guidance! Happy is he who has God for his guide. (*Starck's Prayer Book, pp 180-181.*)

