



Steadfast

In the Word and Faith



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What Luther Says About Monasticism



Luther Once a Zealous Monk. It is true, I was a pious monk, and so strictly did I observe the rules of my order that I may say: If ever a monk got to heaven through monasticism I, too, would have got there. To this all my associates in the cloister, who knew me, will bear witness. If this life had lasted longer, I would have martyred myself to death with vigils, praying, reading, and other labor. SL 19, 1845

The Chief Abomination of Monasticism. This is the chief abomination: we had to deny the grace of God and put our trust and hope on our holy monkery and not on the pure mercy and grace of Christ, as we had promised and begun to do in Christian Baptism. For relying on works in order thereby to be justified and sanctified is in reality denying God's grace, as St. Paul clearly says (Gal. 5:4):

‘Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from grace...’ Now it is obvious that when one removes this trust and confidence from monkery . . . its head is lopped off, and it is done for. SL 19, 1864

There Is a Monk in An of Us. Every one of us is carrying a large monk in his bosom, that is, all of us desire to do the kind of work which would make it possible for us to glory: Behold, this I have done; today I have satisfied God by my praying, by welldoing; therefore I shall be more at ease in my heart. SL 5, 438

A Normal, Domestic Life Is Better. Let monks and nuns boast of their works. Let a married man be satisfied properly to preside over his household. Let the wife be satisfied to care for the children by feeding, washing, and putting them to sleep; to obey her husband and diligently take care of domestic matters. These activities exceed by far the works of all nuns, of which they nonetheless are so amazingly proud. SL 1, 1165

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Devotion — John 10:27, 28

v.27. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

v.28. and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.



He one shepherd unites the flock under his own leadership. Christians are united into an invisible fellowship as they become one with Christ through faith – they are united in confession (creed), they are united in Word (accepting the Bible as the written Word of God), they are united in the holy Sacraments. ‘I and the Father are one’, Christ says. Though Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three distinct Persons, each possessing full omnipotent power and majesty, yet there is only one God. And Christ’s sheep are likewise united together into the one flock.

True love in marriage impels lovers to closeness, but true love also drives the performance of acts of love. In a true marriage, husband and wife want nothing but to be together and serve one another in love. Just so, united through faith in Christ, Christians want nothing but to serve the Lord. ‘Hear my voice, and follow Me,’ Jesus says of His sheep.

Now some people may come along and say, ‘Well, I love God very, very much.’ But what does it mean to love God? 1 John 5:3: **‘This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.’** Many claim love for God, but they don’t even obey God. The Bible says (2 Timothy 2:15), **‘Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.’** They don’t study. ‘I love God, I just don’t study.’ It’s a pretty shallow sick love if it doesn’t obey.

Many stand up and say, ‘O how I love Jesus.’ Oh really, you do? How much do you love Him? ‘Well I love Him, I love Him.’ Do you love Him enough to come to church regularly? Do you love Him even to read His Word daily? Do you love Him enough to contribute to the needs of His kingdom? Do you desire communion with Him enough that you regularly pray? Does your love for the Lord stand the test?

Being a disciple means taking up one’s cross. **‘And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.’** (Luke 14:27). So count the cost. Are you prepared to give everything up for Christ? Are you prepared to follow wherever He leads? Remember, that is one of the characteristics of His sheep, they hear His voice and follow.

This point was illustrated well by an incident from World War One. Some Turkish soldiers tried to steal a flock of sheep from a hillside near Jerusalem. The shepherd, who had been sleeping, awoke to find his flock being driven off. He couldn’t recapture them by force, so he called out to his flock with his distinctive call. The sheep listened, and returned to their rightful owner. The soldiers couldn’t stop the sheep from returning to their shepherd’s voice. They knew their master’s voice. They trusted his voice and knew to follow when he called.

But here is a comforting truth. Our Good Shepherd always leads wherever He calls us. He goes before us to prepare the way, then calls us forth to follow Him. He will never lead us anywhere He Himself has not gone before. Hebrews 4:15: **‘For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.’** John 12:26: **‘If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be.’** He calls out to each of us individually, one by one. The shepherd does not call out the whole flock, but each sheep individually. He knows each of them by name. **‘The Lord knoweth them that are His.’** 2 Tim. 2:19.

He knows your name, he knows your address, He knows all of your needs and wants. But most importantly, He knows what is both good and harmful for your faith from the perspective of all eternity. So when He calls, know He is with you, know that He is watching over you.

Our Good Shepherd paid the ultimate price – giving Himself into death to defend us from the power of the hellish wolf, the devil. He paid a price to His Father to purchase our release, a ransom payment to be released from eternal prison. He has bought us, bought us with the precious price of His innocent suffering and death. Therefore we really belong to Him, are His own. He has bought us for service to Him, but there is also a gracious reward promised: ‘And I give unto them eternal life.’ And then He seals this promise. ‘They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.’ Some hands are weak, others strong. But whose hands are these? These are the hands of the Man Who, at His baptism, was declared to be

God's beloved Son, in Whom the Father is well pleased. These are the hands of the Man Who took on the devil, face to face in the wilderness and Who conquered Him through the power of His Word alone. These are the hands of the Man Who, by uttering nothing more than the words from His mouth, stilled the storm on the Sea of Galilee. These are the hands of the Man Who raised Lazarus from the dead after he had been lying there for four days. These are the hands of the Man Who ultimately conquered sin and Satan by His death on the cross, Who conquered death itself when He rose from the dead after three days.

These are the hands of the Man Who, ascending into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father. He rules and reigns over all things, and promises to return in judgment on the Last Day. He is the Man Who will execute eternal judgment on all Who reject Him, but promises eternal life to all Who in humble, childlike faith believe on Him. These are the powerful hands of the Son of God Himself, true, eternal, omnipotent God with the Father and the Holy Spirit. As long as we confess to Him our sins and trust alone in Him for our salvation, we can rest confident that no-one can pluck us out of His hand.

What a powerful Saviour we have! The Son of God Himself Who promises that (Rom 8:28): **'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.'** When He

also promises that 'His Word is truth', has kept every promise He has made in the past, and has limitless and abundant power, can't we trust Him? Can't we believe that He will fulfil everything He says? Isn't it wise to obey Him, knowing that wherever He calls us, it is ultimately for our good? Can't we also trust Him, that whenever He calls us He will stand with us every step of the way? Isn't this a powerful call to unity? As Christ is one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, as Christ is one with His sheep through faith, should not His sheep here on earth be one in Christ? Yes, God's Word teaches us that we must separate from those who stubbornly and persistently teach false doctrine and that we must defend the Truth, but isn't it true that so often our pride takes first place to faithfulness to the Word? Are we honestly, as the apostle exhorts (Eph 4:3), 'bending every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?' We will be living forever with our brothers and sisters in the faith in heaven. Why can't we live with them now?

*Should I not be always glad?
None whom Jesus loves are sad;
And when this short life is ended,
Those whom the Good Shepherd tended
Will be taken to the skies,
There to dwell in Paradise.*

—TJW

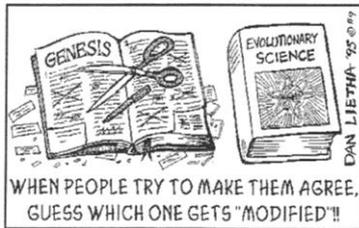
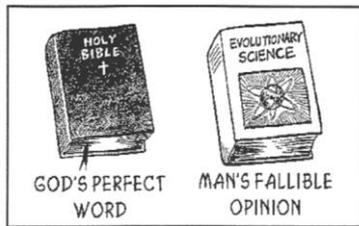
Following the Biblical Faith of our Fathers

(Translation of old Orthodox Lutheran Works)

HISTORY OF THE ELCR HAS BEEN A BATTLE FOR GOD'S PURE WORD

From the very formation of the Federation, by God's grace, it has been a **life and death battle** to hold firmly to God's Word. Already back in the late 1880's the former Immanuel Synod had pastors who cunningly taught that there were **mistakes in the Bible**. In the doctrinal discussions with the later UELCA in 1926-27 members of the UELCA held to 'human weaknesses' (double talk for errors) in the Bible. At the time of the Union in 1966 there were **professors at the seminaries** of both the former ELCA¹ and UELCA who did not accept the absolute Inerrancy of the Scriptures. This was then placed in the evil 'Open Questions' box resulting in the fact that many pastors and people in the LCA today do not accept the absolute Inerrancy of Holy Scripture. Hence we of the ELCR have been engaged in a struggle for the church's most precious possession --- **by God's grace alone, in childlike faith to retain for ourselves and to pass on to our children the verbally Inspired, absolutely TRUE (in every word) Word of God with absolute, divine authority.**

¹ Our old former church body.



All those churches which allow errors in the Bible or the poison of false teaching to remain, **are in deadly peril**. In the first place, they face the **loss of all Christian theology**. The Christian doctrine is based on the **absolute authority and complete trustworthiness of the Bible** and when the termites of Satan undermine both of these truths, the **foundation must be destroyed and Christian doctrine becomes corrupted**. In Psalm 11:3 we learn: *'If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?'* What the Lord said to Nicodemus also applies here, *'If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?'* (John 3:12). If a person believes that some parts of Scripture are in error (e.g. Creation, Flood, etc.), why should he believe that Jesus died for the sins of the world? **The same authority of God teaches both**. If you deny the one teaching, it does not take long before the danger occurs of denying the **vital teaching of salvation by grace through faith in Christ without the deeds of the Law** (Eph.2:8,9; Gal.5:9).

Secondly, the denial of verbal Inspiration and the absolute Inerrancy of God's Word **does away with the certainty of Christian doctrine**. Man, not God decides what is truth and what is to be believed and rejected. God's Word becomes a **matter of human opinions** for people to accept or reject depending on whether it suits them. Who then is to say which opinion is right? *Luther* earnestly warns against this when he states: 'For what other effect can these wavering opinions and uncertain teachings have than that they **toss us who are children to and fro**, carry us hither and yon, force and drive us whither they will.'

— Because they do not believe that every word of Scripture is the absolute Truth of God to be accepted in child-like faith and obeyed, they refuse to accept that it is **God** who is speaking in every Word of Scripture and reject His authority. But the Bible teaches that Scripture, being the Word of God, given word for word by divine Inspiration is the *'sure Word'* (2 Pet.1:19). The Bible is the pillar and ground of truth (1 Tim.3:15). It is so certain that Isaiah states: *'And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure'* (Is.33:6). An excellent translation of this texts reads: **'He (through His Word, BLW) will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear (reverence) of the LORD is his treasure-trove** (out of it all the other spiritual gifts and graces flow).'

In the **hour of death** when our sins accuse us and we are frightened, what alone can make us certain of eternal life? Only the **'Thus says the Lord' in Scripture**, the absolute Truth, which teaches: *'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved'* (Acts16:31). When a Christian finds nothing but unrest and anxiety in his heart, what alone can make him certain of comfort and peace? Only the **'Thus says the Lord' in Scripture**, the absolute Truth, which teaches in the words of Christ Himself: *'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto to you'* (John 14:27) and what **St Paul** writes: *'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'* (Rom.5:1). When a Christian in these evil times sees how the Church of Christ is surrounded by powerful foes and he feels so fearful, where alone can he look for strength and power to be victorious? Only in the **'Thus says the Lord' in Scripture**, the absolute Truth, which assures him in the words of Christ Himself that not even **'the gates of hell can prevail'** against Christ's Church (Matt.16:18).



conviction of the Truth. It involves the **loss of the Bible, the loss of Christian doctrine and the eventual destruction of the Christian Religion**. **Aren't we seeing this happening around us?**

With *Dr. F. Pieper* we take our stand: 'With the Biblical doctrine of the inspiration of Holy Scripture stand or fall the certainty, the Truth, and divine character of Scripture itself and of the entire Christian Religion.'

Let us recognize that we would **commit spiritual suicide** if we **renounced verbal Inspiration and the absolute Inerrancy of Scripture**. Let us realize the **grave peril** in which the visible church exists and in the power of God's grace **hold fast to every word of Scripture**, base our faith on it, seek our comfort alone in it and obey it faithfully; for it is true what our Saviour teaches us in Luke 11:28, *'Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.'*

To this end may the Lord ever give us the grace and wisdom to take to heart what *Dr Janzow* teaches in the following words. Sadly to their destruction our former ELCA did not. —BLW.

Why Still The Division?

(Continued from January-February **Steadfast** 2016.)



[By *Dr. W. Janzow*², 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 Church³

UELCA Theses 2 on the Doctrine of Inspiration.

Thesis Two reads: **'Because Scripture is inspired by the Spirit of God it follows as a matter of course that no errors are present in the Word as originally inspired by Him.'** -- Completely correct (on the surface, BLW)! How is it also possible that the Spirit of Truth who investigates all things, even the deep things of God⁴, could Himself have come to be guilty of allowing errors in Scripture? Even **human reason** recognizes the **absurdity** of such an assumption. But that the Christian faith itself is firmly established (grounded) **on the (absolute) inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures** in this matter is expressly based on the testimony of the Holy Scripture itself. Not (merely) because it has been given by the Holy Spirit Himself by Inspiration, but because the Scriptures have **expressly** said: *'The Scripture cannot be broken'* (John 10:35); *'For the Word of the LORD is right'* (Ps.33:4); *'Thy Word is Truth'* (John 17:17), that is why **from the outset** the Inerrancy of Holy Scripture stands firmly in our faith.

FALSE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE WORDS WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT ORIGINALLY INSPIRED AND THOSE WORDS WHICH THE HOLY MEN OF GOD WROTE DOWN.

As correct as this thesis otherwise also is (on the surface, BLW), just so it still lacks the actual **lifeblood** of the doctrine of (Verbal) Inspiration. It is well stated here about **'the Word as originally inspired by the Him (Holy Spirit)'**. But it does not say **what is meant by these words**. Do these words mean, just as Holy Scripture teaches, that the **originally written** Word (is verbally Inspired and the absolute Truth)? By these words in the thesis does it mean **every word** which the holy men of God have written in the holy Book of the Bible? **Or are they (our opponents) here wanting to make a distinction between those words which the Holy Spirit originally inspired and those words which the holy men**

² Dr.W. Janzow (1875-1949) graduated from the old Missouri Synod Concordia St. Louis Seminary in **1900**. After serving congregations in America he served the Adelaide congregation in South Australia from 1907-1945. He was President of the South Australian District from 1913 to 1923 and General President of the ELSA from 1923 until 1941. In 1934 the St. Louis Seminary awarded him the Doctor of Divinity.

³ Another name by which the **UELCA** (United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia) was known in those days.

⁴ 1 Cor.2:10.

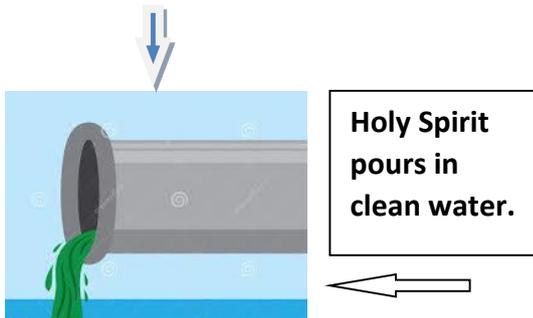
of God have written?⁵ These questions are **left open (not resolved) in this thesis**. And yet they are especially so extremely important in our time. It is **vital** that precisely on this point the clear confession of the Scripture doctrine be made that the **originally written** Word itself **coincides exactly** with the Word which was **originally inspired** by the Holy Spirit and is **completely identical** with it.

But because the thesis lacks this unequivocal⁶ confession, then also a modern theologian, who denies the (absolute) Inerrancy of Holy Scripture, can endorse⁷ this thesis, if needs be with a good conscience just as it reads, without being forced to be a hypocrite in doing so. For such a one it will appear absurd to expect errors by the Holy Spirit **‘in the Word which was originally inspired.’** At the same time he could, however, without coming into conflict with the above thesis quietly teach further as follows: ‘Scripture has errors and contradictions. There can be found in the Bible, in the written Word such “irregularities”, which indeed are not attributable to the Holy Spirit, but no doubt due to the **weaknesses and infirmities of “human factors”**.’

Therefore instead of **unequivocally opposing** the modernistic denial of the Scripture doctrine of the (absolute) Inerrancy of the written Word of God in the Scripture, this thesis rather conveys by **vagueness and ambiguity** the essential point of modernistic unbelief, as is also evident from the next thesis, which is closely connected to this second thesis. (*ATR*, 1932, pages 6,7. To Be Continued; italicised emphasis is Janzow's; some paragraphs shortened. Next Time Dr Janzow deals with the UELCA's Thesis Three on the Doctrine of Inerrancy.)

The Blasphemous View Of Liberals On The Doctrine Of The Inspiration Of The Bible

Holy Writers are like a Dirty Pipe, due to their ignorance



Water of the Bible is a mixture of Truth and ‘human mistakes’.

Translator's comment: When false teachers speak about the **‘weaknesses and infirmities of ‘human factors’** in regard to the Inerrancy of Scripture they mean the following:

- 1) What the Holy Spirit told them was right.
- 2) But because the ‘holy men’ were not as learned as we are today, lacked modern scientific education, had primitive world-views, etc., while they didn't do it deliberately, yet they made ‘mistakes’ **due to their ignorance**.
- 3) Since there were no better-educated men around in those far-off days, and yet God

Pastor Kleinig explains this blasphemous attack on the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture as follows:

What He inspired them to write was absolutely pure and errorless. The trouble lies not with the Spirit of God, Who made a one hundred percent job of the matter; **the trouble lies with the poor, rather backward ‘holy men’, whom the Holy Spirit had to use, since there were no better ones around at that time.** You see it was the fault of the writers of the original text, many of whom were very ordinary, often quite uneducated men (farmers, fishermen, etc.) whom the Holy Ghost had to select.

To give you an example to understand the matter clearly, let me put it like this: A man wants to transfer a **tank-full of clear, clean water** into another empty tank. But unfortunately he has only one pipe that he can use for the job, and that **pipe is on its inside rusty and dirty**. - The water represents the **Word as inspired by the Holy Spirit, the rusty and dirty pipe the ‘holy writers’**. As the clear, clean water passes through the rusty, dirty pipe, **it dissolves at least some of the rust and dirt**, and carries it along with it into the empty tank; but it is no longer clear and clean water. In like manner, say these ‘theologians’ (actually ‘diabologians’) what we have in the Bible is no longer really the pure Word of God, but a Word that is mixed with ‘irregularities’, a rather pleasing and polite word for errors. (*FD Essay*, 1973; emphasis added).

⁵ This distinction became evident to Dr. Janzow in personal discussion with a number of UELCA men and from their writings.

⁶ unambiguous, unmistakable and incontrovertible.

⁷ declare his public approval or support of it.

wanted mankind to know His Word of salvation, the Holy Spirit had to condescend to accommodate Himself to the ‘imperfections’ of the ‘holy men.’

- 4) This is just like us, 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.
- 5) This is a **wicked denial of the verbal Inspiration and absolute Inerrancy of Scripture**. This amounts to saying that the Holy Spirit did a bad job in using these ‘holy men’ to write the Bible and that the Holy Spirit made mistakes.
- 6) **In our Catechism the doctrine of the Verbal Inspiration is defined as ‘God the Holy Spirit took possession of the holy men, gave them the words to use and saw to it that they wrote down the very words He gave them,’ 2 Tim.3:16; 2 Pet.1:21; John 10:35; John 17:17.**

<p>. The Scriptures</p> <p><u>“TRUTH WITHOUT ANY MIXTURE OF ERROR”</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we really trust the Bible? • If the Bible contained error, how could we trust it? • How could we stake our lives on a fallible revelation? 	<p>I. The Scriptures</p> <p><u>“TRUTH WITHOUT ANY MIXTURE OF ERROR”</u></p> <p><i>The Bible is...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritative • Infallible • Inerrant • Sufficient • Eternal <p style="text-align: right;">—BLW.</p>
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Learning from Luther – Faith and Feelings

 One of the most important truths for a Christian to understand is the nature of saving faith. Francis Pieper has defined saving faith as ‘the reliance of the heart on the promises of grace set forth in the Gospel.’ (F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 426). This faith does not look internally at oneself, but rather away from oneself to Christ who suffered and died for our sins. It deals only with the Christ *outside* of us, or the Christ *for us* as set forth in the Word of God. *Luther* says, ‘The true knowledge of Christ, or faith, does not dispute whether you have done good works unto righteousness or evil works unto condemnation, but simply concludes after this sort: If you have done good works, you are not therefore justified; or if you have done evil works, you are not therefore condemned.’ (St. L. IX:619). Saving faith requires that we place no confidence in our estimation of ourselves or in our feelings, but rather only in the objective Word of God which announces to us the grace of God in Christ.

Luther writes, ‘The question now arises: If Christ has taken away death and our sins by His resurrection and has justified us, why do we then still feel death and sin within us? For our sins torment us still, we are stung by our conscience, and this evil conscience creates the fear of hell. To this I reply: I have often said before that feeling and faith are two different things. It is the nature of faith not to feel, to lay aside reason and close the eyes, to submit absolutely to the Word, and

follow it in life and death. Feeling however does not extend beyond that which may be apprehended by reason and the senses, which may be heard, seen, felt and known by the outward senses. For this cause feeling is opposed to faith and faith is opposed to feeling. Therefore the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes of faith: ‘Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.’ For if we would see Christ visibly in heaven, like the visible sun, we would not need to believe it. But since Christ died for our sins and was raised for our justification, we cannot see it nor feel it, neither can we apprehend it with our reason.

‘Therefore we must disregard our feeling and accept only the Word, write it in our heart and cling to it, even though it seems as if my sins were not taken from me, and even though I still feel them within me. Our feelings must not be considered, but we must constantly insist that death, sin and hell have been conquered, although I feel that I am still under the power of death, sin and hell. For although we feel that sin is still in us, it is only permitted that our faith may be developed and strengthened, that in spite of all our feelings we accept the Word, and that we unite our hearts and consciences more and more to Christ. Thus faith leads us quietly, contrary to all feeling and comprehension of reason, through sin, through death and through hell. Then we shall see salvation before our eyes, and then we shall know

perfectly what we have believed, namely that death and all sorrow have been conquered.

‘Take as an illustration the fish in the water. When they are caught in the net, you lead it quietly along, so that they imagine they are still in the water; but when you draw them to the shore, they are exposed and begin to struggle, and then they first feel that they are caught. Thus it also happens with souls that are caught with the Gospel, which Christ compares to a net, Matt. 13:47. When the heart has been conquered, the Word unites this poor heart to Christ and leads it gently and quietly from hell and from sin, although the soul still feels sin and imagines to be still under its power.’ (*Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. II, Ed. Eugene F. A. Klug, pp. 244-245)

In another sermon Luther says, ‘We must believe that our righteousness, salvation, and comfort lie outside of ourselves, namely, that we are righteous before God, acceptable to Him, holy and wise, even though there is nothing within us but sin, injustice, and stupidity. In my conscience there is nothing but an awareness and feeling of sin and of the fear of death; and, therefore, I must look elsewhere for help, and must believe that there is no sin and no death... I myself must confess that it’s contrary to my nature and is hard for me to believe this article, for I see before me a long catalogue of sin. And even if I had committed no other sin against God, I did for sixteen years live in the wicked and abominable

monastic system, conducted Masses, preached errors and misleading doctrine, and led myself and others astray, and yet I’m now asked to overlook all those sins just as if I had never committed any of them. In addition to that, every day I still feel that I lack a proper fear of God and also lack in faith. I’m plagued by laziness, by the ‘old Adam’ who tells me nothing but evil. I don’t love God with all my heart or my neighbour as myself, and so I am filled with sin. Yet I’m to believe that I have no sin at all... There is no way of receiving forgiveness of sins except to simply close my eyes and believe that my sins are forgiven. (*Sermons of Martin Luther: The House Postils, Vol. III*, Ed. Eugene F. A. Klug, pp. 135-138)

Luther concludes, ‘The only thing that avails is that you go outside yourself and all human comfort and find your only comfort in this Word’ (St. L. XI:455). In this article we have seen that saving faith is the reliance of the heart on the promises of grace set forth in the Gospel. We must be assured of such grace despite our estimation of ourselves or our feelings, knowing that it is declared in the Holy Gospel by a God who cannot lie. We must not entertain doubts, but be confident that the object of our faith is correct though our faith itself feels ever so weak. We must always look away from ourselves to the objective Word, which promises us salvation and life freely for Christ’s sake. —SW

Report of the Fiftieth Anniversary Fellowship Day of the ELCR

13 March 2016, was a day of true spiritual joy for the members of the ELCR as we gathered together to remember 50 years of God’s grace and blessing. The ELCR was officially formed on May 29, 1966, when Pastor F G Kleinig and a number of dedicated lay people who had severed their connection from the ELCA, officially constituted a new synod, the ELCR (Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Reformation).

The day began with a Thanksgiving service, followed by a community lunch, and closed with the reading of an essay commemorating our 50th anniversary. In the service, each of the three Pastors preached. Pastor Bryce Winter based his message on Acts 4:32, ‘*And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.*’ Pastor Tim Winter used Psalm 100 as his text, ‘*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness, come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord, He is God, it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good, His mercy is ever-lasting; and His truth endureth to all generations.*’ Finally Pastor Gavin Winter preached on John 8:31,32, ‘*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*’ All members present shared Holy Communion together as a sign of our oneness of faith.

After a community lunch, the three pastors jointly presented an essay entitled, *The ELCR – 50 Years Of God’s Word And Blessing, 1966 – 2016*. The three parts to the essay were, I. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ELCR AND WHY IT WAS FORMED — Pastor Gavin Winter; II. THE PRESENT: CONSTANTLY ABIDE IN CHRIST THE TRUE VINE — Pastor Timothy Winter; and III. ELCR: WHAT OF THE FUTURE? — Pastor Bryce Winter. This essay is available from our pastors. Collection for the day was \$6,258.35.

May all our members continue to value this precious treasure of God's Word, accept it in faith and abide by it in their lives.

Greetings to the Assembled Gathering at Kilcoy for 50th Anniversary of the ELCR from 'Redeemer' Lutheran Congregation, ELCR Melbourne.

As much as we would like to, since many of us cannot be present for this special Celebration, we would like to pass on to you all our special Greetings in Christ and pray that in His pure grace we as a Federation would always be truly grateful for God's Word in its truth and purity and to have Law and Gospel rightly divided in our services every Sunday.

Especially in these last days when very few people care any longer for the pure truth of God's Word may we all take to heart the words of Psalm 137:5,6: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning (the power of motion in general, and especially her skill with the harp). If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth (in an agony of thirst and suffering); if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy (if he, and all believing Jews with him, did not consider the Sanctuary of Jehovah the source of his greatest delight in life).'

In the Sanctuary in Jerusalem was the place where God revealed Himself in His pure Word and in His grace and mercy. In spite of our many sins, great hardships, tests of faith and heart-rending difficulties we have been richly blessed as never before in having so many great and wonderful treasures of God's grace in the special Sanctuary of His pure Word. May we never forget, but always in humble child-like faith always remember and take to heart the pure doctrine which has been handed down to us or else we too will lose it. May we never forget, but always remember that salvation is not by works but alone by the faith in the sacrificial death of our precious Saviour Jesus Christ. May we never forget, but always remember, that until Christ comes He desires us to be faithful to Him and His Word. In spite of how great the difficulties are and no matter what the opposition may be, no matter how small we may be, God in His grace wants us each day to rely totally on Him and step by step carry out the glorious and gracious work He has given each one of us until He calls us home.

Let us today say with Dr. Walther: 'Where is there another church who could be such a true mother for our souls than the orthodox Lutheran Church? Where is there another church that teaches pure faith, true life and a comforted and blessed death? We know of no other. Well then, let us remain with her. Let us

believe with her, confess with her, live with her to the LORD in every circumstance, suffer trials with her, with her contend and, finally, with her die comforted and blessed. What privileges could any church give that you do not have in the orthodox Lutheran Church?'

On this precious day of re-consecration let us in the power of Christ's death and resurrection, promise Christ, the founder of our church, and say with right hands raised: 'Should I forget you, oh, my Lutheran Zion, so I would have to forget my right hand. My tongue would have to stick to the roof of my mouth were I not to remember you, if you were not my highest joy.'

In Christ's Name,
Those who share in the pure Word and Faith,
Your fellow Brethren and Sisters of 'Redeemer' Melbourne.

Greetings to the Assembled Gathering at Kilcoy on March 13 for 50th Anniversary of the ELCR from the Lutheran Christian Church of Tasmania

Though a large distance may separate us and though we are only a small congregation who worship in our home here at Deloraine (about 28 who are either members or under our care), we too by God's grace desire like you, no matter how much Satan may attack us, to do as Jesus tells us to '**continue in My Word**' (John 8:31). As much as we would like to be with you to celebrate this anniversary, **by faith in Christ, and by our love for God's Word**, we want to assure you that **we are present with you in 'spirit' today**. Besides the pastors (for which we are grateful for their help) of the ELCR we have also come to know others among you like Morris, Sharon, Anna, and Bruce Winter.

With you we **stand shoulder to shoulder on God's Word in these evil days**. In these times as Satan seeks to attack especially our youth God's Word alone is their strength to stand firm through the Gospel and their guide by the Law to live faithfully for Jesus. We too have experienced the **seriousness of these times which have caused us much grief**, yet God has sustained us through His Word and prayer. With what is happening today in the Catholic Church and the Lutheran church in general, we want to stress how important it is constantly to ask of our pastors, '**What does God's Word say in these matters?**' We have seen how churches have become corrupt by wanting to **go their own way instead of following Christ's Word**. Following Christ's Word is **not always easy but it is more blessed**. Also we want to stress how important it is that the **care for and salvation of souls through faith in Christ is always kept to the fore**. In the Catholic church, as well as other churches, the importance of the visible organization is put first instead of Christ. Hence not only the confusion, the vile disgrace, but also the great loss of souls that has resulted.

In Rom.1:12 Paul speaks about the fact that we may **be mutually encouraged by each other's faith**. On this day of your anniversary we want to thank God that in the ELCR there are Christians who, like us, in faith believe in Christ as their Saviour and want only God's Word in its purity and **who take their stand, like us, on Luther's Small Catechism**. We need your prayers as we pray for you that you will by God's grace alone continue to hold fast to God's Word.

No matter what the future holds we know that if in faith we hold fast to Jesus **He will never let us down**. He tells us in Luke 11:28, '**Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.**' Like you we too have had to leave a church that departed from God's Word. It has not been easy standing alone for Jesus. But we have been truly blessed ---- richly blessed in earthly things, but especially blessed with a stronger faith, a deeper understanding of God's Truth, a clearer view of the sure path of righteousness on which to walk and, above all, the certainty of knowing that by grace alone the wonderful blessedness of heaven awaits us.

In Christ's Name,
Ian Huett.
(Chairman of the **Lutheran Christian Church of Tasmania**)
February 28, 2016

(More Greetings will be printed next issue)

Notes and News

Hospital: These members have spent time or are still in hospital.

PRAYER:

O Holy Spirit, I am seized with fear whenever these divine words strike my ears: 'Ye shall be holy, for I am holy'; and again: 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' When I ponder these sayings and measure against them my unholy heart, my unholy thoughts, my unholy words, my unholy deeds, I am often thrown into great anguish, and I become ashamed of the unbecoming and unholy life which I have led. For, alas! obeying the promptings of my heart and the habits of worldly men, I have sinned with them and have offended Thee with unholy words and deeds. Oh, if no one shall see Thy face without holiness, how few shall be saved, and oh, how many shall be damned! Help, Lord; for godly men have ceased.

Therefore, O Thou holy God, make me to understand all these things well that I may with sincere earnestness follow after true inward and outward holiness. O Jesus, sanctify me by Thy righteousness, by Thy merit and blood. Give to me, who am by nature unholy, Thy holiness, that, clothed in it as my most beautiful robe, I may be able to appear and stand before Thy heavenly Father. Sanctify my life by Thy holy Word. Sanctify my heart that it may be always occupied with good thoughts. Sanctify my lips that they may

speaking nothing that is unbecoming, unchristian, and wicked. Sanctify my will, that I may will and do only what is pleasing to Thee. O holy God, draw me away from the world and unite me with Thee, that through Thy Holy Spirit I may have the witness in me that I am born again, that I am a child of God and in a state of grace.

But let this sanctification be genuine, that I may not be holy only outwardly, and seek holiness while at church, while attending Holy Communion, or when I am engaged in other sacred actions; but let me be truly holy and follow after holiness in all places, at all times, on all occasions, even when I must live entirely in the society of worldly men. Let me under such circumstances speak, live, and act as a child of God, and remain in such a blessed state until death, when Thou wilt bring me to the company of the saints and elect in the everlasting light of joy.

'Tis Thine to cleanse the heart, To sanctify the soul,
To pour fresh life on every part, And new create the whole.
Dwell, therefore, in our hearts; Our minds from bondage free:
Then shall we know and praise and love The Father, Son; and Thee. Amen.

Starck's Prayer Book, P. 179.

