

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

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Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM – Divine Service 10:30 AM

August 1, 2024 Volume 26 Issue 4

August - September 2024

The Right Consideration of the Past

It doesn't take that much to become caught up in what we might call "the panoramic past." We see a sight, we hear a sound, we taste a taste, we smell a smell, or we touch something, and suddenly we enter the world of panorama. A mental picture begins to emerge. We see the faded photograph, we hear the sound of a voice or we listen to a particular piece of music, we taste a cookie from an old recipe, we smell an old house, or we touch something that was given to us by someone who is no longer here, and a larger view opens up.¹ Only our thoughts are able to travel back in time in an attempt to recapture something that has been lost.

When our mind enters the world of panorama, we begin to compare what was with what is now. And while we desperately try to accurately replay the past, it isn't entirely the objective past that flows through our mind, but it is more often our interpretation of the past as it is compared with the now. "Those were the days!" we say to ourselves with a sigh. "If only I could go back!" And we wistfully dream and long for a time machine. We ask, "Why were the old days better than these?" as if there might be some discoverable formula that might bring them back.

Sometimes, we get so caught up in the panoramic past that today becomes nothing more than an attempt to recapture yesterday. That is not a good thing to do. It is one thing to thank God for where we have been, for God would not have us to deny ourselves the solace of remembering the mercies of the past, but it is quite another thing to reject the

course that has been laid out for us today. Our journey is a saving journey that has a destination. We are to remember that the Christian life is a movement forward to our departure from this world and an entrance into the beauty of Jesus, heaven. And when we choose to ignore this and begin to use today to recapture yesterday, it is a form of escapism that is unacceptable.

In the book of Ecclesiastes (7:10) it is written: "Do not say, 'Why were the old days better than these?' For it is not wise to ask such questions." It is embarrassing to inwardly consider how often we have asked this or similar questions. In commenting on this passage Luther writes: "Old men usually speak this way: 'When I was a boy, everything was better.' They are what the poet calls 'glorifiers of times past.' But Solomon says: 'This is false; things were never right.'"²

You see, when we glorify "the good old days" and say that they were better than today, we are failing to take into consideration the reality of sin in every generation. Since the fall of our first parents, things have never been right at any age. Humanity today is the same vile humanity that has always been and will be until the end of time. Yet, we still unwisely think that one era is better than another. Why do we do that? There are typically three reasons for it. First, when we were children, we did not have the pressures of adult life. As we grow older and become more aware of hardship, our youth looks like a better time. Secondly, in some periods of history, there is more opportunity for wickedness to erupt. This is why some ages seem to be more wicked than others. It is a matter of civil righteousness, or a lack thereof.

And thirdly, when we go through hard times today, we often romanticize the past and think of it as a better time than what it really was. The Israelites longed for their slavery in Egypt when they found themselves in the wilderness.

The book of Ecclesiastes sharply cuts through all of this. It is not our objective to relive this life, but to leave this life behind for eternal life - to press forward. Things have never been right, and we want to leave sin, death, and the devil behind. As I said a moment ago, the Israelites failed to realize this when they were in the desert. Their example is well worth our consideration. They grumbled against God for what he had allowed in their lives for good purposes, and they astonishingly longed for their bondage in Egypt. They reasoned to one another, "There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death (Exodus 16:2-3)." Not only did they fail to comprehend the reality of sin, death, and the devil, but they also failed to see the goodness of the Lord. You would think that all of this would have been clear to them in bricks without straw and as they crossed the sea on dry ground. And this is the danger we confront when we reject the path of the Lord and long for the past.

Lest we forget, the Lord was not happy with the grumbling of the people because it demonstrated a lack of fear, love, and trust in God above all things. It all came to a head when they built a golden calf that fit their expectations. In this they said, "let the good times roll!" as they "sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry (Exodus 32:6)." The Lord was ready to destroy them because they rejected the path in which he was leading them. They longed for something different. We are often like them. And when we grumble against God about our today, and place our security in something else, we build our own version of the golden calf.

The apostle Paul writes in Philippians 3:13b-14, "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called

me heavenward in Christ Jesus." The words of Paul tie in with Ecclesiastes. Wisdom teaches us that things have not been right at any age. Every age confronts the same reality of sin, death, and the devil. Since every age is what it is, we do not romanticize human history and long to hold on to it, for that is the folly of the Israelites in the desert and a lack of understanding when it comes to God's intervention in our lives. Instead, we want to be freed from this place and brought into eternal perfection.

God has called us heavenward in Jesus Christ, the apostle tells us. This calling is not an empty voice, but it is the voice of the Father who says that he has sent his Son in flesh, and with him he is well pleased. Christ has lived a life for us that transcends the past and today. The eternal Son has lived a perfect life on our behalf so that we might escape this imperfect life and enter the eternal, perfect kingdom. Not only has he done this, but he also suffered and died on the cross to pay for every one of our sins - past, present, and future. We see his attitude about all of this in the book of Hebrews (12:2) where it says of Christ, "who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." It does not say that when Jesus was facing the cross that he longed for the happy days when he young and in Nazareth.

What again was it that Paul said? We are to forget what is behind and press on. Let us throw off everything that hinders us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Let us consider him and how he looked forward and endured so that we will do the same and not lose heart! Paul takes us even further in our lesson. Not are we invited to avoid being all caught up in the panoramic past, but we also are to avoid the thought that we have reached the goal. We are still running the race. As Harlyn J. Kuschel comments:

Looking back while running ahead is a dangerous procedure for an athlete in a race. It can only result in a loss of speed and direction. In the race of his

Christian life, the apostle did not look back either. He did not look back with pride on past accomplishments, which he knew could not earn him anything in God's sight. Nor did he look back in regretful brooding over past sins, which had been washed away by Jesus' blood. With each new day he put forth every effort to press ahead, to grow in his Christian living and service to Christ. The long-distance runner strains and stretches every muscle, expending even more energy, if possible, as he draws closer to the finish line. Similarly, Paul was expending all the energy he possessed as a Christian, straining with all his spiritual might as he drew ever closer to the goal and the prize of eternal life.³

All of this brings us to the right consideration of the past. To rightly consider the past is to consider Jesus today and the future that is ours in him. If we really believe that all things work for our good and salvation, then every day is a day that we endure all that we must endure as we consider the joy set before us. God has done and is doing great and glorious things in our lives, even using us as witnesses to his gospel of forgiveness. He will continue to do so until we see him face to face. Consequently, we do not hide in the past, nor do we try to relive it. Instead, we live each day as it comes, learning the lessons of the past, thanking God for where we have been, where he has brought us, and where he is taking us. And, when it comes to accomplishments, we do not become proud or boastful, but thank God for what he has done in and through us. We are not to beat ourselves over past sins and mistakes, but we praise the Lord for the forgiveness we have received at the cross, and for the miracle of straightening our paths to lead us home to heaven. In faith toward Christ, we strain and stretch every spiritual muscle.

Luther writes: "Therefore the evil in the world is always the same. See to it, then, that you have a peaceful and tranquil heart and that you do not get angry when you see this evil. You will never change the world but see to it

that you change into another kind of man." And we are another kind. We are adopted children of our heavenly Father who are headed for heaven! Our God has been our help in ages past, and he is our hope for years to come, as the hymn says.⁴

So, what is the right consideration of the past? Again, Paul says in Philippians 3:12-16,

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

In these words of Paul, we are brought to the bottom line. And what is it that we have attained, that is, what is it that we have come to possess? We have received the gift of Jesus. He is what we are to consider and occupy ourselves with until we are with him in glory. Jesus interprets our past, present, and future. May we truly be caught up in him rather than down here.

1. *Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*, (Springfield, Massachusetts: MARRIAM-WEBSTER INC., 1985), 851.
2. Jaroslav Pelikan, ed., *Luther's Works Ecclesiastes. Song of Solomon. Last Words of David 2 Samuel 23:1-7*, Volume 15, (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1972), 117.
3. Harlyn J. Kuschel, *The People's Bible Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2000), 78.
4. The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Worship*, (Saint Louis: CPH, 1982), 180.

Christian Fellowship and “Psychiatric Flu”

Below is a paper which Professor Kurt Marquart gave on September 19th in 1970 while he served as pastor of Redeemer & Good Shepherd Parishes at Toowoomba in Queensland, Australia. When I read the paper, I was struck by how it still speaks to us in 2024 to so many issues. This article was written 54 years ago and could have been written yesterday. Keep in mind that some of the words, which appear as spelling errors, are simply the way Australians spell. For example, an “s” may be a “z” to us. I hope you enjoy. I sure did.

POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2012,
BY PASTOR ROBERT PAUL

<https://steadfastlutherans.org/blog/2012/09/christian-fellowship-and-psychiatric-flu-by-pr-kurt-marquart/>

Christian Fellowship and “Psychiatric Flu”

Pastor Kurt E. Marquart, 19 September 1970

1. THE PROBLEM

The basic idea behind this paper arose out of various discussions of pastoral counseling. Without in the least wishing to belittle the value of real pastoral counseling, guided by God’s Word, I merely suggest that the problem which “counseling” is usually supposed to meet is in fact far too big for this sort of approach.

It is reported that in New South Wales one half of all the hospital beds are occupied by mental patients. Mental and emotional disturbances of all kinds are extremely common, and surely also in our parishes, including the ministry. Indeed, a lecturer at a recent seminar at the Baillie-Henderson Special Hospital in Toowoomba, used the charming phrase “psychiatric flu” to describe so-called “crisis-reactions,” i.e. temporary mental-emotional disturbances brought on by the stresses and strains of crises. This sort of “psychiatric flu” is very common compared to the more permanent neurotic or psychotic conditions.

Now, I would suggest that the Christian Church has a far more effective remedy (prevention as well as cure!) for the “psychiatric flu” type of ailment than “counseling”, and that is Christian fellowship and friendship. I am convinced that the supportive security of meaningful and wholesome human relationships plays a far greater and more fundamental role in the preservation and restoration of mental health and balance than do the verbalisings of formal counseling sessions (although these, of course, have their place too!). But if what is wanted is real, time-consuming human involvement, then this challenge can be met only by the Church in each place acting as God’s Family—never by the ministry alone, who are hopelessly outnumbered statistically.

I cannot conclude this section without drawing attention to the fact that much of the “mental-health-and-counseling” enterprise rests on the unquestioned acceptance of psychiatric notions which are open to serious objections, both medical-scientific and theological. The claims for psychotherapy are rather ambitious:

“Statements and proclamations made at international meetings often suggest that psychiatric discoveries can now be relied upon to replace or reshape basic spiritual values and that a vast reorganization of the world must be confidently and immediately undertaken to implement this transformation.”

The same author goes on to quote Dr. Brock Chisholm, a former head of the World Health Organization, as follows:

“If the race is to be freed from its crippling burden of good and evil, it must be psychiatrists who take the original responsibility. ...The reinterpretation and eventual eradication of the concept of right and wrong...are the belated objectives of practically all effective psychotherapy...most psychiatrists and psychologists and many other respectable people have escaped from

these moral chains and are able to observe and think freely. ...With the other human sciences, psychiatry must now decide what is to be the immediate future of the human race. No one else can. And this is the prime responsibility of psychiatry”.

Yet statistical studies comparing the progress of neurotic patients receiving psychiatric treatment with that of similar patients not receiving it, show that about the same proportion (about two out of three) recover or improve in both cases!

2. THE REMEDY

1. A native once said to his missionary friend:

“How odd that you take away our tribal life to civilise us, and then you white people look for a tribe to join!”

We have increasingly atomised the human race, so that the individual stands isolated and alone. Perhaps this is why the spiritually rootless and homeless intellectuals of our time are so attracted to socialistic collectivism, which begin with bloodless abstractions and end in bloody oppression!

The Bible, on the other hand, does not treat men as isolated individuals. As sons of Adam, men share a common inheritance of sin and death, Rom. 5. And when Christ, the Second Adam, creates the new humanity, this too consists not of separate individuals here and there, but of one family, the Church, which shares common blessings and a common destiny. This oneness of the Church in her Lord—which of course is an article of faith and not of sight—is beautifully described in such texts as I Cor. 12 (one body with its many and various members), Eph. 2 and 4 (“One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism”), and I Peter 4:8-11 (sharing the gifts). The unity in Christ overcomes even the deep hostility between Jew and Gentile:

“But now in Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far apart from us have been brought very close, by the blood of Christ. For He is the peace between us,

and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart... This was to create one single New Man in himself out of the two of them and by restoring peace through the cross, to unite them both in a single Body and reconcile them with God” (Eph. 2:13-15).

How much more does Christian unity overcome our modern racial, class, and cultural differences, or generation-gaps, real and imagined! Christians are not simply people, but a people, the holy nation, the chosen people, the spiritual Israel, the People: “One you were not a people at all and now you are the People of God” (I Peter 2:10)!

2. The New Testament does not present Christian oneness and fellowship merely as a theoretical ideal. It is something real and practical, and not merely “spiritual” in the vaguer sense of that term:

“These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers...The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed. They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved” (Acts 2:42-47). (See also Acts 4:32-35).

The practice of holding their property in common does not seem to have survived long, nor was it ever insisted on as necessary (Acts 5:4). But the responsibility of caring for one another is permanent. The first deacons were appointed specifically for the task of looking after a fair distribution of the daily food for the widows (Acts 6:1ff). To the Galatians St. Paul wrote: “let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (6:10); and to the Romans: “receive ye one

another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (15:7). And St. John writes: "This has taught us love—that he gave up his life for us; and we, too, ought to give up our lives for our brothers. If a man who was rich enough in this world's goods saw that one of his brothers was in need, but closed his heart to him, how could the love of God be living in him? My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active" (I John 3:16-18).

How tragic, by contrast, the modern situation in all too many cases! So many people seem to experience the Church as a kind of threatening force which makes them feel uncomfortable. They would speak about their real troubles and problems much more openly and freely at the pub, than among their fellow church-members. Perhaps a few experiences with gossip, and a hard, condemning attitude have convinced them that it isn't safe to let one's problems be known in a congregation!

In conscious rebellion against this Pharisaic unbrotherliness, some churches now go to the opposite extreme and throw God's revealed will to the winds. And so, we have pathetic scenes like a couple being admitted to Holy Communion in the nude, in an American Lutheran Church! In San Francisco, there are churches that think it is their duty to organize dances for homosexuals! And only the other day the Rev. Alan Walker of Sydney announced a vast Christian public relations campaign in New South Wales which will feature the following:

"The accent will be on youth; there will be meetings all over the State, a youth parliament, pop plays, bands, dancers, singers, radio trailers, records and a TV show. Jingles and slogans are on the way. The climax will be a four-day pop festival in a 67-acre valley at Arcadia, north of Sydney... We'll put tents up, bring in the pop stars, and have gaiety and abandon in a Christian setting... It will be a Christian Woodstock" (The Australian, Sept. 17, 1970).

And so, the pendulum swings to the opposite extreme. The New Testament teaches us not to

be extremely careless about sin, but to be loving, compassionate, and brotherly toward the sinner:

"Brother, if one of you misbehaves, the more spiritual of you who set him right should do so in a spirit of gentleness, not forgetting that you may be tempted yourselves. You should carry each other's troubles and fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1).

In this atmosphere of sincere Christian brotherhood, spiritual and mental wholeness and soundness can be nurtured. But a masquerade of disguises, suspicions, and judgment strain and erode mental and spiritual health!

3. Fellowship in the New Testament is not simply an easy-going camaraderie, which develops just anyhow; but it is a gift that comes with supernatural, divine life, and its centre of gravity is the New Testament congregational worship service, in which the Risen Lord meets His People in His Gospel and Sacrament, Acts 20:7ff. Gospel and Sacrament belong together. And here at the Altar is the source and the chief expression of Christian unity: "The fact that there is only one loaf means that, though there are many of us, we form one single body because we all have a share in this one loaf" (I Cor. 10:17).

Today many people regard the Liturgy, the Service of Word and Sacrament, as dry, routine formality surrounding a sermon! From this cold formality some seek to escape into Pentecostal frenzy, others into shallow, "with-it" fads. The point is that we do not need to turn meaningful—it needs merely to be seriously understood and appreciated. The connection between Gospel and Sacrament is primary—the particular wordings, rituals, forms, and so on are secondary.

To recapture the fullness and richness of New Testament worship we Lutherans ought to study, for instance, Article 24 of the Augsburg Confession and of the Apology (also Art. XV of the latter), which set forth the place of the Sacrament in the life of the Church.

If Christian worship and fellowship are not to be mere official formalities, we need, as individuals and as congregations, to beg the Lord of the Church to let us appropriate anew in every generation that which is basic, crucial, and central in the practice of New Testament Christianity.

And if the reception of the Sacrament has implications for bodily health (I Cor. 11:30), is this holy mystery not even more closely related to spiritual and mental health?

Concerning the Name “Lutheran”

The following article (Concerning the Name “Lutheran”) was written by C. F. W. Walther in Der Lutheraner 1 (1884): 2-4, 5-7, 9-12. The article was written 140 years ago and still answers questions that are asked by a new generation. It is in three parts. In each part, a question is raised regarding the name “Lutheran” and then answered. The questions are: 1) Is it wrong to use such a name? 2) What does it mean to be a Lutheran? and 3) Why do we keep this name? It was translated by Mark Nispel in June 2019 and is in the public domain. In this issue of Te Deum, we present the first question and answer.

Concerning the Name “Lutheran”

by C.F.W. Walther
Translated by Mark Nispel

PART I - September 1, 1844

A. Is it wrong to use such a name?

Isn't it wrong to use the name “Lutheran?” We did not shy from giving our periodical the title Der Lutheraner (The Lutheran) and so we consider it our duty to give answer to those who might ask us what this name means and why we would use it. There have been many people at all times, as we well know, that have been offended that the Lutheran Church should be named after Luther, or any man. ‘Why’, they ask, ‘can't everyone see in light of this that this church could not be the true church of Christ but instead only the work of a man, a sect?’ ‘Indeed,’ says another, ‘you Lutherans should read what St. Paul says about such names of men. In 1 Corinthians 1 and 3 he says: “it has been reported to me

that there is discord among you. I am speaking of the fact that among you one says: I am of Paul! And another, I am of Apollo! And a third, I am of Christ! How can this be? Is Christ divided? Has Paul been crucified for you? Or are you baptized in the name of Paul? — So, one says: I am of Paul! The other, I am of Apollo! Are you then not fleshly? Who is Paul and who is Apollo? They are servants through whom you believed.” Are you listening, Lutherans? It is cried out to us: Don't you do the same thing the holy apostle condemns here in Corinthians when you name yourselves Lutherans? You continuously say that one should always follow the letter of the Scripture precisely, then why do you not do so here?

There are not a few honest Lutherans who become quite embarrassed when this is said to them by our opponents. But this accusation is so fictitious that it will be shown to be without basis as soon as we consider the matter more closely. First, it is a mistake if it is believed that Lutherans took this name for themselves. History reports to us instead that they were first given this name by their opponents in order to insult them. Dr. Eck, who held that well known disputation with Luther in Leipzig, was the first to call those who held to Luther's teaching by that name. We see clearly what Luther thought of this in a writing which he completed in 1522: Admonition Against Insurrection, in which he says among other things:

I ask that my name be left silent, and people not call themselves Lutheran, but rather Christians. Who is Luther? The doctrine is not mine. I have been crucified for no one. St. Paul in 1 Cor. 3:4-5 would not suffer that the Christians should call themselves of Paul or of Peter, but Christian. How should I, a poor stinking bag of worms, become so that the children of Christ are named with my unholy name? It should not be dear friends. Let us extinguish all factious names and be called Christians whose doctrine we have. The pope's men rightly have a factious name because they are not

satisfied with the doctrine and name of Christ and want to be with the pope, who is their master. I have not been and will not be a master. Along with the church I have the one general teaching of Christ who alone is our master. (Matt. 23:8).

This judgment of Luther is as clear as the sun. He did not want, in any way, that the church should be named after him and even less did he want this to happen for his own glory.

Let no one imagine that in and of itself it is wrong when Christians let themselves be named after a man. This is shown undeniably by the fact that the church of the Old Testament was named by God himself after a man. What did He call them? - The Israelites. Didn't Christ himself say of Nathaniel: "See, a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false!" What was Israel? He was a man. Therefore, it is clear, it depends on the sense in which the children of God are named after a man. In that alone can there be sin?

In which sense and on what grounds did the Corinthians name themselves of Paul, of Apollo, of Cephas, of Christ? In this fashion, as we can read, they wanted to separate themselves from one another. Although Paul, Apollo, and Peter (or Cephas) taught one and the same thing, the Corinthians rejected the others when they chose one. They separated themselves from one another by taking on a name and setting up factions. The sin for which Paul rebukes the Corinthians exists not only in that they named themselves after a man, but instead that by doing this among those who had the same orthodox doctrine they wanted to establish divisions. Therefore, the apostle himself rejects the name "of Christ" as the name of a sect (which some of them were using) when they wanted to establish division with it. Paul does this even though this last name is not taken from a man but from the Son of God himself.

Now true Lutherans have never named themselves after Luther in this forbidden sense. With this their name they have never wanted to depart or separate from other orthodox teachers. They declare their

allegiance as Lutherans to Athanasius and all true teachers of the Gospel in all times and lands just as much as to Luther. Luther himself was far from wanting to be the only true teacher. He publicly writes among other things about a friend, the Württemberg theologian Brentius: "I value your books so highly that my books entirely stink when I compare them to your books and those like them. I am not mocking you here. I am not dreaming, and I am not saying something to insult you. I will not be deceived by my judgment, for I am not praising Brentius, but the Spirit that is in you is much friendlier, and full of love and joy than the spirit in me." Certainly no one speaks this way if he is trying to lead a sect. But Luther speaks this way because he wants to be nothing more than a witness of the truth.

Therefore, we do not call ourselves Lutherans after him in the same way that we are called Christians on account of Christ. We are not called such because we believe in Luther. As highly as we treasure this vigorous witness, in our church we still do not accept so much as a word in matters of faith simply because Luther said it. Rather, we accept his words only in the instance that it can be shown written clearly in the Word of God. We do not accept him as any apostle or prophet but rather we know that he was subject to error and sin like other men. He is not the head of our church. He is not our pope. Therefore, whoever accepts everything in blind faith simply because Luther said it is separated from the true Lutheran church as far as earth is from heaven and day is from night.

In this manner then Luther wrote to Melanchthon in 1530 who was at the Imperial Council in Augsburg [confessing the Lutheran faith to the Emperor and the Roman Catholic Church]: "It does not please me in your letter that you write that you have me as the head of this matter and have followed it on account of my reputation. I do not want to direct or command anything, nor will I be called the author. And even if someone might find some kind of correct understanding in using that word, I do not want it. Isn't this matter likewise yours and does it not fit you as well

as me, therefore one may not say that it is mine.” Just as Luther refused any improper esteem in the church so our church has not improperly honored him. Just as it says in the beginning of the Formula of Concord, which is one of the most important public confessions of the orthodox Lutherans:

We believe, teach, and confess that the one rule and guide, according to which all doctrine and teachers should be judged is the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and new Testaments alone. Other writings of old and new teachers whatever their name should not be considered equal to the holy Scriptures, but rather all of them together one with another are subject to it and together are taken only as witnesses of how much and at which places after the time of the apostles such doctrine of the apostles and prophets were kept.

So finally, we ask ourselves, do we call ourselves Lutherans in order to show that we cling to a new doctrine which Luther first 300 years ago brought forward? And do we thereby show that we want to belong to a new church, which was instituted by itself? May that never be so! We name ourselves not as the Arians are named after Arius, or as the Dominicans after Dominicus. Luther did not preach any new doctrine but rather the ancient doctrine of the eternal gospel. He did not stray from the ancient true church, which is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the Cornerstone. He only left, yes, actually was thrown out, of that church which had fallen and misused the name of the ‘catholic’ church in order to bind the conscience with their laws of men. To show this thoroughly is the very goal we had in mind when we started this publication. In the first place we refer our readers to only one witness of Luther himself, from which it is clear to see that he did not intend to spread his own human ideas but rather was driven by the Word of God. So, among other things he says at the close of his splendid Church postil:

Oh, that God would, that the explanation of God’s Word by me and all teachers would perish, and each Christian would take up the nude Scriptures. You see from this my prattle, how unlike God’s Word is compared to the word of all men, how no man is able to properly attain and illumine one of God’s words by all of his own words. My and all other explanations of men would be nothing, yes, only a hindrance to him who can enter it without glosses and explanations. Therefore, go in, go in dear Christian. And leave my and all other explanations be a mere step unto the real building, so that we may cling to the nude clear Word of God itself, taste it and remain there, for God lives only in Zion.

Even Luther’s most bitter enemy must agree that it was the holy Scriptures above all that he insisted upon and spread among the people. To prove this, I will bring forward only one quote from the writings of a Roman Catholic author, a certain Florenundus Raemundus, who otherwise wrote entirely against the Protestants and had taken part in the persecution of them. He said in his History of the Origin . . . of the Heresies of the 16th Century:

The common people concerned themselves (in Luther’s time) mostly with the Bible, which was translated into the mother language. It was seen in the houses and lay upon the tables. The common worker had the Bible in his workplace and the women lay it upon their knees. The entire world busied itself with the reading of the Bible. The sects which were armed with these books, whenever they came upon a priest or someone from another spiritual order, immediately began an argument with these books. One demanded that he should be shown from Scripture the mass, another purgatory, another infant baptism, another the Trinity. Finally, they wanted all articles of faith to be proven

with express Words and rejected the unwritten Word of God and the apostolic precepts. For the arch heretic Luther had taught: The Scripture (and he authorized everyone to explain it) is alone the judge of all arguments in religion.

Who could have given a more delightful picture of the awakening of a new life through the old truth in the time of the Reformation and who could defend Luther better against the complaint that he brought forward new doctrine than this zealous follower of the people? Let us hear Luther himself as to whether Luther despised the true church and wanted to create a new church. he wrote among other things in 1532 Against Certain Mob Spirits:

I would rather allow the wisdom and laws not only of all mob spirits but also of all emperors, kings and princes to witness against me, than hear or see one iota or tittle of the entire Christian church against me. Indeed, one should not jest with articles of the faith, which were held in unison from the beginning wherever Christianity was found. That is not like jesting with the laws of the pope or the emperor, or other human traditions of the fathers or councils.

From this, one sees that Luther in no way despised the church as is so often said, but rather that he was an obedient son of it. As

little as Luther followed the reputation of any man, yet he did not want in any way to stand on his own feet on a false way in dark self-centeredness as so many have done. He believed that through all the centuries there had remained an orthodox church. He then asked above all how that church had taught at all times. The witness of the true church and agreement with it especially mattered to him. He considered her to be a pillar and foundation of the truth [1 Tim. 3:15] and wanted to follow it and be a member of the whole great army of the orthodox teachers of the church from the time of the Apostles until his time. That one must hear and obey the church (Matt. 18:7), was never denied by Luther. That is not the matter of contention which of old has been argued between the Lutheran and Roman churches. But the question is instead whether one must obey those who take the authority of the church as their own because they have the office of the church among them but use it to command something which is contrary to the Gospel. That is what Luther denied. He maintained that if one should not hear the voice of Christ, he would also not hear the voice of his bride, his true church. Instead, such a one would have the false prophets, who carry the name of the church as if in sheep's clothing under which they try to conceal the ravaging wolf. Luther departed from these false prophets, who would not allow a true reformation, but not form the Church.

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Trinity Te Deum is published bi-monthly.

Deadline for all articles is the 15th of the odd months.

All articles must be approved by Interim Pastor Brock Abbott. Articles with no author are written by him.

AUGUST 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 ELDERS D. KURTH, J. LESKO	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 PASTOR KEISTMAN W/ HOLY COMMUNION	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 PASTOR KEISTMAN W/ HOLY COMMUNION	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 VICAR KILLION	26	27	28	29	30	31

SEPTEMBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 PASTOR KEISTMAN W/ HOLY COMMUNION	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 PASTOR KEISTMAN W/ HOLY COMMUNION	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 VICAR KILLION	16	17	18	19	20	21 10 th ANNUAL BEER, BRATS, & BRIDE
22 VICAR KILLION	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 PASTOR BROCK ABBOTT W/ HOLY COMMUNION ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS	30					



AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2024